Chapter - II

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - A LITERATURE SURVEY
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In the words of Walter R. Berg, “The literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work will be built”.

Carter V. Good thinks “The key to the vast store - house of published literature may open doors to source of significant problems and explanatory hypothesis and helpful orientation for definition of problem background for selection of procedure and comparative data for interpretation of results. In order to be truly creative and original one must read extensively and critically as a stimulus to thinking”

Section A: Women Empowerment - Genesis

2A.1 Introduction

For centuries together women has played the secondary role to man. She was never held in esteem, only a mention about her pathetic status was mentioned here and there. But the advent of science and technology, growth of democratic ideas and impact of modern industrialization and general awareness and conscience among the mass has paved way for the emancipation of women.
As per Encyclopaedia of women “woman is as much human being as man; as she is equally entitled to develop her abilities, all her abilities, to choose the sort of life she wishes to lead and carry on all the activities and assume all the responsibilities that go to make up human dignity.”

According to Dr. Amartya Sen, “Burden of hardship falls disproportionately on women due to seven types of inequality—mortality (due to gender bias in health care and nutrition), nasality (sex selective abortion and female infanticide), basic facility (education and skill development), special opportunity (high education and professional training), employment (promotion) and ownership (home, land and property).”

As a general perception, women are considered a weaker sex in every walk of life. For ages now, the Indian society has not reconciled to the factor of liberation of women. The position of women in the society has established the fact that they are the disadvantaged gender, being dominated on by their male-counterparts.

In the original Sanskrit text the creation of women by Tyashtri the Vulcon of Hindu mythology is described thus: “He took the lightness of leaf and the glance of fawn, the gaiety of the sun’s rays and the tears of the mist; the inconsistency of the wind, and the timidity of hare, the vanity of the peacock and the softness of the dove on the throat of the swallow. He added the harshness of
diamond, the sweet flavor of honey, the cruelty of tiger, the warmth of the fire and the turtle dove, the chill of snow and the chatter of joy. He melted all these and formed a woman. Then he made a present of her to man. And she lived unhappily even after to be honored with smiling condescension by the enlightened maltreated by the boorish deified as a religious figure but walloped with regularity if as a wife she cannot bring a whooping dowry. The Indian woman's tale is an endless one of woe. They are abandoned, divorced, bought and sold or killed at the men whim of men.” ³

2A.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is a term widely used in the context of 'development' particularly women's development. Empowerment is a nutshell, is a way of defining challenging and overcoming barriers in one's life through which the individual increases her ability to shape her life and environment.

Empowerment implies as

- A state of mind and an attitude of a person. An empowered woman has a positive self image and takes an active part in decision making related to herself, her family and her community.
- Greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making and greater ability to overcome restrictions and constraints imposed by customs, beliefs and practices.
Self-confidence and understanding of the importance of human values, rights and privileges conducive for a more dignified and satisfactory way of life.

According to Gangrede, "Goal of empowerment depends on three fold revolution. Firstly to change people's heart. Secondly to create a change in their lives. Thirdly, to change the social structure."  

Empowerment in the real sense is quality of life, does not necessarily follow with rising money income or longer life spans (which form the conventional yardstick of 'progress' and 'development'). A woman may live in the midst of material comforts in a luxurious palace and yet be powerless in terms of self-assertion or autonomy over her own life. It is therefore, evidences of the kind of increasing autonomy that empowers woman and individuals in their own right, with entitlements in terms of dignity and decision-making prerogatives.

2A.3. Women Empowerment

Women empowerment is the ability to direct and control one's own life. But it is clear that such an individual empowerment of women is attained in relationship to the larger society. It is a process in which women gain control over their own lives by knowing and claiming their rights at all levels of society at the international, local and household levels.
Women empowerment as a phenomenon is not new but it is reshaped with specific forms on the critical and key issues related with the empowerment of women.

In other words empowerment of women means equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and make them capable of participate in developmental activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision-making. Education will be the only factor which would play the most crucial role in empowering women.

There was consensus among the participation that 'empowerment' has become one of the most widely used terms in development. Women's groups, non-governmental organizations, activists, politicians, governments, and international agencies refer to empowerment as one of their goals.

Nelly Stromquist, for instance defines empowerment as "a process to change the distribution of power both in interpersonal relations and in institutions through our society." 5

It is also agreed by D.B. Rao, that "empowerment is a moving state; it is continuum that varies in degree of power. It is relative ... One can move from an extreme state of absolute lack of power to the other extreme of having absolute power." 6
Indications of Empowerment

Understanding that empowerment is a complex issue with varying interpretations in different societal, national and cultural contexts.

At the level of the individual woman and her household:
- Participation in crucial decision making process
- Extent of showing of domestic work by men
- To which a woman takes control of her reproductive functions and decides on family size.
- To which a woman is able to decide where the income she has earned will be challenged.
- Feeling and expression of pride and value in her work.
- Self-confidence and self esteem.
- Ability to prevent violence at the community or organizational level.
- Existence of women organizations.
- Allocation of funds to women and women's projects.
- Increased number of women leaders at village level, district, provincial and national levels.
- Involvement of women in design, development and application of technology.
- Participation in community programmes, productive enterprises, politics and arts.
❖ Involvement of women in non-traditional tasks; and
❖ Increased training programmes for women empowerment; and
❖ Exercising her legal rights when necessary at the national level.
❖ Awareness of her social and political rights.
❖ Integration of women in the general national developmental plan.
❖ Existence of woman's networks and publications.
❖ Extent to which women are officially visible and recognized and
❖ The degree to which media take heed of women’s issues."7

The new policy on education 1986 emphasize that, 'Man and women are created after the images likeness of god' (gen 1:27) this equality stands solemnly inscribed of first page of the bible. In the Indian way of thinking, “a human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care coupled with dynamism.” 8

The emphasis is on the human person be it a man, or a woman. Women make-up almost 50% of the human resources of our country and of our state. They can be even greater instruments in the development of human resources than men. They can enter any profession or economic activity but they also remain mothers and care-takers of our potential human resource - the children.

Tyagi says that“ Women constitute nearly half of the population and therefore there cannot be happiness and full development, as long as women
remain depressed and exploited. No society can be free, fair and just until women enjoy freedom, justice, and opportunities for utilizing their full potentials.”

Quoting from a UNFPA report, ‘The state of World Population 1992’, the Newsletter of Bernard Van Leer Foundation says that there can be no sustainable development without development for women, because it is women who contribute most for the development of children. The women have and will lead us in our search for a world free of violence and war. Women have led the peace and ecology movements in many parts of the world. Historically and even today women take care of the basic needs of society like food, fodder and fuel, they have had to move in tune with their own nature. They have also been creating and nurturing.

Pinto identified that, “There are two ways in which education and employment improve women power:

- By imparting specialized skills and
- By generally raising the capability through greater discipline responsiveness to challenges conscientiousness pride in workmanship etc.

The former is a function of formal education. The latter on the other hand is related to much greater extent to the nature of children’s upbringing which is mainly done by the mother.” The principal problem to be faced in the development of human resources, therefore is the availability of resources to be
best developed and their role in securely playing the most beneficial form of educational development; the extent and quality of education society should strive to provide and to whom."

Section - B : Women Empowerment in India

For a proper assessment of status of women in India, a brief resume and background of women through the ages is essential. The position of women reflects the cultural attainment of society. If we observe the position of women in ancient India, there are variations in the status of women in different periods of history.

In pre-Aryan age women enjoyed high status in the society. The image of women was high. Even the main deity at that time was Mother Goddess. Women enjoyed property rights and freedom. In pre-Vedic age the status of woman was high and matriarchal system was prevalent.

2B.1 Women in Vedic Period

In the Vedic Period (4000-1000 BC) matriarchy was replaced by patriarchy. Within limits and limitations of a Patriarchal System, it is said that women in vedic period enjoyed a high status. In that society widow remarriages were allowed. Being grown up and educated, the vedic women were married at a mature age and had a voice in the selection of their life partners. The women were free to attend and visit public places and social gatherings. Marriage was
not compulsory for every girl. Those women who remained unmarried and grew old in the house of her parents were called 'Amaju.'

In the Rig-Vedic period, women enjoyed full freedom for their spiritual progress and intellectual development. The examples of Maitreya and Gargi, the two women scholars in Vedanta, are well known. References are available in the vedic literature of a ritual that ensures the birth of a scholarly daughter. Daughters like sons were initiated into vedic studies and had to lead a life of studentship (Brahmacharya) devoted to learning, self control and discipline. Many women rose to become philosophers well-versed in the sacred texts, poetesses, and teachers and participated in scholarly debates. Some of them composed the hymns of the Rigveda.

2B.2 Women in Upanishad Period

During these period only women of the royal families enjoyed respect. The status of women in general continued to be the same as in the vedic period. Like men, women also enjoyed social privileges and played honourable roles in social development. Husband and wife were performing the social and religious rights together. They maintained high moral standards. There were prayers requesting the birth of female child according to 'Bruhadaryakopanishat.'

As per Upadhyay Neelam, "Some remained unmarried for a life-long pursuit of knowledge and were known as 'Brahma Vadinis'. This reflects women's
better social position, the height of intellectual attainment and pursuance of the academic career in early Vedic period."  

**2B. 3 Women in Epic Period**

The high standard of women’s education set up during the vedic age was fortunately continued to a large extent during the Epic age as well. The Ramayana and Mahabharata, (500 BC- 200 AD) the epics of India, are resplendent with acts and achievements of a good many learned and qualified women. The Mahabharata a literary creation gave sanction to many new social customs of inter-racial and inter-caste marriages. The Mahabharata viewed the nature of women as inherently base and exhorted them to observe piety and obedience to their men.

According to Upadhyay Neelam, “under the impact of images created and sustained in Hinduism, women are regarded on the one hand as the embodiment of purity and spiritual power: on the other they are viewed as essentially weak and dependent creatures requiring constant guardianship of men.”

**2B.4 Women in Sutra Period**

After the epic period (600-300 BC) the sutra period started. There were several writers and among them Asvalayana Apastamena Asankhayana and
Bharadwaja" were outstanding. Although they lived in different times of places, they held similar views about some fundamental aspects of the status of women in the society. Asvalayana prohibited the performance of rituals by married women. A woman was not allowed to inherit wealth and was denied the right to the property of her husband.

By the time of Manu Smriti (200BC to 100), many laws governing freedom to women got extinct and what remained thereafter was the ascetic rigidity. Manu Smriti is full of paradoxes of respect and neglect of women. Manu keeps women in high esteem when he says that “women must always be honored and respected by father, brother, husband and brother-in-law” and “where women are honored there the Gods are pleased (Naryastu yatra pujyante, ramante tatra devata ), but when they are not honored, no sacred rite even could yield rewards.”

But underneath such rhetoric, there was a different motif. According to Manu “In childhood a woman must be subjected to her father, in youth, to her husband and when her Lord is dead, to her son”. A woman must never be independent. She is viewed solely as the mother and the wife and those roles are idealized. A virtuous Hindu woman was supposed to possess the following six virtues: she should act like a maid servant while doing manual work, a minister while volunteering counsel, goddess of wealth in charm and beauty, goddess of earth in forbearance, mother in love and tenderness, and a public women in giving sexual pleasure.
2B.5 Women in Buddha Period

The position of women was different in Buddhism. Buddhism did act as a temporary check on the declining status of women but could not have lasting impact. The Buddhists reacted against caste, and the sacrificial ritual of Brahmanism. In this period, women are admitted to Buddhist order, which offered women, an alternative to subjugation to husbands and patriarchy.

In Buddhism marriage rules and divorces are liberal. Women had right to property, but evils like polygamy existed. Even then women enjoyed freedom in religious affairs and there were some great women scholars like the sister of Asoka, Sanga Mitra, who went to Ceylon to spread Buddhism.

2B.6 Women in Mughal Period

Ladies of royal families during Mughal period enjoyed an exalted position. They enjoyed titles also. Some of the royal ladies were given glamorous surnames. They were given jagirs. They received presentations and dresses of honour. The ladies of royal society, some times, enjoyed the privilege of coming into contact with the royal ladies of foreign countries.

According to Sarala, 'The Mughals treated their ladies with utmost regard. Some of the ladies devoted themselves in offering prayers to God (Namaz) and reading Quran. As regards the education of girls of the palaces they received it
up to primary standard. Educated ladies were employed as lady tutors for the children of the royal family. Some ladies founded colleges and gave stipends for encouraging women education. The royal ladies were interested in painting, decoration, dancing, cooking and music. They participated in fairs and festivals. They enjoyed hunting. They traveled in palanquins. Thus ladies of royal families in Mughal period enjoyed greater status of respect.”

2B.7 Women in Bhakti Period

As per Jain, “The Bhakti movement placed God with in reach of all irrespective of caste or gender. Mira Bai, Mukta Bai, Jana Bai and Vishnu Priya are well-known names in Bhakti literature whose compositions are popular even to this day. However, the status of women received a serious set back due to saints’ attitude towards women. Some saints came to regard women as an object of material pleasure, maya, while others thought them as a barrier in the path of liberation. Whatever achievement was there, it was within the traditional fold. So there could be no redemption of women”.

2B.8 Women in British Period

At the time of the British rule, the position of woman was miserable. The freedom she enjoyed during the Vedic times was long forgotten. It was Raja Ram Mohan Roy who came forward and took a very bold step to abolish the custom of
'Sati Sahagamana' which was very cruel ritual imposed on women. The status of women reached its lowest ebb in India during the British period that is 18th century. But in due course of time, many new forces came into existence slowly, but steadily helped to upgrade her status. According to Encyclopaedia of women, "the British rule, no doubt tried to check all these evil practices and to put an end to them."16

Some of the legislative acts passed by the Britishers helped to improve the status of women. Christian missionaries and Indian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dayananda Saraswathi, Annie Besant, Rama Bai Ranade, Pandit Rama Bai Saraswathi, D.K. Karve pleading the cause of female life-ratio from several inhuman customs such as infanticide, infant marriage, an enforced widowhood, illiteracy, purdah etc. As a result of such literacy endeavors, the cruelties against women were recognised by law. It is noteworthy that from the nineteenth century along with men, women also began to work for the elevation of the status of women in the society.

3B.9 Women in the Period of Freedom Struggle

The struggle for Indian independence opened up a new chapter in the role of women to boost their status. Maharanis like Rani Chennamma of Kittur, Jhansi Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hajrat Mahal of Avadh fought against the British, col. Lakshmi Sahagal organized a women's corps under Subhash Chandra Bose.
When Pandit Rama Bai thundered against child marriages of young girls. She also strongly advocated women’s education. She started women’s homes in India. Rani Harnam Singh of Punjab confined for women’s emancipation at the same time, she advocated education and enlightenment of women.

In the last decade of 19th century the revolutionary ideology had developed into terrorist activities especially in Punjab and Bengal. Numerous conspiracies and acts of terrorism were worked out. A few brave women rendered great services in these activities. There was, for example, Kumudin, who was an active revolutionary in Bengal. She organized a group of educated brahmin ladies for maintaining secret liaison between different revolutionary groups and leaders. She also tried to organize wider circulation of revolutionary leaflets and other literature. The organization also published a Bengal Magazine called “Suprabhat”. This magazine preached the cause of national freedom through the cult of violence and terror. In eastern Bengal, there was another revolutionary women called Bhag Bati, who wrote a song describing distressed and wretched conditions of Indian people due to foreign domination.

Similarly Sarala Devi, the niece of the famous poet Rabindranath Tagore, was a link between revolutionaries of Bengal and Punjab. In 1897, she took over the editorship of the magazine called “Barti” and exerted powerful influence on revolutionary activities. She opened “Lakshmi Bhandar”, a store for popularizing
swadeshi goods. Sarala Devi toured extensively in Punjab and opened branches of Arya Samaj for women.

While Sarala Devi was working in India Madam Bhikhaiji Rustum Cama conducted revolutionary activities in foreign countries. She helped in U.K., and later in France. These women were fearless soldiers and they dedicated their lives to the cause of India’s freedom in very dangerous circumstances. However their names did not come into lime light or received wide publicity in history of freedom movement of India. While working for such dangerous activities, they proved that in spite of centuries of slavery and ignorance, they did not lose their innate courage and abilities to work for India’s freedom. They also inspired other Indian women to come out in the open and take part in freedom struggle.

Gandhiji became a vehement advocate of equality of gender. Under his leadership, women came out of their houses and participated actively in political affairs. In every sphere women stood on the forefront. Gandhiji demanded full participation of women in political activity for a healthy social and national reconstruction. Jawaharlal Nehru opined that women’s participation in public life will give them a status which would not be possible to remove it afterwards. They organised “Swadeshi Melas”. Women donated their ornaments and jewelry for movement. “Vandemataram” became a popular slogan. Annie Besant became the President of Indian National Congress. She demanded political rights to women
in India. Sarojini Naidu joined hands with her. In 1919, constitutional reforms were made giving franchise to women. Kamala Devi Chatopadhyaya was the first Indian woman to contend in the elections. Sarojini Naidu became the President of Congress in 1925.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit was the first woman to become a minister in the United Provinces. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was the first woman M.L.C. in Madras. Many great leaders inspired women to participate in the freedom struggle. Matangini and Kanakalata Baruva, the women leaders, were shot dead in Quit India movement. Great leaders like Durga Bai Deshmukh, Maganti Annapurna Devi, Kasturba Gandhi, Violet Alva, Sushila Nayyar played a leading role in the freedom struggle. Down through the ages, women of India gave themselves to the building of our nation so nobly and so silently.

Social reformers worked for the betterment of the status of women. “Sati” was vehemently opposed. Child marriages were strongly discouraged, widow marriages were encouraged. Sister Nivedita, and Annie Besant dedicated their lives to the cause of women’s progress.

In the beginning of the 20th century, a number of women’s colleges came into existence throughout the country. Women became enlightened and came to the conclusion that freedom alone can solve their problems.

They started convincing the common people by going round the villages,
preaching the importance of freedom and turning every citizen against the British. Durga Bai is one among such great people.

Many a mother became Jijibais in inspiring their children to plunge into the freedom struggle. Many young men were given “Veerakhadga”, by their wives of valor to instigate them like “Manchala” to dare the freedom fight. The little child “Indira Gandhi” did her might to lead children of her age in favour of freedom.

However the involvement of women in nationalist politics has not changed the image of the ideal Hindu women. The structure of traditional society in reference to the roles available to women has remained largely the same. The nationalist movement enabled women to combine their life within the family with a career outside the home. A woman’s sphere of activity was broadened and enlarged. Its essential core, however, remained unchanged.

2B.10 Constitutional Efforts Towards Women Development during Freedom Struggle

The British Government in India took several constitutional steps to empower Indian women during the pre-independence period. They are listed below:

- **Bengal Sati Regulation** of 1829. Abolition of “Sati-Sahagamanam Act”.

  It was legally abolished. Burning of widows was considerably checked.
Lord William Bentinck helped in legally abolishing it. Raja Ram Mohan Roy reinterpreted the Vedas/Shastras, motivated the public opinion in its favor and continued fighting the appeals and petitions from the orthodox Hindus against abolition of Sati till death.

- **Widow Re-marriage Act in 1856**

  This act declared the legal validity of widow remarriage and laid specific circumstances for its validity. But very few remarriages were solemnized as our orthodox section of people found it difficult to accept it mentally.

- **Indian Penal Code, 1860**

  It provided for punishment for various offences against women like abduction, rape, adultery, bigamy, remarriage during the life time of a wife, cruelty and cheating against women, etc.

- **The Converts Marriage Dissolution Act 1866**

  The act provides for dissolution of a marriage where one of the parties has deserted or been repudiated by other on ground on the former's conversion to the religion of Christianity.

- **Indian Divorce Act 1869**

  It provided for divorce by wife or husband under certain specific circumstances.
Female Infanticide Prevention Act

It made registration of every birth and death with the municipalities compulsory.

The Married Women's Property Act 1872

Through the practice of Sridhana the movable property awarded to women by her husband or parents was enlarged by the passage of the married women's property act 1974, widening scope of Sridhana ‘to include earnings by a women and the money she acquire through her artistic and literacy skills.’ The legislation provided the incentive to the women to engage herself in remunerative work and acquire property on the basis of her own earnings.

Special Marriage Act, 1872

Inter - caste marriage was legalized.

Age of Consent Bill 1891

Child marriage became an accepted norm. A group of doctors, and reformers, worked to raise the age of marriage for girls. This could not become an act owing to unending heated debate.

Law on Compulsory Education Programme (1917)

Bombay education council passed the first law on compulsory Primary Education in 1917 at the initiative of Vithal bai Patel.
Hindu Succession Disability Remove Act 1928

It was provided that no Hindu should be deprived of succession or from the rights of property of foist family on the ground of disease, disability etc. Until and unless he is insane or idiot by birth.

Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929

Age of consent bill, 1891 was passed in 1929 as child marriage restraint Act, popularly Konan as Sarada Act. This was later amended in 1976.

The Hindu Women’s Right to Property Act, 1938

The Hindu women got legal right to property of ancestors or parents.

2B.11 Women in Post Independence Period

After independence, women were granted complete political, economic, religious and social equality with men. Educational facilities were expanded for women. They have been given the right to property.

The economic status of women in the post independence period is still gloomy. Although some educated women work in the offices, more uneducated women work as laborers in the factories. Women are still not given proper freedom in domestic or social affairs. The social status of women during the post independent period is to some extent, better than before. The woman is free to express her will in the public, report any grievances to the authorities and to seek
reprisal even in the court of law. Women are in the posts of advocates and judges. They are in administrative positions also. So women moved into the public from the confinement of their domestic roles. “Stree Janabhyudaya Samithi” worked very hard and encouraged women's participation in public cultural activities. It is generally said that women have more religious convictions than those of men. But there are no women religious heads in any religious organization.

2B.12 Constitutional efforts towards women development

- As per Article - 14 the constitution of India conferred equality to men and women in status and opportunities in political, social, economic areas.

- Article - 15 gave a provision that any discrimination against citizens on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex etc, is prohibited.

- Article - 16 provided equality of opportunities in the matter of public appointments to women in India.

- Article - 39 ensures that the state shall direct all its policies towards securing all its citizens, men and women equally the right to means of livelihood and equal pay to equal work.

- The Hindu Married Women's Separate Maintenance Act, 1946 : The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1947 : Nehru wanted to introduce legal changes so that women could be equal to man before law. It was Nehru's initiative and determination and a strong law minister, Ambedkar that Hindu code bill was introduced in Parliament. This bill was passed during 1947.
Special Marriage Act, 1954: The aim of the special marriage act is to provide for special marriages and divorce. This type of act was passed for the first time in 1872. But the act of 1954 is wider than that.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955: The chief aim of this Act was to amend Hindu marriage and to codify it. The act also describes the rights of the husband and wife.

Judicial Separation Act, 1955: An endeavor has been made to check the number of divorces and time has been given for the establishment of harmonious relations.

Indian divorce Act, 1956: Women have been given two additional grounds to demand divorce.

Hindu Succession Act 1956: According to this act, all persons are considered to have equal rights in the property irrespective of sex, age or status. The women got right to the use, sale and mortgage of the property received through inheritance.

Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956: According to this act, the husband has to take the consent of the wife while adopting a son or daughter. The issueless (Childless) widow has also got rights of adoption.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy 1971: This MTP Act legalizes abortion by a qualified doctor on a humanitarian and medical grounds. Maternity leave may be continued with any kind of leave. Leave in further continuation of 90 days + 60 days is allowed in case of an illness of the baby when the presence of the mother is necessary. Even in case of MTP a woman can get 6 weeks of leave with pay.

Child Marriage Restrain Act, 1976: This act raised the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys from 18 to 21 years.

Parliament Enacted Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1983: which introduces several reforms concerning the punishment of rape, the procedure and the rules of evidence.

Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act 1984: made far-reaching change in the principal act so as to make it more effective by increasing the period of imprisonment and the amount of fine of the offence.

Family Courts Law 1984: An act was passed in 1984 for setting up of family in the country with a view to promoting reconciliation in and securing speedy settlement of disputes relating to marriage and family affairs and for matters connected therewith.

Commission of Sati Prevention Act 1987: The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 was passed by the Parliament to provide for prevention of Commission of Sati and its glorification.
Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994: This act specifically prohibits the determination of sex of the fetus. The act provides no laboratory or center or clinic shall conduct any test including ultrasonography for the purpose of determining the sex of the fetus.

2B.13 Committees and Commissions towards Women development

Various committees and commissions have studied the prevailing conditions and recommended to the Government measures to be taken up to improve the situation of women.

The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1986): The committee examined the condition of women prisoners in the criminal correctional justice system and made a series of recommendations relating to necessary legislative reform, prison reform, prison reforms and reforms of other custodial institutions and rehabilitation of prisoners so far as women prisoners are concerned.

Protection of Human rights act 1993 and the National Human Rights Commission: The protection of Human rights received the president’s consent on 8.1.1994. It is an act to provide for constitution of a National Rights Commission State Human Rights Commission in states and Human Rights count for better protection of human rights and for matters connected thereto or incidental thereto. It was enacted by the Parliament in the 44th year of the Republic.
Parliamentary Committee on the Empowering of Women: With a view to receiving among other things, dignity and equality for all women in all fields, a joint parliamentary committee of parliament (JCP) was constituted on 9-4-1997 to look into these aspects. As per rule 331 (P), it shall extend to whole India except the State of Jammu & Kashmir. It investigates and examines all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women. Under the constitution and other laws.

2B.14 Women in Five Year Plans

Though in the first three five year plans priorities were assigned to women, the real shift from the welfare to the development aspect of women took place only during the sixth plan. This has inculcated confidence among women to bring about an awareness of their own potential for development as also of their rights and privileges. This paved the way for a National perspective plan for women which has recommended well articulated national policies for increasing the participation of women in development plans. It means, there have been conscious efforts to change the status of women from inequality to equality.

The First Five Year Plan (1951-1965)

According to Jaya Kothari Pillai "The central social welfare board was established by Government in 1953 with a national wide programme of grant in aid for promoting development of children and women. This led to the growth of
a number of women's organizations and provided status and activity to many of the erstwhile active women social workers"."17.

Thus the tradition of women and social welfare department was established at the very outset of phased planning in India.

- The Second Plan (1956 - 1961)

As far as women's issues are concerned this plan persecuted in welfare approach. It recognized the need for organization of women as workers, that women should be protected against injurious work should receive maternity benefits and crèches should be established for children in work places. It also recommended speedy implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work and provision of training to enable women competing for higher jobs.

- The Third Plan (1961-1966)

The plan focused an expansion of girls education as a strategy for women's development. Efforts on providing condensed courses for adult women in health nutrition and family planning were continued.


The plan continued the emphasis on women's education. This literacy percentage increased from 12.95 (1961) to 18.69%. Enrolment of girls in the education system continued to raise, in the school system, there were 54 girls for
every 100 boys and in the university system 21.9 girls per 100 boys enrolled. Thus the rate of the progress of girls was very slow. Middle class women developed career interests. So these women had to carry on the burden of two full time jobs.

☐ **The Fifth Plan (1974-1979)**

Functional literacy, programmes to train women in the age group 15-45 in the functions of housewife including child care, nutrition, health care, and home economy were stressed. Thus in all three plans, the priorities assigned to women's development programmes were mainly education, health and some aspects of welfare. The committee constituted to examine the social status of women by the Government of India in 1971 reported in December 1974. This report recommended suitable measures for improving the status of women.

Women's welfare and development bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare in 1976 to act as a nodal point to initiate measures for women's development.

☐ **The Sixth Plan (1980-1985)**

During the sixth plan period, a variety of programmes, were taken up under different sectors of development to ameliorate the working conditions of women and to raise their economic and social status. Vocational training centers and industrial training institutes exclusively meant for women were set up. The
Integrated rural development programme accorded priority to women heads of households, one third of beneficiaries under TRYSEM were women and a new scheme called Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) was started in 1982-83. Non formal education centers were set up exclusively for girls. The Ministry of Social Welfare implemented a programme called *Functional Literacy for Adult Women* under the scheme *Science Technology for Women* and a wide spectrum of activities such as smokeless chullahs, solar cookers, bio-gas plants, water purification system etc. were taken up. Nutritional intervention to pregnant and nursing mothers belonging to weaker sections was given high priority under the ICDS programme. Hostels for working women, assistance to women in distress etc. were some of the schemes for which financial assistance was given to voluntary organizations.

*The Seventh Plan (1985 - 1990)*

The plan emphasized the need to open new avenues of work for women and proclaim them as a crucial resources for the development of the country. The plan saw the need to organize women workers so that they could demand their rights for services.

The Government of India constituted a separate department in the Ministry of Human resource Development for the development of women and children. This department plans and executes programmes for women besides monitoring
the programmes meant for women in other ministries and departments. The department of women and child development setup a core group to evaluate the impact of development plans and programmes on Indian women and review the polices and programmes and draft perspective plan for 1988-2000 AD. This document was released in October 1988.

This plan establishes an apex body for women's training in the country and it would be responsible for reorientation and sensitization of the administrative machinery at all levels to the issues of women in development. This plan recommends that a commission for women's rights should be appointed for the enforcement of law to ensure women's rights.

☐ The Eighth Plan (1992 - 97)

The main objective of Eighth plan was to extend the reach of services to women both qualitatively and quantitatively. The approach of the eighth plan makes a definite shift from development of empowerment of women. In order to meet the needs of women and children, there was a progressive increase in the plan outlays over the time of eighth five year plans. There was a clear circular to the effect that the different ministries would try to allocate resources in a manner that benefited women. The outlay of Rs.4 crores in the first five year plan rose up to Rs.2000 crores in the eighth five year plan A more holistic view of women's role in the family and society would be conceived as opposed to the perception of a restricted role of motherhood and home maker.
The Ninth Plan (1997-2002)

The ninth five year plan had been approved retrospectively in 1999 has important objectives for women's development. In the preparation for the ninth plan an approach paper has been developed by the planning commission and accepted by the National Development Council (NDC). This document became the basis on which the ninth five year plan developed.

In the approach paper, the focus was on, among the other things empowerment of women and people's participation in planning and implementation of strategies. In planning process, empowerment at the outset means choices for women and opportunities to avail of these choices. The imperative environment should be provided to women at all stages by the home, school, religion, Government and workplace.

A supportive environment is one that is gender sensitive. In all regional meetings, participants asked for gender sensitization or training at all levels in public and private sectors. The young boys and girls from an early age should learn about the rights and responsibilities of life and their division between men and women in the home and at workplace.

There was a strong demand for vocational training for women. To enable women to participate outside the home, child-care services, night shelters, hostels and affordable housing were felt essential. The necessity for information and
training opportunities, reservations and social services etc. was identified. It was realized that empowerment about choices and the ability to exercise the women's choices will be limited unless women are more involved in policy making. The ninth five year plan was an attempt to bring in women's issues within the policy-making sphere.

2B.15 Programmes and Schemes for Women Empowerment

As per Anju Vyas and Sunitha Singh, "The Government of India launched a number of programmes and schemes for women's welfare and development over the last two decades. In many of these programmes, welfare measures are mingled with purely economic activities. They are aimed directly at enhancing women's economic productivity and help them move out of poverty. There are certain programmes, which are directed at the poor, regardless of gender, but with special components for women." 18

A. National Level

The ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Industry, Labor, Science and Technology and the Department of Women and Child Development have taken significant initiatives to make specific schemes for enhancing women's employment and alround development.
Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)

The annual report of Women and Child Welfare department, (1996-97) presents that “The Government’s biggest effort to give employment to women has however been in the rural development sector. The most important programme in this connection was the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) which was started in 1975 but data on the number of women beneficiaries is available only from 1985-1986 onwards. Women started with a share of 3.03 lakh in 1985-86 and this has increased to 6.15 lakh in 1996-97 (provisional).”

The percentage of women beneficiaries to total families assisted had however increased from 9.90 percent in 1985-86 to 33.12 percent in 1996-97 (provisional). It appeared that the programme was gradually moving towards achieving a higher percentage of women beneficiaries.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

It is another important initiative of the Rural Development Ministry where 30 percent of the employment opportunities were reserved for women. As per Mira Seth, “The share of women in the employment opportunities were reserved for women. The share of women in the employment generated so far under this scheme was about 25 percent during the period 1989-90 to 1993-94. During 1996-97, 558.51 lakh man days were generated for women out of a total of 4,288.58 lakh man days generated during this period. Women’s share came to
29.30 percent. This fell to 1,116.71 lakh man days representing 28.7 percent of total employment in 1997-98.”

**Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)**

Under this scheme a special provision has been made for women and 67 lakh man days of work were generated for them during the year 1993-94 which was 13.5 percent of the total 494.74 man days generated in 1994-95, 313.37 lakh man days out of a total of 1,191.29 lakh man days or 26.3 percent of the man days generated went to women. This figure increased to 30.94 percent of women beneficiaries by February 1997.

**Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA)**

According to Mira Seth, “It was started in the sixth plan implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and so far it has covered 23,09,848 women. It started with a coverage of only 52,170 women in the sixth plan. ((1982-83) The programme has more than quadrupled in the seventh plan leading to a coverage of 4,68,683 women and during the eighth plan 11,50,451 women has been covered.”

**Training for Rural Youth Self - Employment (TRYSEM)**

It was a supporting component of IRDP; under it technical skills are imparted to rural youth in the age group of 18-35 from families below the poverty
line to enable them to take up self-employment. The scheme was started in 1979 and up to 1995-96 it had trained 37,89,104 youths out of which 16,29,765 (43 percent) were women.

- **Swaran Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SJGSY)**

  This was initiated by Ministry of rural development in April 1999, and encompasses these schemes. As per the plan women will form 40 percent of this Swarojgaris. It is too early to anticipate how this scheme will result.

  Under the urban basic scheme for helping the urban poor through setting up of help groups in neighborhoods and self-help communities. Neighbor hood Development Committees comprising primarily the urban poor women were setup in 353 towns for extending basic services to 82 lakh beneficiaries. About 5,000 women were enabled to get employment opportunities during the eighth five year plan period. The Swaran Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana provides for 30 percent women beneficiaries in all urban employment schemes.

- **Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY)**

  The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana launched in 1993 and administered by the Department of Industry provides self – employment opportunities to women entrepreneurs along with men. Up to November 1995, a total of 3,25,575 persons were assisted under this programme out of which women constitute about 10 percent although, it was expected that 30 per cent of the beneficiaries under this scheme would be women.
Support for Training and Employment (STEP)

The Department of Women and Child Development in the Government of India, plans and executes the ‘Support for Training and Employment’ Programme called ‘STEP’. The objectives of the STEP programme was to provide employment up gradation, access to credit, marketing opportunities and mobilization into groups for employment - cum - income generation programmes. The programmes were sanctioned till 1993, five of them dealing with the dairy industry, three with the handloom sector, another one for fishing and one for handicrafts.

Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD)

The NORAD scheme was started (1982-83) by the Department of Women and Child development which aims at imparting skill training to women through projects run by non - governmental organizations which are assisted by funds for hiring of skill teaching instructors, equipment for training, renting building for training and setting up production centres. The Scheme helped 78,000 girls in getting training in many modern and newly emerging trades through 693 training - cum - production centers. Since its inception in 1982 - 83 up to 1999 - 2000, 1,477 projects benefiting 2.68 lakh women were sanctioned.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

A National Credit Fund, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up by Department of Women and Child Development in March, 1993, to extend credit
facilities to poor and needy women in the informal sectors. Since inception, the Kosh has sanctioned credit of Rs.57.09 crore through 367 NGOs to benefit 2,77,662 women. According to Department of women and child development, “The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) disbursed loans of Rs.2.58 crore during 2001 - 02 for the benefit of 6009 women. Since its inception, the Kosh has sanctioned credit of Rs.106.05 crore to benefit 4.13 lakh women.”

☐ **Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)**

The latest initiative taken by the Department of Women and Child Development was the launching of the Indira Mahila Yojana in 1995 in 200 ICDS Blocks. This approach emphasizes the holistic nature of women’s development through self-help groups and Indira Mahila Block level samitis. By March 1998, 28,000 self-help groups and by June, 260 Indira Mahila Block Samitis had come into existence. Income generation is part of their programme of action. An attempt was made to introduce skill training and employment generation for women in the World Bank – financed integrated Child Development Projects in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, both of which benefited women.

☐ **National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)**

A National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NBMS) was launched in 1995 for extending financial assistance of 300 rupees to pregnant women for their first two live births. This was meant to compensate women, especially in the unorganized sector, who do not have any help at this time of their lives.
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- Swayam Sidha (SS) -

As per Department of Women and Child Development, "Swayam Sidha", is an integrated programme for the empowerment of women through the network of self-help groups of women launched by Department of Women and Child Development in 2001. It seeks to achieve convergence of all women related to schemes of state and central government at the block level. The programme shall be implemented through the State Governments in 650 blocks throughout the country, but the State Governments will be at liberty to choose the Implementing Authority, which could be either a Department of Government or a Corporation or an autonomous body or even a Voluntary Organization.23

- Swadhar (SD) -

Swadhar which will be implemented by Department of Women and Child Development through the State Government or its agencies, Voluntary Organizations or Trusts. The scheme provides for grants for construction or renting of shelter homes, food, medical care, counseling, training of the inmates etc. The scheme also provides for a Help line for Women in difficult circumstances.

- Rural Women's Development & Empowerment Project (RWDEP) -

The Rural Women's Development & Empowerment Project (RWDEP) was sanctioned on 16th October, 1998 by the Department of Women and Child Development as a Centrally Sponsored Project with an estimated cost of Rs.191.21
crores. The project will strengthen the process of and create an environment for empowerment of women in the six States of Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

B. State Level

☐ Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

As per status report of department of women and child development, “The Government of India initiated Integrated child Development Services (ICDS) to provide a package of nutrition, health and educational services to mother and child. The programmes are administered through Anganwadis located in the region”.  

Various relief measures are being implemented through ICDS programme in 209 ICDS projects in the State of which 110 are covered by world Bank assisted projects.

☐ Special Schemes in the World Bank Assisted ICDS Projects

❖ Income generating activities
❖ Women’s integrated learning for life
❖ Adolescent Girls Scheme - 1
❖ Adolescent Girls Scheme - 2
❖ Nutrition rehabilitation centers.
World Bank Assisted Projects

The world Bank assisted project is under operation since 1-10-1990 and the duration of the scheme was 6 years (1990 – 96). The world Bank Project was started with a view to strengthen the existing ICDS activities in certain work areas by introducing additional components. The project covers 110 blocks; 24 tribal, 43 rural and 43 drought prone areas.

Income Generation Activities

This scheme is being implemented in a phased manner in 70 projects out of 110 projects taken up under the world bank ICDS projects. The IGA scheme envisages activization of Mahila Mandals at village level by involving mothers with a view to initiating income generating activities for women. Each Mahila Mandal is given Rs.1000/-. During the year 1992 - 93, 6940 Mahila Mandals were activated at a cost of Rs.36.15 lakhs and IGA for women were initiated in 360 villages, improving economic status of more than 4000 poor women at a cost of Rs.1.62 crores. In 1993 - 94, 23 blocks were taken up for implementation of income generating activities with an amount of Rs.295.35 lakhs.

Women's Integrated Learning for Life (WILL)

This programme aims at imparting literacy skills and knowledge of good health, hygiene, nutrition and family planning to women in the age group of 11 - 35 years. This programme is being implemented in 14 blocks covering 1543
Anganwadi centers up to 1994, 26,000 women were enrolled. The WILL class is held on all working days for 10 months and the last two months are kept for tests and distribution of certificates.

**Adolescent Girls Scheme**

This programme is being implemented in 16 blocks covering 1543 WILL Centers in 14 ICDS projects, up to 1994 out of 26740 women enrolled 26000 illiterate women were imparted literacy and numeracy skills at a cost of Rs.47 lakhs up to November 1993.

In 1993 - 94, Rs.43.50 lakhs were spent for the implementation of the Programme.

**Adolescent Girls Scheme**

To upgrade the technical skills of adolescent girls in the age groups of 11 - 15 years and 15 - 17 years respectively, scheme I and II were initiated in (81) World Bank assisted projects of ICDS during 1991 - 92.

**Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRC)**

There are 25 centres set up in 17 districts. They are at Anantapur 3, Chittor 2, Vizianagaram 2, West Godvari 1, Adilabad 2, Khammam 2, Warangal 2 and Karimnagar 2. The centers are meant to provide services for combating nutritional deficiencies among " at risk " mothers and children below 3 years of
age suffering from malnutrition on the average 20 cases are admitted in each NRC every month, 80% of which pertain to malnutrition while the rest are emergency cases.

- Centrally Sponsored Schemes

The following Rural Development programmes are initiated by the Government of India being implemented by the District Rural Development agencies in Andhra Pradesh.

- Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP)
- Training for Rural Youth for Self – Employment (TRYSEM)
- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA)

- Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP)

According to Women Sub Plan of Department of women and child welfare, “IRDP is a beneficiary oriented programme with the objective of assisting the families below the income level of Rs.11,000/- per year and 30% benefits are allocated for women. Under the programme income generating assets are being provided to the beneficiaries with a package of assistance consisting of subsidy from the District Rural Development agencies besides term loan from the bank. The state governments and the Government of India have to share 50 : 50 out of which Rs.46 crores were earmarked to 61,300 women headed families in the State and which was 40 % of the physical and financial targets of the proposed targets during 1997 - 98.” 25
During 1996 - 97, through IRDP, 1,22,868 women benefited by Rs.8830.88 lakhs against the target of one lakh beneficiaries.

- Training for Rural Youth Self - Employment (TRYSEM)

 The programme is to train rural youth in the age group of 18 to 35 years for the provision of self / wage employment. As against the proposed Rs.12.66 crores, the Government of India and State Government have to share equally out of which Rs.5.06 crores have to be earmarked to women, i.e. to cover 10,760 candidates which is 40% of the proposed targets of physical as well as financial.

- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA)

 As per Women sub plan of department of women and child development "The DWACRA Scheme, a sub -scheme of IRDP, was introduced in 1983 – 84. The programme was meant for the development of women and children in rural areas by providing a revolving fund of Rs.25,000/- to a group of 10 – 15 women belonging to poverty group for undertaking economic activities and ancillary services like nutrition, health, child care, family welfare, immunization, literacy adult education facilities which are covered for the beneficiary family. During 1997 – 98 it was proposed to form 25,000 groups in the state. The total outlay of the project is Rs.62.50 crores." 26 Up to 1994 – 95, the scheme was extended to all regions of Andhra Pradesh.
Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY)

The Mahila Samridhi Yojana is a centrally sponsored scheme and launched on 2-10-1993. Through Mahila Samridhi Yojana, every rural women aged 18 and above can open an MSY account of money she can save. The Government would contribute an incentive money to her savings. For an amount up to Rs.300/- kept in the account for a lock – in period of one year, she would receive a governmental incentive of 25 per cent. In other words, the deposits have to remain in account for a period of 12 months and the maximum participation of government is limited to Rs.75/- per year.

As per Anjani Bhushan,” The Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human resource development gets the scheme implemented through the network of 1.32 lakh post offices of the Department of Posts Functioning in the rural areas.”

An important aspect of the programme is that of involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at all levels.

Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)

The IMY was launched in August 1995 in 200 blocks of the country. Its main objective is to give a forward thrust to education, awareness, income - generation capacities and the empowerment of women. The platform for the forward thrust is to be self - help group at the grass - root level.
Thrift Promotion

The group is expected to have some thrift activity. In Andhra Pradesh, 14 blocks have been taken up for the implementation of the scheme – 9 blocks in Chittor district and 5 blocks in Mahaboobnagar district. IMY is a strategy to coordinate and integrate components of all sectoral programmes by identifying programmes selected for women and to facilitate their convergence for empowerment of the women. It aims at meaningful integration of various streams of funds available under schemes like Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA), National Bank for agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) etc., to meet women’s needs.

The Government of India is sanctioning funds at the rate of Rs.5000/- per IMK and it is proposed to form around 1204 IMKs in each project. Each project gets Rs.6 lakhs over a period of 2 years and 9 blocks in Chittoor district got Rs.54 lakhs.

Maternity Assistance to Pregnant Women of Agricultural Labor Families

The scheme is introduced by the State Government during the Seventh Plan Period to provide assistance to pregnant women of agricultural labor families in their advanced stage of pregnancy and one month after delivery. Under the scheme, each agricultural laborer will be given Rs.20 per month for 3 months
soon after they reach advanced stage of pregnancy, i.e. 8th month in ICDS blocks. This assistance would be extended for the 1st and 2nd orders of birth and 1000 beneficiaries will be covered in each block of the district.

☐ Special scheme to prevent child labor; A special project for girl child

As per news item published in Deccan Chronicle,″ In an effort to discourage child labor, the State Government launched a special project for girl child under which 100 girls will be adopted in each district and imparted education and vocational training courses. Andhra Pradesh continues to be the top of the list of child labor for the last 3 decades. To combat the problem, there are for the last 3 decades. To combat the problem, there are 565 special school (Bala Jyothi Schools) which have been extended to children who are withdrawn from child labor.″ 28

In 1995, the number of schemes for liberated child laborers were constituted. There are 105 Bala Jyothi Schemes being constituted in the state. Various literacy programmes for women were introduced.

☐ Rehabilitation of Girl Child Labourers

The news item published in the Eenadu provides that “The State Government initiated a new scheme of identifying girl child laborers in the state with a view to rehabilitating them. Rs.1 crore were released for the rehabilitation of girl child laborers.” 29


**Girl Child Protection Scheme**

The news item in the Eenadu states that “This scheme was launched by the State Government during the year 1995 – 96. Rs.24 crores was released for the scheme and extended to all districts. During the financial year 1996 – 97, Rs.25 crores were released for the scheme and 80% of the amount was disbursed. In 1996 – 97, the target girls were 60,000. So far 45,000 girls were identified.”

**Promotion of Entrepreneur Skills among Women**

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), small scale Industries Development Bank (SIDBI) and Commercial banks are encouraging women entrepreneurs by providing credit facilities.

**Co-operative Development Fund (CDF)**

CDF was constituted in 1992 in Hyderabad with the objective of promoting self-sufficiency of urban women through credit facilities. It promotes the thrift activity among women. Up to June 30, 1996, Rs.1 crore were collected and 46 thrift credit co-operative societies formed with the membership of 13,799 out of which 12,156 women got loans.

**Women Development Corporation (WDC)**

The scheme for setting up of women development corporations in the state was formulated in 1986 – 87. The objective of WDC is to play a catalytic
role in identifying women entrepreneurs, providing technical consultancy services, facilitating availability of credits, promoting marketing of products, promoting and strengthening women’s co-operatives, arranging training facilities, etc.

The corporations were set up in the state as per the direction of National Development Council (NDC). The scheme was transferred to the state sector during 1992-93.

- **Andhra Pradesh State Social Welfare Advisory Board**

  The A. P. State Social Welfare Advisory Board is implementing welfare programmes for the benefit of poor women, children and the disabled through 1412 voluntary agencies. The Board assists voluntary agencies in organizing various schemes such as setting up of creches, providing nutrition, awareness generation, condensed courses of education, vocational training, assistance to working women’s hostels, setting up of voluntary action bureaus, socio-economic programmes, innovative schemes and training programmes for the beneficiaries through voluntary organizations with an outlay of Rs.350 lakhs per annum for the coverage of 10,000 women and 30,000 children.

- **Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation**

  The corporation has been laying great emphasis in developing self-employment opportunities and operating promotional schemes such as Mahila Udyan Nidhi Scheme, National Equity Fund etc. To help various categories of
entrepreneurs, the corporation is operating 23 schemes for financial assistance and all women entrepreneurs are eligible for setting up of industries under these schemes subject to satisfying other norms of corporation.

- Support to Employment Programmes for Women -

Support to Employment Programmes for women is a new programmes launched by the Department of women and child Development in the Seventh Plan 1980.

Support to the employment programme for women or STEP consists of series of action projects intended to strengthen and improve women’s work and employment in the following sectors: (1) Agriculture, (2) Small Animal Husbandry, (3) Dairying, (4) Fisheries, (5) Handlooms, (6) Handicrafts, (7) Khadi and village Industries and (8) Sericulture etc. Series of action projects aiming at integrating women into these sectors and into main stream of development are introduced. The action project focuses on the poorest, the most marginalized asset – less women. These would include wage laborers, unpaid family workers, female headed household, migrant labor, tribal and other dispossessed groups.

Central / State Government co – operatives, boards, central and state or other state government agencies are substantially funded by the government. NGOs will be implementing the agencies. The scheme provides 90% assistance for income - generating activities taken up by poor women in urban and rural areas. Under each project 5000 - 10000 women are covered.
The editorial statement in Southern Economist states that, "A disturbing feature of the IRDP in several states has been raising indebtedness of the beneficiaries. Besides, the programme for upgrading skills, TRYSEM, was not dovetailed with IRDP. One discovered non-existent training centers and non-payment of stipend in some cases. However the programme for women, DWACRA did well in some states (Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat)." 31

During the 10th plan it was suggested that: SJSY (IRDP) should be transformed into a micro-finance programme to be run by banks with no subsidy on the lines of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh.

- **Distance Education Programme**

Self - Help groups have emerged as one of the major strategies in group formation and various schemes of the government of India have shown that strong women's groups could contribute substantially to the development and convergence of services and activities. Experience with various programmes and projects has highlighted the benefits of formation of women's groups for building confidence and focusing on developmental tasks. Different groups in various states all over the country have focused on skill development and awareness generation, promoting economic development through income generation activities, inculcating thrift, credit management activities among poor women..

The experience of running these schemes has shown that the sustainability
of the majority of these groups is a major problem and one of the prime reasons for that was lack of a proper training strategy. Because of incomplete or ineffective training, full potential of women's groups formed in different states could not be realized. Many of the women's groups are neither homogenous nor sustainable. The vast geographical canvas also impedes transmission of messages in time and without distortion. The project called "Distance education for women's development and empowerment" aims to address some of these critical areas of concern. It is the first such programme of its kind in the country.

The scheme proposes to launch a certificate course by IGNOU to train a large mass of trainers from amongst village level implementers of the projects, their supervisors and district level functionaries. Such trainers after their successful participation in the project will be able to guide sustainable group formation work in their areas. Such an approach will also speed up the whole training process since as large number of centers can be activated simultaneously and the grass root level trainers can be directly accessed. Considering about 7 lakh government supported women's groups in the country at present, there will be a need of about 2.30 lakhs facilitators and 11,600 supervisory level functionaries who will require training on a best case scenario.

The implementation of the project is being jointly undertaken by the Department of Women and Child Development, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Indian Satellite Research Organization (ISRO). The
Department of Women and Child Development will provide support of policy direction, sharing of available material and funds for the programme. The scheme would use IGNOU's experience in development and accreditation of software so that a standardized package consisting of self instructional print, audio and video material with tutorial support through tele-conferencing could be developed. ISRO will provide the satellite linkage for at least 80 hours per year for the programme and will arrange some of the hardware related support. There would be seven training cycles in English and five cycles in Hindi during the next 5 years.

The total cost of the project is about Rs. 3.90 crore consisting of Rs. 105 lakh towards hardware Rs. 166 lakh for software preparation and rest for printing, distribution, and support services. The project also covers the installation of 150 units of receiving terminals with T.V. facilities and 250 new telephone connections at the identified centers.

The programme will be opened to employees of various government bodies, NGOs and students.

At present the Planning Commission is without female representation. When we go through the entire gamut of policy formulation and planning for women's development, one thing which strikes us most sorely is the lack of much effort in planning or policy formulation and planning for women's development. A few states have made schemes for women's development but they are extremely
inadequate and do not meet the needs of the women. Initiatives have mainly come through the Central Government. A great deal of sensitization of states is done by the Central Government as well as the voluntary sector but grass-root organizations have to be involved to a much greater extent through the political process.

2B.16 Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations in Women Empowerment

Although women's groups have been in existence for a very large period, there has been a welcome trend during the last two decades.

The scope and structure of these organizations is as diverse as their activities but they all strive to achieve a common goal of the upliftment and development of women, whether it is through education, research and training programmes or through counseling, awareness generation activities and a wide range of other services and programmes. In terms of coverage their activities may range from the grass roots level to the national level. They may be activist groups, policy-making bodies, research organizations or professional associations. Their target groups may vary from rural to urban women, housewives to working women, working mothers, widows, destitutes, illiterates to urban educated middle class women, from self-employed poor women to highly placed women entrepreneurs. The organizations may be government bodies, ministries, or
voluntary organizations, popularly known as non-governmental organizations. (NGOs).

Although different categorization of these organizations is possible based on the size, coverage activities and methodology for reaching out to women here they have been broadly grouped as the following:

- Government ministries, departments and agencies.
- Women’s organizations and institutions.
- Women’s studies centers and cells within the university system.

Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies

As the apex body, the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, is entrusted with the responsibility for formulating as well as implementing policies and programmes for the welfare and development of women in the country. It derives its role and responsibilities from the National Action Programme for Women (1976). Two organisations viz., National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and the Central Social Welfare Board assist the department in its functions and implementation of some of its programmes. The department also has the responsibility to guide, co-ordinate and review the efforts of both the governmental and non-governmental organisations working for the development of women. In all its efforts the department enlists the active co-
operation and involvement of non-governmental organisations in the country. Apart from the ministries and their departments, some national apex bodies which are autonomous but government supported in different sectors viz., social science, agriculture, education and health provide support and input in terms of finances, research and training projects and programmes and a variety of other ways.

Women Organisations and Institutions

Over the years, the role of the voluntary sector in providing support to the women's movement and development through various forums, groups and agencies has been most vital. These organizations may be varied in the scope, coverage and range of their activities and are very diverse in nature.

The women's movement has been receiving constant support from other specific groups or organisations which are engaged in academic research relating to women's issue. Such organisations are often funded by the ICSSR, the various ministries and other development and UN agencies and international bodies for specific sectoral projects and activities. Along with research such organisations are also deeply involved and concerned with advocacy, awareness generation activities, conferences, seminars, documentation, communication and dissemination of ideas and information through regular publications, newsletters and research reports.
**Women's Studies Centres and Cells Within the University Systems**

The University Grants Commission has a special mandate to promote women's studies within the University system. The research centre for women's studies was the first such independent unit established as early as 1974 within SNDT women's University, Bombay. During the last decade the number of such University Grants Commission supported women's studies research centres has grown up to 20 and more would be coming every year. The common objectives of all these centres are promotion of women's studies through teaching and research, curriculum development, extension services, documentation and dissemination of knowledge.

Similarly within the colleges women's studies cells have been promoted by the University Grants Commission to work on the same guidelines as are laid out for the research centres but with a narrower scope.

Apart from the University Grants Commission sponsored centres and cells, some independent ones have also come up within the university system which are not sponsored by the University Grants Commission. These are sponsored non-UGC women's studies centers and cells. Thus there are different types of women's groups, organisations and agencies working at various levels for the common cause of women's development.

The following table illustrates in nutshell the important women organizations at national level and state level functioning at present at India:
## 2B.17 Women Organisations and Associations at National Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG), Ahmedabad.</td>
<td>AWAG’s activities range from organizing protest actions against portrayal of negative images of women in India.</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>All India Democratic Women Association, New Delhi. (AIDWA)</td>
<td>AIDWA was takes up all democratic issues relating to women’s employment, education, and status. It has regional offices in all States.</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>All India Women's Conference, New Delhi. (AIWC)</td>
<td>All India Women's Conference is the oldest women's organization in the country. The constructive programme of AIWC is entirely carried out by its branches. Some of the main activities taken up by the branches are working women's hostels, balwadies, co-operatives, handicrafts, free medical aid, mobile health units, family planning, fair price shops, schools for the blind, condensed courses for women, adult education centers, canteens, marriage bureaus and free legal aid. The Andhra Pradesh branch has 8 branches state the Hyderabad – Secunderabad.</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Anapoorna Mahila Mandal, Bombay</td>
<td>The activities of the Mandal have been directed towards organizing low income group women in the slums of Bombay. It also recommends loans from banks, develops basic management skills in women, provides literacy classes, give legal assistance and social welfare facilities.</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Center for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), New Delhi. CWDS is a group of research professionals striving for women's equality and development in all spheres of life. 1980

6. Center for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), Bihar. The Center for Women's Development Studies aims to influence rural society's perceptions of women and reaffirm their rights to participate as equal partners in various processes of development and change. 1985.

7. Forum Against Oppression of Women c/o Women's Center, Bombay. Formerly known as the Forum Against Rape, its major activities include investigating cases of rape, offering support, counseling and legal help as well as organizing demonstrations and meeting. 1979

8. The International Association for Women, Amravti. The Association is an international non-profit organization. Its activities include research, documentation and publishing. It concentrates more on increasing the involvement of women in self-employment and national and international activities. 1990

9. Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi. It carried out studies related to rural employment and development. Its focus changed in 1976 and the Institute moved into the area of women's employment and their linkages in development, generally concentrating on studies related to the elimination of poverty. It collects data and conducts research in this field and acts as an intermediary in decision-making, policy-making, and planning bodies. It also serves as a social action and service organization. 1975
10. Janwadi Mahila Samiti, New Delhi. The Janwadi Mahila Samiti's activities are conscientization and organization of women to fight against dowry, sati, wage discrimination, rising prices, and for provision of crèche and nutritional facilities.

11. Joint Women's Programme (JWP), New Delhi. The perspectives of JWP are to see the women's question in India both as a concern of the female sex and an important part of the interrelated phenomena including caste, class, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. It emphasizes grass-root organizing of women and the community in rural and urban areas, issue-based campaigns, networking at the regional and national levels among women's groups, studies, research, publications, documentation, cultural action, seminars, conferences, and workshops related to action. Increasingly, the legal and socio-economic rights of women as well as their struggle for human rights are attracting the attention of the JWP. The JWP today works in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

12. Karmika, New Delhi. Karmika is giving counselling and legal services for women. It is also engaged in creating awareness through film shows and seminars. It runs an income-generating and training programme.

13. Mahila Dakshata Samiti, New Delhi. The Samiti's activities are campaigning discussions, seminars, protest action on consumer interest and women’s issues.

Besides publishing the English feminist magazine 'Manushi', the organization also conducts group discussions, campaigning, legal aid and research on women's issues.

15. National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), New Delhi.

The Federation works with women in trade unions, organizes campaigns, meetings, and discussions. It also participates in discussions on women at the governmental level.


Saheli's activities are counselling, providing legal aid, organizing workshops and exhibitions, documentation, and health programmes.

17. Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad.

It endeavors to uplift the socio-economic status of women through joint activities of struggle and development, labour unions and co-operatives.

18. Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Lucknow.

An autonomous voluntary organization. SEWA is working towards improving the living conditions of women chikan workers and their families in Lucknow and surrounding areas.


The society is giving employment to 500 women through rolling papads. It has a compulsory saving scheme and also a health care scheme. It also provides employment in making masalas and agarbathis.


It is an independent research organization, the society conducts surveys and studies on problems of women. It is deeply involved and institutes probes into reports of crimes committed against women.
21. Women's Institute for New Awakening (WINA), Bangalore. It was primarily started as an effort that would build a network with women's associations in the Third World. Its basic aim is to create awareness through education, research, oral histories, investigative studies, and publications. It also brings out a newsletter, and undertakes and promotes studies related to women's lives. It is also developing a library on women's books and documents and news reports from newspapers and magazines.

22. Women's Organisation for movement Empowerment and Neo-awareness (WOMEN) Dehradun. Its activities include research on women and children, especially those belonging to scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and backward classes, training consultancy and organisation of conferences. It also has a well-equipped library which provides services like reading, lending, reference and interlibraryloan, indexing and newspaper clippings.

Source: Anju Vyas and Sunitha Singh's Organisations - Research Centres In. Women Studies in India.
### 2B. 18. Women Organisation Associations at State Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Andhra Mahila Sabha.</td>
<td>At present it provides fifty different categories of service. Prominent among the institutions run by it at Madras are ‘Avakasa’ imparting vocational training to students, ‘Mahila Vidyalaya’ with hostel and ‘Mallamma Devi Mahila Mandiram’ helping hapless women who could not pursue their studies to become educated.</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Action for Welfare and Awakening in Rural Environment(Aware)</td>
<td>This organization was founded by Mr. P. K. S. Madhavan. The area of its activities is the territory of six states of India. It covers 4000 villages throughout the country. Income-generation projects, vocational training, awakening, literacy, adult education, thrift, self-help projects, sanitation, health, medical care, procurement and disbursement of loans, nutrition, ante-natal and post-natal care for women, leprosy relief, fight against superstition, raising of fruit and kitchen gardens happen to be some of the programme of aware for the ignorant, illiterate backward sections of society.</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Comprehensive Rural Organisation of Social Services, (CROSS), Hyderabad.</td>
<td>This organisation has served the poor and downtrodden sections of villagers in three districts of Andhra Pradesh and in some areas of Kerala and Orissa. Under the dynamic leadership and guidance of Mr. M. Kurian, it awakened the people to their plight and organised them for taking up self-help</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
programmes. Organisation of ‘Sanghams’ (Associations) in villages and Mahila Sanghams (Women’s Associations) separately is the distinction of Cross. Enlightenment and education were imparted through adult literacy and adult education classes, discussions, lectures, training camps, orientation camps etc.

4. WCADL

This organization aims at liberation and freedom of weaker sections of the society. Its programmes cover organization of women, adult education, training classes, orientation courses, training in tailoring, political awakening, legal literacy, legal aid, health, eye treatment, attention on environment, economic programmes including preservation of the soil, provision of seeds, provision of loans to the needy and cultural activities.

5. VASORD

Founded by Mr. G.V.V.S.D.S. Prasad it organizes women’s associations and spreads the message of smokeless chimney, sanitary latrines and awareness besides several other activities.

6. Vasavya Mahila Mandali

This women’s association based at Vijayawada with the ideals of promoting realistic outlook, individuality and social outlook has been striving strenuously for elimination of casteism, religious bigotry and superstition from women’s lives.

7. ARTIC

Based at Kottur of Srikakulam District, founded by Mr. H.R. Prakash and Ms. Srimathi this organisation forms women’s associations and carries on welfare projects.

Arvind Adarsa Mahila Sangham has been rendering service to the villages of MINIMINCHIPADU of West Godavary District. It has taken up vegetable gardening, preparation of food products, dress making, adult education and assistance in proper supply of seeds and manure’s. It is one of the few village women’s associations with a lot to report and be proud of.

9. Sri Prasanna Gajanana Sevak Samajam

This Samajam (Society) at present under the leadership of Ms. A. Syamala Devi who has been president since 1968 onwards the society runs a school, a high school and a degree college in buildings of its own. It has celebrated its diamond jubilee in 1984.

10. SAMATA

This is an organization of all India character arranging cultural caravans travelling through villages and towns, performing plays and singing songs. There will be eight kala jathas one for each region. The fight for education is only a part of much larger fight for women’s equality. Campaigns against poverty and against the routine and drudgery of women’s work enable the women to link up their struggle with that of other exploited sections of society.

11. Feminist Study Circle

This was established on the initiative of Ms. Volga who later blossomed into a writer and leader of feminist thought. The ‘Study Circle’ has to its credit one original book 'we have
12 ANVESHI
(SEARCH)

Anveshi consists of a group of women from different institutions and disciplines who share a background of activism in the women's movement. It springs from the need for a structure that can nurture and support the creative potential of feminist research which, is rooted in the connection between activism and scholarship.

13. Mahila Abhyudaya Samstha
(MAS)

The Samstha founded by Ms. Malladi Subbamma and her associates in 1980 is an umbrella organization striving for all-round progress and welfare of women. It has gained stature and position in society by its hard work and achievements. Its activities cover educational, agitational and organization areas. Prominent enterprising ventures are only mentioned.

'Abhyudaya Vivaha Vedika' (Cosmopolitan Marriage Bureau) a sister organisation of MAS encourages, promotes and officiates at marriages transcending considerations of caste, dowry and religious ceremony. 'Mahila Abhyudaya Trust' (TRYST for progress of women) founded and authored by Malladi Subbamma has been publishing a monthly journal entitled 'Women's Freedom' for the last five years.

2B.19 Women in Modern Era

According to Atal Bihar Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, “India’s rapid development is intrinsically linked to the social, economic and political empowerment of every citizen of this country, especially women. Ensuring gender equality by removing gender discrimination is the key to real empowerment. Developing countries that have made global social progress have done primarily through the empowerment of women, which has had enormous impact in terms of literacy, health and economic well being of families.” Therefore the year 2001 of the new millennium has been embarked and declared as a “year of women’s empowerment” by the government of India. Undoubtedly we have a long way to go and multi-furioso activities are required to be undertaken towards empowerment of women in different fields of life.

During women empowerment year, the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) and its associated bodies were involved in a number of initiatives to improve the status of women in the country. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with the objective of bringing about advancement development and empowerment of women was formulated. Five stree shakti puraskars to honour and recognize the achievements of individual women were presented for the first time by the Prime Minister at the launch of the Women’s empowerment year. The government also decided to give annual awards to the selected ‘angan wadi’ workers on the basis of exemplary performance.
The purpose of year of women empowerment is:

- To create and raise large scale awareness of women's issues with active participation, involvement of all women and men.
- To initiate and accelerate action to improve access to and control of resources by women.
- To create an enabling environment to enhance self-confidence and autonomy of women.

As per India: a Reference Annual - 2000. “The development of women has always been the central focus in developmental planning since independence. Though there have been various shifts in policy approaches in the last 50 years from the concept of ‘Welfare’ in the 70s to ‘development’ in the 80s and now to empowerment in the 90s, the Department of Women and Child Development since its inception has been implementing special programmes designed to improve the socio-economic status of women.”

Achievements of Government towards Women Empowerment

Machinery for Women's Development

The first landmark in the context of machinery for women's welfare was the establishment of the central Social Welfare Board in 1953 which promoted and assisted voluntary action for the welfare of women and children. The Women Development Bureau was established in the Ministry of Social Welfare. In 1985,
a separate department for women and child development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development was created. It co-ordinates with various ministries such as labor, health, family welfare, education, agriculture, rural development, etc. Similarly at the state level, there are Directorates of Welfare and Development of Women. At the grass root level, in addition to Mahila Mandals and other women's organizations, there are statutory panchayatis, which provide for special representation to women. There are voluntary agencies at the state and national levels by and for women welfare and development. In the semi-governmental sector, there is the central social welfare board, the National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development, National Resource Centre for Women and the National Commission for Women, in addition to state women developmental corporation. Although the most important aspect of women's development is the effective implementation of various laws concerning them, yet this has gone by default because of rather weak and cumbersome functioning of courts at different levels. Courts are important part of machinery for women development and status, which needs to be strengthened and streamlined.

The government has set up a national resource centre for women which acts as an apex body for promoting and incorporating gender perspectives in policies and programmes of the government.
Actual formation and functioning of commission began in 1992. The section 10 of the Act listed fourteen important areas in which the commission has to function: they include investigation of all matters relating to safeguards of women, suggest amendments to various laws, look into complaints relating to deprivation of women's rights, take up matters of non implementation of Acts meant for achieving equality and development of women and non compliance of policy decisions etc. The commission can undertake investigations, call for special studies and find litigation's involving women's issues of larger dimensions. The commission can also inspect fails and investigate the conditions of women fails and investigate the conditions of women therein.

Highlights of Achievements 2002 - 2003

- On the occasion of the International Women's Day, 10 NGOs were felicitated for their outstanding work in promoting and protecting the interests of women.
- Anti- Child marriage agitation was organized in four major States- Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
- A report on violence in Gujarat was submitted.
- A report was prepared on the alleged 'Sati' committed by Kuttu Bai at village Patna, Tamoli of Panna district (Madhya Pradesh).
- Visited Patna Dental College to investigate into the alleged harassment of girl students.
Public hearings on 'Problems of Muslim Women' were held at Pune, Saharanpur and Chhinwada.

A meeting was organized in the Commission of Muslim Experts to discuss problems and development of women of the minority community.

A discussion was organized on Domestic Violence and the commissions recommendations on the Domestic Violence Bill was sent to the Department of WCD.

A discussion was held on 'Increasing Violence Against Women' with senior police officers, NGOs, and legal specialists.

In the wake of rape of a student of Maulana Azad medical college, a meeting was held at the commission with the Delhi Police Commissioner, Chief Secretary, Delhi, college principals of Delhi to discuss the reasons for such atrocities and the measures to be adopted to stop this menace.

Twenty four meetings were held since November 2000 to assess implementation of the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court on sexual harassment of women at workplace. Four meetings were held in state capitals - Kolkata, Lucknow, Bhopal and Channai. In these meetings, 727 representatives of 636 organization participated.

Public hearings were organized in Trichy, Chennai and Coimbatore on 'impact of globalization on women'.

Public hearings were organized in Jharkhand on land related problems.
Regional workshops on ‘Economic Empowerment of Tribal Women’ were held at Bhopal, Nasik, Jabalpur, Guwahati, and Manali.

A one-day workshop on the working of family courts was organized. A draft on Family Court rules was prepared to bring uniformity in the rules of the Family Court all over India.

NCW and Maharashtra State Commission for Women jointly inquired into incident of rape of a minor girl in a running local train in Mumbai.

NCW team went to enquire about the alleged atrocities against women Baloda Bazar, Chattisgarh.

NCW enquired about alleged atrocities of girl students of Mahatma Gandhi Gramodaya Vishwavidhyalaya, Chitrkoot (Madhya Pradesh).

NCW team went to enquire about the alleged rape of a minor girl of Khoja Girls Orphanage, Mumbai.

NCW team went to inquire about abduction of Ms. Kanchan Mishra, by Mr. Sultan Mian, who is said to be one of the notorious gangsters of Patna.

NCW sponsored studies/surveys on the following projects:

- Implementation of current policies, programmes, and schemes for women and girls in India.
- Preparation of Women’s rights manual in the light of judicial decisions.
- Sexual harassment of working women in organized and unorganized sectors of Orissa.
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- Domestic violence and torture among women of urban area.
- War widows.
- Girl child abuse awareness camp (2) and sensitization training (4).
- Status of education of girls in Delhi.
- Gender based study on mental health and self-efficacy among adolescents in the context of cultural values.
- Status of women journalists in the country.
- Comparative study on widows of Vrindavan and Varanasi.
- Women in media.

_Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission (1999)_

Under the act IX of 1998, the Andhra Pradesh Women’s Commission, Hyderabad came into existence with effect from 1-6-1999. The object of the Andhra Pradesh Women’s Commission Act is to improve the status of women to achieve this object, the act lays down the functions of the commission. A reading of 15, 16 and 17 of the act gives an impression that the role of commission in brief is that of a guardian of the women. The commission is empowered to plan, guide and supervise the status of the women at all stages and on all aspects of the women life-social, educational and economic and empowerment. The commission can suggest legislation to improve the existing laws and also for supplementing the existing laws with new laws. It is empowered to enquire into the unfair practices like violating constitutional and statutory rights, committed against the women.
When the accused are found guilty, it can suggest that the government should prosecute them. To achieve this object of finding of the accused, the commission has been empowered with powers of a court both civil and criminal, to the extent of taking necessary steps to gather the evidence. The commission can conduct research and advise the government about the ways and means of empowering and battering the status of women in all fields.

The commission believes that for empowerment of women and improving the status of the women, it is absolutely necessary to bring awareness among the women on all aspects of life. Education and literacy are the means through which awareness can be achieved. Through education only women will be able to achieve their objects/goals in life. Therefore the commission is concentrating on bringing awareness about the necessity of education among women. The commission also believes that it is essential to strengthen the character of the women by instilling courage and self-confidence. The commission also recommended several agro-based courses to be introduced in the Telugu Bala Mahila Pragathi Pranganams making use of the land surrounding the pranganams. These proposals also have been accepted by the government.

**Voluntary Action**

India has a rich tradition of selfless voluntary action. While government’s intervention for women’s empowerment is largely through non-governmental
organizations, the initiatives that the later themselves have developed are rich and diverse. These efforts have often demonstrated the success of alternative models in the field of credit for poor women, health, awareness generation, literacy, participatory rural appraisal involving women and organizing women’s self employment groups in traditional and non traditional sectors of the economy. There are over 12000 organizations in the block, district and state levels. These are actively supported by a vibrant women’s movement.

- Strategies During the Nineties

During the nineties the strategy was to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not by pass women and special programmes with gender sensitivity are implemented to complement the general development programmes. The strategy recognizes that government responses to the problems of women often tend to be sectored and thereby fragmented.

The strategy focuses on an integrated approach for providing basic services. It also accepts women as active participants in the process of development. The developmental approach shifted to empowerment approach. The impact of various developmental policies and programmes and institutional mechanisms is to be gauged from the perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women in the country. Thus the strategy in nineties is to achieve empowerment of women.
Action Plan to Protect Girl Child


The action plan focuses on the three major goals of survival, protection, and development of the girl child in India which emphasizes the needs of girl-children belonging to special and vulnerable groups and adolescent children.

Reservation for Women

The constitution (73rd amendment) Act, 1992, Article 2430 (3) reads

"Not less than one third (including the numbers of seats reserved for women belonging to S.C. and S.T.) of the total numbers of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat."

"... Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women:

"Provided also that number of offices reserved under this clause shall be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats at each level."

The 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment Acts of 1993 mark historic events in the advancement of Indian women, as they ensure reservation of 1/3 of
total seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies, in rural areas and urban areas. "In the rural areas, women have thus been brought to the centre-stage in the nation's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions." The process of election to these bodies is continuing throughout the country. A massive country-wide training programme has been launched since 1993 to give leadership training to the women elected representatives.

The 81st Constitutional Amendment Bill 1996 provides for one-third reservation for women in parliament and State legislatures. Now the bill is yet to be approved by Parliament. It provides for political empowerment of women.

Legal Literacy Manuals

According to Reny Jacob, "legal literacy manual was brought out in 1992 with the aim of educating women about the laws concerning their basic rights. These manuals have been written in a simple and illustrated format and cover a wide range of subjects namely, laws relating to working women, child labor, contract labor adoption and maintenance, marriage laws and rights to property".34

Protection From Domestic Violence Bill, 2001

As per Indira Jaising, "The government of India through the Ministry of Human Resource Development published and circulated a bill to be introduced in the Loksabha, (Bill no. 133 of 2001), titled: The bill has not yet been introduced
in the Parliament. This delay in the introduction has proved to be a blessing in disguise for it gives us all an opportunity to discuss the same and its implications."

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☐ Mahila Panchayats

According to Reny Jacob, "The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) initiated an experiment called 'Mahila Panchayats' with women community and NGOs for the empowerment of women. The project aimed at helping in the redressal of disputes in the community and offering crisis intervention and para-legal training to women. This programme was inaugurated in January 2001. A total of 14 NGOs in partnership with DCW formed Mahila Panchayats in different districts of Delhi with the aim to make "Delhi safe for women"."

☐ Policy Planning and Programming

Till sixth plan, women were recipient of welfare services along with other weaker and handicapped sections. It was only in 1980's that an emphasis was laid on developmental issues concerning women, which means their empowerment and accordingly assuring their participation in development. Efforts are also being made as part of social policy to help women to get their rightful share of fruits of development plans. This policy is translated in preparing special plans and programmes for women's development along with creating machinery for implementation of these plans. Successive five year plans laid emphasis on women's welfare, health and education. It was in the sixth five year plan for the
first time, that a chapter on women and development was added to the plan document. It emphasized four strategies - (1) Economic independence (2) educational advance (3) access to health care and family planning (4) income supplementing of tribal women. The eighth five year plan strategy for women’s development covers new thrust areas such as improving women’s education, database, enumeration of women workers, provision of supportive services, encouraging women’s organizations and stepping up social security measures. The programmes for women initiated by the government are social welfare nutrition service, supplement income generation, girls education, equal remuneration for equal work, hostels for working women and crèches for children, functional and legal literacy, family promotion and strengthening of self employment, review and streamlining laws concerning women etc.

Since women’s development is multi-disciplinary, a variety of agencies are involved in this programme, the department of women’s development being the nodal government agency which co-ordinates to programmes of various central ministries, such as agricultural and rural development, health and family welfare, education, youth affairs, industry, law and justice, welfare, science and technology on the one hand and the state government and voluntary agencies on the other. A list of schemes of assistance for women is given below.

❖ Hostels and working women.
❖ Income generation activities.
❖ Condensed courses of education for women.
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❖ Awareness training for women.
❖ Training Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSE).
❖ Development of Women and Children in Rural areas. (DWACRA)
❖ Home for the destitute women.
❖ Organizational assistance to women Non-Governmental Organizations.
❖ Promotion and strengthening of Mahila Mandals.
❖ Family Counseling.
❖ Prevention of atrocities on women.
❖ Legal literacy aid.

☐ Supportive Services

With a view to enhancing women participation in development, certain supportive services have to be provided. These are:

❖ Raising the level of literacy.
❖ Training women in home management.
❖ Maternal and child care services.
❖ Provision of appropriate technology.
❖ Availability of drinking water.
❖ Establishment of crèches and day-care services.
❖ Establishment of hostels for working women.
❖ Provision of credit facilities.
❖ Vocational training.
Thus the governments have offered welfare schemes for women empowerment. They have floated anti poverty programmes. They have enacted legislation to safeguard women's rights. The government can only facilitate the process. It is the women themselves who should become conscious of their inequality and oppression and seize all available opportunities to improve their status.

Some progressive changes were observed in the socio-economic status of Women in Modern India. (Specially of the middle class women).

Among the various environmental and institutional factors contributing to raise the social position of women in India the most important have been advances in science, technology, and education, national awareness and the changes made in law consequently, new social roles started emerging both for men and women. Advances in science and technology led to new production processes, occupations and skills which in turn led to an increased demand for women labor.

Women today enjoy better health and they have better health and hygiene conscious because of the progress in the national health programmes including family planning. As a result they are not only relieved of their worries and their preoccupations with matters such as frequent child births and health problems of large families, but they can also now afford to invest part of their energies in the activities outside their houses.
Changing in the social attitudes of women themselves, as well as those of men have been observed owing to widespread use of radio, cinema and television and with the spread of books and newspapers.

The shift from rural to urban areas have also affected changes in the social roles of women. Many women have not only attained relief from the dawn to dusk hardship in village life, but have also gained access to increased employment opportunities vis-à-vis their higher education.

It has been observed that women from the upper middle and middle classes which by and large are the most educated and advanced groups and have made the speedy headway in all specious.

An educated woman of late 1990s and of coming decade of 21st century can be described as:

- A woman who can no longer blindly cling to orthodox beliefs but strikes a balance between tradition and modernity.
- Who wants to prove to man that she is his equal.
- Who does not want an identify through a man (she wants an opportunity to shine independently and wants to capitalize on her own potentials and merits).
- Who wants to take decisions for herself about her life rather than just playing the role of a wife or a mother.
- Who is not afraid of becoming aggressive, assertive and tough when the occasion demands so.
In short an educated woman takes pride in being a woman who is caring, considerate and tolerant.

Changing Role of Indian Women in Modern Society

Pre marital Role | Familial Role | Extra Familial Role

As Wife | As housewife | As mother | Employee | Role orientation in Corporate life

(In regulative role) | (Socializer) | (Pol Social Life) | (Social Legislation)

Section - C : Education for Women Empowerment

2C.1 Introduction

The fact that convention on the rights of the child insists on the child’s right to a high quality education is informing a movement for educational innovations around the world, says the state of the world’s children 1999 report. From the convention’s perspective needs, but also their physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual development. Education so conceptualized unfolds from the child’s perspective and addresses each child’s unique capacities and needs.

The vision of educational quality enshrined in the convention extends to issues of gender equality and equity, health and nutrition parental and community involvement and management of the education system itself.
Above all it demands that schools should be zones of creativity safety and stimulation for children, places where they can expect to find not only safe water and decent sanitation facilities, with motivated teachers and relevant curricula, but also where children are respected and learn to respect others.

The broad outlines of an education revolution within the conventions framework can already be discerned. It has 5 key elements that interweave with and reinforce each other: learning for life, accessibility quality, and flexibility; gender sensitivity and girl's education. The state as key partner; and care of the young children.

One can regard education as an important value which is necessary for the upliftment of the society. Education is a lifelong process and is essential for human resource development at all levels. Education should help intellectual social and emotional development of human beings. Education also brings about reduction in inequalities in society presuming that education leads to equalization of status between individuals coming from higher to unequal socio-economic status of the society.

Education which is the most dynamic factor of development is the only tool for realizing empowerment. It is also a production investment. It brings about conscientiousness which helps individuals to perceive, interpret, criticize and fully transform their environment.

Women's awareness about development is basic to her empowerment for
achieving their awareness. The most important ingredients are education and information. The empowerment of women is linked with their educational and economic status in the society. The strategy for empowerment of women is two fold.

- Education that promotes building a positive self image and self confidence among women and develops their ability to think critically.
- Information that promotes awareness among women about health, nutrition, environments, economic and political processes to ensure equal participation in the process of bringing social change.

- The wisdom and doors of education are to be opened widely, so that girls and women get the bright light of knowledge in abundance. A literate mother can do wonders in building up a healthy society and a bright future for the nation.
- The knowledge, skills and inputs obtained as ‘distant’ learners could be of immense use to women in consolidating their role in decision-making. They can embark on measures for capacity building among the disadvantaged women, organize the neighborhood, formulate livelihood - strategies and ensure protection against vulnerabilities.
- In India the realization of the importance of women's education and development is the result of years of struggle against injustice and inequality. Even after 55 years of independence, we are lagging behind in getting their
due share in all developmental activities and have not been able to take full advantage of the constitutional privileges and statutory rights. As per Jayanti, "The right to education is widely accepted in principle but substantially violated in practice".  

2C - 2 Education - Definitions

According to Swamy Vivekananda "The very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain. We must have life building, men making character making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by health the whole library".  

The Ex President of India Mr. K. R. Narayana in his speech once said "The deprivation of education continues to be the want and most insidious aspect of backwardness and under development ... I believe education is the only penacea for all girls in our society ... Education is the only enduring means of empowerment of instilling self confidence and pride in oneself of imparting some degree of control over one's own destiny." 

According to Nisha Singh, "Education has a wider meaning 'Sa Vidyā Ya Vimuktyā' implying that it is the knowledge which liberation."
In the words of Herbert Spencer, "Education is a training for the completeness of life. Education brings perfection to life, which means the growth and development of personality. It qualifies a person to fulfill certain economic, political, and cultural functions and thereby improves the socio-economic status of the people. It also helps to equalize the status of individuals who belong to different social strata."  

According to Sadhu T.L. Vasvani, "Education must be illuminated and re-illuminated in the light of the soul.... The new community of girls and women in India must be a community of Light. And Light knows no distinction or creed or community."  

The National Policy on Education 1986 states that "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favor of women. The National Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, text books, training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators."  

2C.3 Objectives of Education for women

Pinto in his book "Women power : technical education and development" identified the following objectives of education for women.
❖ “Decision making ability - the ability to weigh and to arrive at a valid and honest personal judgement.
❖ Truth seeking- a respect for and a reliance upon observable evidence vouched for by reliable groups;
❖ Skills of living- the ability to use those tools and machines which have wide application in one’s society.
❖ Communication - the ability to convey to others orally in writing, graphically, or otherwise, information, opinions and conclusions;
❖ Adaptation to change - an awareness that knowledge, society and social values are all changing and ability to change oneself to maintain harmony with the environment;
❖ Aesthetic awareness – a recognition of beauty in the natural world, in the arts and in human relationships;
❖ Commitment to society- a knowledge of the different elements of social relationship and the ability to practice social skills, enabling individuals to interact in a mature way with one another and with the environment”

If women are to contribute effectively to national development into the twenty first century, the fundamental question is whether they will be sufficiently equipped to participate fully by receiving a quality education that will prepare them to enter any field exposing them to science, technology and communications and stimulates their creativity.
According to Bhaskar Rao, "Since 1975 when the first conference on women was held in Mexico City, education for women has remained a key issue on the international agenda. The forward looking strategies for the advancement of women to the year 2000, adopted at the third world conference on women in Nairobi in 1985, described education as the basic for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women, a basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of the society."

Empowerment of women is directly linked with education. Women are the agents of change. Education is considered a key instrument for the change which is responsible for national development. It is true to the saying, “If you educate a boy you educate an individual, but if you educate a girl, you educate a family, society and ultimately the nation.”

Education liberates women from ignorance and enhances their self-esteem. It enables them to choose their own way and look after their families in a better way. Napoleon rightly said, “Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized nation”. The education commission’s report rightly observed, “the destiny of India is being shaped in her class room.”

As per Moshin Ali Khan “Women’s education brings about more awareness. Educated mothers become more knowledgeable and vigilant enhancing their ability to rear and bring up children in a better way. There is a positive correlation
between women literacy rate and life expectancy. While illiteracy is invariably associated with poverty, malnutrition, deprivation, high mortality, high population growth and all other aspects of under development, women's education becomes imperative."46

According to Singh "When women are educated their dependence automatically disappears or at least decreases. Education helps women to resist exploitation, besides of course empowering them to be self reliant."47

Where women are educated, they can become potential sources for harnessing a community's resources for general well being. Education, which increases women's awareness, thus leads to their overall development in particular and society in general.

According to Uma Devi, "The aim of education should be to train women in such a way that they apply, their acquired knowledge to the pursuits of daily life and to fit them for the position they have to fill. Education for women should always be directed towards their holistic development so that they adjust themselves to the complexities in the society. Education should create an awareness of their rights and duties so, as to make them independent in thinking and decision making. What is important is, a kind of education, that will lead to greater awareness on the part of both men and women of the legal, economic and personal rights of women."48
There is a Chinese saying that “If you are to plan for one year, you plant rice; if you are planning for five years, you plant trees; if you are planning for a generation and the future, you educate your women”.

**2C. 4. Women Education - Its Impact on Society**

If women are educated ultimately the society achieves the following:

- **Higher Productivity**

  “Few will dispute that educating women has great social benefits. But it has enormous economic advantages as well... The wages of female workers rise by 10 to 20 percent for each additional year of schooling. Returns of this magnitude are impressive by the standard of other available investments, but they are just the beginning...”

  -- *Laurence Summers, 1992, as Chief Economist at the World Bank.*

Educated women are more productive both at home and in the workplace. A World Bank global study showed that nations that had invested heavily in female primary education benefited through higher economic productivity.

- **Smaller Families**

  “Over the long term, the single most effective and enduring way of reducing population growth, even more than by the diffusion of contraception, is by giving women more and better education.”

  -- *The Economist, 3 September 1994.*
Educated women tend to have fewer children, slowing population growth. A woman with at least seven years of education has 2.2 fewer children than a woman with no schooling.

**Better Family Nutrition and Health**

"Mothers' education may be even more important to her children's health than flush toilets or piped water."

-- Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund.

An educated mother can raise a healthier family. She not only knows about nutrition, but may have learned how to respond to health-related emergencies.

Every year of a mother's schooling leads to a decrease of up to nine percent in the mortality rate of under-five children.

**Enhanced Learning for Children**

"The family is "the world's smallest school'... Most (pre-adolescent) children in developing countries spend more time . . . with their mothers than with any other educational "medium" including school."

-- UNESCO's 1993 World Education Survey.

In fact it has been noticed that when women are educated, they tend to encourage their children to become educated as well.
Enhanced Social Status for Women

"An educated woman almost always has more value and status in the eyes of her husband, her family and her community. She is more likely to share in family decisions about how many children to have, how to bring them up, how to spend money, how to organize domestic life."

-- Gertrude Mongella, Secretary General of the Fourth World conference on women.

Educated women tend to make more, independent decisions and stand up for themselves.

2C.5. Committees and Commissions towards Women Education

Various committees and commissions have studied the prevailing conditions and offered various suggestions to improve the women education in the country.

Committees in Pre Independence Period

- Wood's Dispatch (1854) : This was the first commission after the advent of the British in India. It observed that the enrolment of girls in schools and colleges was very poor and there was no encouragement from the state. They advised to open many schools and colleges for girls.

- Hunter's Commission (1882) : It discussed the problem of education of women. It has advised to pay special attention to the education of women
and recommended good amount of funds, concessions of fees, scholarships and award of prizes. This commission recommended different curricula for boys and girls.

❖ **Curzan’s Committee (1902)**: This committee was appointed to review the conditions of universities and to recommend the necessary steps to improve the standard of university teaching.

❖ **Sadler’s Commission (1916)**: Sadler’s commission also known as Calcutta University Commission made a survey of women’s higher education in Bengal and pointed out the needs in women’s education.

❖ **Central advisory Board of Education (1939)**: It stressed that special attention should be given to the needs of women. Special institutes should be organised for women with women teachers.

☐ **University Education Commission (1948 - 49)**

The University Education commission noted the importance of women’s education and stated that there can not be educated people without educated women.

☐ **Recommendations**

❖ Ordinary amenities and decencies of life should be provided for in colleges originally planned for men, but to which women are being admitted in increasing numbers.
There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for women but rather a great increase.

There should be intelligent educational guidance by qualified men and women, to help women to get a clear view of their real educational interest, to the end that they shall not try to imitate men, but shall desire as good education as men get.

Women students in general should be helped to see their normal places in a normal society both as citizens and as women and to prepare for it and college programmes should be so designed that it will be possible for them to do so.

Women teachers should be paid the same salaries as men teachers for equal work.

Secondary Education Commission (1952 - 53)

It will be noticed in this report that no particular chapter has been devoted to the education of women. The commission feels that at the present stage of our social evolution there is no special justification to deal with women's education separately. Every type of education open to men should also be open to women. There was general agreement that however that for girls as well as for boys education needs to be more closely connected with the home and the community.
National Committee on Women's Education (1958 - 59)

The National Committee on women's education was setup by the Government of India in the Ministry of Education under the chairmanship of Durgabhai Deshmukh to examine the very comprehensive problems related to women's education.

Recommendations

- Steps shall be taken to constitute as early as possible a national council for the education of girls and women.
- The state governments should establish State Councils for the education of girls and women.
- Every state should be required to prepare comprehensive development plans for the education of girls and women in its area.

Committee on differentiation of curricula for boys and girls (1961): In the meeting held on May, 10, 1961 the National Council for Women's Education authorized the Chairman to set up a committee to examine comprehensively the problem of curricula for girls at all stages of education. In consultation with the Ministry of Education, the Chairman Smt. Reksha Saran, setup a committee on November 1st, 1961.

Proposal: In the ultimate democratic and socialistic pattern of society which we visualize, education will be related to individual capacities, aptitudes, and interests
which as stated above are not related to sex. There would therefore be no need in such a society to differentiate curricula on the basis of sex.

But it will be some years before this new social order is created. In the transitional phase, in which we are at present, certain psychological differences between men and women as well as certain divisions of social functions based on them will have to be accepted as matter of fact and as a practical basis for building up the curricula for boys and girls. While doing so, however care should be taken to see that values and attitudes which are essential in the long run are increasingly built up in men and women and that no step is taken which will tend to intensify the existing differences. It is on these fundamental assumptions that the proposals for a differentiation of curricula between boys and girls made in this report are based.

☐ The National Council for Women's Education (1963)

It appointed a committee on girls education and public cooperation under the Chairmanship of M. Bhaktavastalam. This committee examined the cause of lack of public support for girls education especially in rural areas. This committee put the needed efforts to educate women.

☐ The Education Commission (1964 - 66)

Popularly known as Kothari Commission, it endorsed the views of earlier committees and recommended that the women to men ratio at higher education
should be raised from 1 : 4 to 1 : 3 through the provision of scholarships, hostel accommodation and so on. It also recommended establishing a separate girls college at undergraduate level based on local demand, but not postgraduate level. Also women research units at one or two universities should be set up. It also recommended to provide opportunities for training and employment, both whole and part time so as to enable women to simultaneously look after their homes and career.

☐ **A Committee on Status of Women (1971 - 74)**

This Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Phulrenu Guha. It recommended co-education at all stages of education. It also provided ample opportunities for girls in classes XI and XII for education in any area. It strongly recommended universal education up to 14 years of age by providing primary schools within a walking distance and free secondary education to girls with scholarships and hostel facilities so as to improve women education.

☐ **National Policy on Education (1986)**

Major emphasis was given to participation of women in vocational, technical, and professional courses. Separate women's studies were established at higher education level to further women's development. It also recommended that equalization of educational opportunities should be given priority and women education should be stressed upon.
Objectives of National Policy on Women Education 1996:

❖ Creating an environment through positive, economic, and social policies for development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.

❖ The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom - women on equal basis with men in all spheres political, economic, social, cultural and civil.

❖ Equal access to participation and decision-making of women in social, political, economic life of the nation.

❖ Equal access to women to health care, quality education, at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration occupational health and safety social security public office etc.;

❖ Strengthening legal systems aided at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

❖ Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation involvement of both men and women.

❖ Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process;

❖ Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child.

❖ Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society particularly with organizations.

The commission was appointed on January 5th, 1987 under the chairperson of Ela R. Bhatt, submitted its report to the Government of India in June 1988. The commission covered and studied the entire gamut of unprotected laboring women to include self employed and wage labor, paid and unpaid labor and contract labor. The commission made recommendations on the education of women.

However, in principle the fact of empowering women through education has been recognized in the national policy on education and programme of action.

The National Policy on Education Review Committee (NPERC) (1990)

It stressed on the promotion and participation of girls and women in education at all level. This committee strongly recommended that all dimensions of educational policy should reflect will conceive edge in favor of women.

Section D - Information for Women Empowerment

2D.1 Introduction

Information is the life blood of the society. Information is the foundation for generating knowledge. Each citizen of the world has right to have information. It is information that bring change in society. Therefore the terms information, knowledge are used synonymously. In other words information is knowledge and
knowledge is information. Any social development needs information. This has no exception in case of women development.

We are living in an age of information. Every government is now mainly concerned with the development of knowledge-based institutions for the purpose of creating, transmitting, and utilizing the information for the overall development of the nation. Variety of information is generated by the institutions and they are needed to be moved from point of generation to the point of use. Information has no value until it is used.

2D.2 Information-Definitions

The word information is used to identify many concepts. However, it is extremely difficult to define it precisely. But an understanding of how different individuals have tried to define and quantify information is valuable. Many definitions have been attempted but not even a single agreeable definition comprehending all its aspects have been arrived at so far.

According to Hayes, "It is agreed that 'information' is a slippery concept amorphous, loaded with connotations and implications and that it has had a variety of meanings and we must have a suitable definition even if it is at the most elementary level."49

The simple meaning of information in a restricted sense is a sensible statement, opinion, fact, concept or idea, or an association of statements opinions
or ideas. It is more important to define and analyze the term “information” for understanding the nature and concept of the term. Many definitions have been attempted in this regard.

Webster’s New International Dictionary, 3rd edition, defines information as “the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence”. L. Brillorium viewed that “information is raw material and consists of mere collection of data.”

Hoshvosky and Marsey view information as data used to solve problems. They consider information as a process which occurs within human mind when a problem and data for its solution are brought into productive union. The information is data of value in decision-making. Some authors treat information as message.

J.H. Shera also has the similar view when he says that information should also bring a response in the recipient. He says further, “In generic sense it is that which is transmitted by act or processes of communication. It may be a message a signal, or stimulus. It assumes a response in the receiving organism and therefore possesses response potential”.

In the context of users studies research, the term information is used to denote a physical entity or phenomenon (as in the case of questions relating to number of journals subscribed to etc.); the channel of communication through
which messages are transferred (as when we speak of the incidence of oral versus written information), or the factual data, empirically determined and presented in a document or transmitted orally.  

Davis, G.B. (1974) defined information as “data that has been processed into a form that is meaningful to the recipient and is of real perceived value in current or projective decision.”  

Stevens (1986) defined information as the “factual data ideas and other knowledge emanating from any segment of society that identified as being of value, some fashion, transmitted to others, and used in some meaningful fashion.”  

Kent (1979) states that “Information is the feed-stock for knowledge. In an ideal world of unimpeded flow of information amongst individuals of equal capacity to process the information into knowledge, there would be no advantage to be gained by any individual or group as compared with another by possession of information.”  

As per Encyclopedia of Library and Information science “a sophisticated definition emphasizes information as both a commodity and a process. Thus information as commodity has to be acted upon by an energy system in order to make it useful and allow it to be put into action (i.e., transferred)”  

Knowledge and information are often used interchangeably but some authors are able to make difference between these two terms. Farradane makes
difference between these two terms, information is physical surrogate of knowledge (i.e. language) used for communication. While knowledge is memorable records of process in the brain, something available in the mind is at present quite unexplained.

2D.3 Nature of Information

Wilson Alex stated that “The nature and amount of information that effects the behavior of a person (i.e. recipient) in taking the decision however varies from person to person, from time to time and from place to place. As such information is a resource of immense economic and social value. It is vital to the proper functioning of a democratic society, a crucial tool in a productive economy and also for an effective government, a central part of the growth and well beings of individuals”.

The increasing need and dependence on information and the increase in technological sophistication and the complexities of modern social life have increased its nature and value. The nature and value of information is directly related to its communication. According to Viswanathan, “Information communicated could be broadly grouped into three categories. 1. development 2. pedagogic. 3. achievement; when one uses a document for general cultural advancement for enlargement of his vision; and for intellectual enjoyment, the information obtained is developmental; when a student studies a prescribed text-
book or refers to an index, with a view to supplement the class instruction the information communicated is pedagogic; if a scientist working in a laboratory refers to abstract and indexes relating to the field of investigation or experiment, the information received is achievement in quality.  

2D.4 Principles and qualities of information

The ideas underlined in the five laws of library science enunciated by S.R. Ranganathan are the basic concepts of librarianship. Based on the five laws of library science, Bhattacharya has conceived five principles of information Viz. "1. Information is for use. 2. Every information user his/her information. 3. Every piece of information its user. 4. Save the time of the information user and 5. The universe of information is ever growing."  

As information is an important valuable resource, it ought to have certain ideal qualities also. According to Roja’s “Some of the qualities of information are: 1. Accessibility. 2. Comprehensiveness. 3. Precision. 4. Compatibility. 5. Timelessness. 6. Clarity. 7. Flexibility. 8. Verifiability. 9. Free of bias and 10. Quantifiable.”

William, F. William has recognized 6 parameters of information. They are:  
❖ "Quality of information : which can be measured by the number of documents, pages, words, characteristics bits, drawings, etc."
Content: Meaning of information

Structure: the organization of information.

Language: Symbol, alphabets, codes.

Quality that which characterizes the completeness, accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of information; and

Life: the total span of time in which value can be derived from the information. ⁶⁰

In view of the different definitions, McGranny summarizes varied attributes to see the nature of "information" ¹ 1. Information can be regarded as a near synonym of fact, 2. It had a transforming or reinforcing effect on what is known, or believed to be known, by a human being, 3. Information is used as an aid in decision-making; 4. Information is the freedom of choice one has in selecting a message, 5. Information is a necessary piece of something when we are faced with a choice. The amount required depends upon the complexity of decision to be made, 6. Information is the raw material from which knowledge is derived. 7. Information is exchanged with outer world; not merely received; and 8. Information can be defined in terms of its effect on the recipient. ⁶¹

It is clear that information is complex in contents, having more than one attribute to arrive at agreed definition, encompassing all its attributes seems difficult. In order to overcome such difficulty, the distinction is made between data, information and knowledge. Information falls between data and knowledge.
Information can be perceived as something between data and knowledge which is communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance in order to reduce the user's uncertainty by meeting their needs.” The concept of information is fundamentally associated with human communication of recorded potential information, processed by generation as well as recipient. The public library in the modern society should serve as the local point for access to information, which is now regarded as a vital resource for national development.

2D.5 Need and Purpose of Information

Information involves reduction of uncertainty- i.e., what the decision-maker expects from the information system. However, the degree of uncertainty of the decision-maker will vary, and so the amount of information needed or taken from the system will vary. Information is thus a relative quality, and can be quantified in terms of its effects on the state of decision-maker at a particular moment of time.

The amount of information needed to change the state of the decision maker or alter his level of understanding a particular minimum amount of data is called an ‘inform’. This minimum quantity of information will vary depending on the person, time and the place.
2D.6 Information Needs for Women Empowerment

Brittain stated that the word 'information needs' is very difficult to define. In some cases needs are more difficult. In some cases needs are synonymous with demands: for example, when the user knows of all the information that is relevant to his work and makes a demand for information sources. At the other extreme the user who makes very few demands has but many needs. Brittain identified 3 types of needs “1. an articulated need 2. a felt but unarticulated need for any reason and 3. an unfelt need. In regard to the latter need users are unaware that they have a need until it is pointed out at which time they may readily agree to the need or they may not realize this until the need has actually been met.” 62

Gronin divided user needs into 3 categories, “1. expressed needs. 2. unexpressed needs. 3. dormant needs.” 63

According to Line, “Information that the faculty member ‘ought to have for his work, his research, his edification etc.” 64

Menzel suggested that “Information needs are not synonymous with either demands or conscious - wants of information - users. It is not the information that users are aware of wanting that counts, not even the information that would be good for the best’ but rather the information that would be good for science-the progress of scientific research.” 65
Some other benefits likely to result from a larger availability of scientific and technical information can be cited as a:

- Improved capacity of a country to take advantage of existing knowledge and ‘know how’ available elsewhere.
- Rationalization and systematization of a country’s research and development efforts in light of knowledge already available.
- Wider knowledge base for the solutions of problems.
- New alternative and approaches to the solutions of technical problems and options for minimizing failure.
- Improved effectiveness and efficiency of technical activities in the production and service sector.
- Above all better decision making in all sectors and at all levels of responsibility.

It is observed that there are variations in economic, educational and social status among women. A substantial majority of them are illiterates, poor and work as manual laborers. Some of them are rich and educated but they remain as house-wives. Some of them are employees, despite these varieties, they may have common interest in matters like child-rearing, cooking, nutrition, house-decoration, health and the like. They may have common problems like literacy, social inequalities and segregation in regard to free access to public services. The urban women spend more time in exposure to the formal media of communication like print, radio, TV etc. than any other class of activity as an
informal education and so presently communication has an important and impressionable role in the manifold behavior of the urban women. The printed media is useful only to the literate women where as the oral communication is an important media useful to the illiterate women. Religious leaders, elders, neighbors and friends are some of the informal agents of communication and for information transfer from one to another. Information needs from the context of women empowerment vary from urban women to that of rural women. So also from literates to that of illiterates.

a. Information Needs for Urban Women

Urban women comprise students, housewives, women from different professions, like doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers, software professionals, etc. Thus the urban women needs are different from one another. The following are the public library activities useful to empower urban women.

- Reference books, text books, and general knowledge books should be provided to the students according to their requirements.
- Books on different professions to meet the needs of users from different professions.
- Religious and Philosophical books are very useful to meet the requirements of old women.
- Fiction and other information regarding government schemes and programmes for women are very useful to the housewives..
b. Information Needs of Rural Women

According to Kamaiah, "The following are the information requirements of rural women.

❖ Fundamental rights of children with emphasis on prevention of child labor.
❖ Free and compulsory education for girls.
❖ Incentives like scholarships, free stipend, hostel facilities, etc to encourage rural women education.
❖ Vocational opportunities available for rural girls and women.
❖ Gender equalities.
❖ Social evils; such as, dowry early marriage, prostitution, rape etc.
❖ Women reservations in education, employment, politics, etc.
❖ Women self-help groups.
❖ Rural banking facilities.
❖ Women and child health.
❖ DWACRA groups.
❖ Vana Samrakshana Samithies.
❖ New technologies relating to agriculture and rural industries.
❖ Income generation programmes.
❖ Self-employment programmes.
❖ Women training and development.
❖ Free legal aid, family courts and women courts."
❖ Subsidy and credit facilities available under CMEY Programme

❖ Awareness on Family Planning, Aids, Drugs, etc.

❖ State and central government programmes meant for women development.”

2D.7 Information services for women in Public Libraries

Libraries are the service organizations meant for information collection, storage and distribution. These libraries are of three types, namely Public libraries, Academic libraries and Special libraries. Information technology influenced these libraries as information centers.

The women-citizens acquire information from public libraries which are called ‘People’s Universities’. Therefore, the role of public libraries to meet information needs of women-citizens play an important role in women empowerment.

Today the public libraries should contribute to knowledge and information useful for women development by using information and communication technologies. The public libraries not only collect and preserve and disseminate information from the printed document but also information and knowledge should be provided through non-print media such as T.V. and C.Ds. The public libraries should be dynamic by involving all types of media. The public libraries should involve many non-traditional domains and prepare its own information sources useful for women development. The information needs of women-citizens differ
from that of general needs of public. Sometimes the library should collect those needs from resources outside the library. The public library should provide the following types of information services to women users.

- It should provide atmosphere and environment to encourage women for library use.
- To link speedily appropriate sources of information on several activities, machines and subjects related to women-users in the society to make information readily available to women-users at the point of their work through network access.
- To provide special service with a customized gathering and presentation of information to help to solve specific problems of women.
- To get feedback on use of documents and identity pattern of utilization of information services in different sectors.
- To provide integrated information services especially for decision-making or problem-solving situations of women in different domains.
- Present data and information in such forms and formats easily usable by a different category of women-users served.
- Finally the public library should provide information services in a friendly manner and to meet special information needs of women citizens.

Public libraries situated in cities and towns under ZGS should provide the information services and programmes to empower women.
In spite of several efforts made by the government of India towards women empowerment, even today women are not able to attain equal status with that of men in the society. It is due to lack of education and information which are basic needs for any development in the society. Therefore the government of India should have integrated plan to provide not only for education but also day-to-day information available in different forms and media to both urban women as well as rural women at their door steps. It ultimately demands for 'National Policy'. Unless National Policy for Public libraries in India is enacted, it is not possible to co-ordinate the information collection, storage and distribution activities for free supply of information to the public especially to women-users so as to achieve women empowerment in the country.

**Section E : Studies Conducted in the Direction of Women Empowerment**

The investigator reviews related literature and studies abroad and India to get deep and clear understanding of the problem and to find out the gap which can be fulfilled by the present study.

M.Rama Chander and K. Lakshmi (1993) in their work analyses women's perceptions about politics and their voting behaviour. They have also assessed the performance of women candidates in different sections (*women and Politics*). Delamonts (1980) focussed on different dimensions of women's importance and her contribution to society particularly in politics. (*The sociology of women*).
Renu Sethi made a critical study of different participatory trends of women in political process (*Determinants of Women’s Action Political Participation*). Vina Mazumdar (1975) outlined the political status of women in India and provides an insightful description on the position of women in India. (*Status of women in India*). Elizabeth Superman’s (1975) attempts a detailed study of the perceptions of Feminist Movements and their impact on women in different countries. (*Exclusion in Feminist thought*)

Roberts (1981) attempted a comparative analysis on women’s actions and reactions relative to political situation existing around them. (*Positive action for women*). Verba and Nie (1972) assesses in scientific methods to gauge the wages and means of political participation (*participation in America : Political Democracy and Social Equality*) Jayawardhane (1986) conducted a study which focused on Feminist perception about women’s role in Feminist Movements (*Feminism and the Nationalism in the third world.*) Kamala Bhasin’s (1972) study highlights women role in society in Vedic period. (*The Position of women in India*). Neera Desai (1957) in her work focused on women’s changing role and their adaptability to the changes taking place in the Indian society (*women in modern India*)

Thomas Paul (1964) traced the changes in the lives of women folk during different periods of Indian history (*Indian women through the ages*). Manmohan
Kaur (1968) analyzed the role women in the freedom movement at the gross root level in her work. *(The role of the women in the Freedom Movement)*. L.S. Buxi’s (1989) research study attempts a macro level analysis on the women’s status in India and also assesses her impact on the society *(Status of women in India)*.


Ranjana Kumari (1997) provides an excellent analysis on the women’s active and positive participation in decision making process in her book *(Women Parliamentarians)*. A. S. Seetha Ramu (1981) examines the different dimensions
of women's participatory trends in several social movements (*Women in Organized Movements*). Susheela Kaushik (1993) in her study analysis the different dimensions in her study (*empowering women for politics*). Calman (1992) provides a vivid account of different perspectives of women about politics (*Toward empowering women and movement politics in India*). Aruna Asaf Ali (1989) projects the factors which inspired women to participate in the freedom movement in her work (*Fragment from the Past Selected Writings and Speeches*). R. Vivek Bhattacharya’s (1984) work is an excellent study on Indira Gandhi’s contribution to the world peace (*Indira Gandhi and her role in world Peace*). Shankar Ghosh’s (1975) work contains valuable information on Indira Gandhi’s role in revamping the Congress Party (*Indira Gandhi : the Resurgent Congress and Socialism*). Virendra Grover and Ranjana Arora (1985) in their edited volume the great women of Modern India deals with the Annie Besant’s political life and also her participation in the Nationalist Movement (*The Great Women of Modern India*). Padmini Sen Gupta (1966) in her work presents Sarojini Naidu’s profile and also assesses her impact on Indian politics (*Sarojini Naidu : a Biography*). Swamy Madhavananda and Ramesh Mazumdar (1953) study analyses the role of great Indian women in the awakening of the Indian women (*great Indian women for the nineteenth century*).

Chowdhari Maitrayee (1988) In her book examines the interest of women folk in strengthening women movements and women’s perceptions towards participations in these movements (*Indian women’s movement reform and revival*)
Lakxmi Misra (1992) in her book throws light on how women are getting united to lead political movements (*Women's issues: an Indian Perception*). Kamud Sharma (1987) in her article makes a detailed study of the problems and challenges encountered women leaders in leading protest movements and struggle (*Role and Participation of women in Chipco Movement in U.P.*). Jan Mastan Everett (1981) highlights the aims and achievements of Franchise Movement started in India during the 20th century in his work (*women and social change*). Dorathy Harris (1971) in her study describes the dilemma and deplors the fact that if a woman wants to participate in a competitive sport she has to display the traits of competencies, self-reliance, and willingness to take risk but if she does she risks her image. (*Psycho-social study of outstanding women athletes*) In her study, Mary Sumani (1998) examined that the girl student of X class who are participating in the sports and games are also good in academic achievement. She also suggested that the parents should not express their negative feelings towards girls participation in games and sports (*Interests, opportunities and participation in sports and games in relation to Academic Achievement and personal adjustment of the X class girl students*).

In their empirical study Iyyapillai and Kundan Theresa (2001) examined the women's empowerment status (WES) assessed on the basis of certain variables like economic, education and health status, extent of political awareness, psychological strength and so on. They found that the empowerment of women
depend upon all these determinants. The highly empowered women have scored high in all these determinants when compared with those who are empowered. They also suggested that the spread of education is the most important means for empowerment of women. (*Status inside and outside the Home correlated*).

Swati Shirwadkar (1990) attempted a comparative analysis on the development of women's education in the comparatively backward area of Marthwada. The attitude of men as well as women towards women education was deterrent. It was found that situation was improved with the independence of country and the merger of Marthwada with the state of Maharashtra. (*Education and development of women in Marthwada*). In their empirical study, Mohapatra and Eswar Rao Patnaik (1988) throws light on women’s share a two fold a two fold burden- are on the domestic front and the other on the economic front- in the socio-cultural, and economic development of the country. Women are underestimated and discriminated against all walks of life, in spite of their vital contribution. They also suggested that the three fold strategy of education, employment and health can uplift them from the depth. (*How can we improve socio-economic condition of women*).

Jabbi, M. K. and C. Rajyalakshmi (1993) analyzed the reporting in newspapers of issues related to women. It was found that though reporting of such issues was more extensive at present than in the past and was still given to
mere reporting of events and incidents and was of a more sensational character. They suggested that the need for more investigative, analytical, informative and educational articles. (Issues related to women as reported in news papers). Naresh Kumar (1993) made an attempt in this study to examine the regional dimensions of demographic and socio-economic status of female population in the country. It was found that the status of women is generally lower than that of men and level of status varies significantly from class to class, society to society, region to region (Regional dimensions of the status of women in India). Ajit Kumar (1988), in his study attempts a macro level analyses on the theoretical commitments, policies and programmes and found that its impact on the rural industrial household of Bihar, the most backward state of India have not created any significant changes. He also suggested that a separate “Rural Women Corporation” for the well being of the rural women (Improving the lot of rural women). Koumari Mitra and Gail R. Pool (2000) outlined the gender bias of poverty which underlines the social and economic subordination of women and the effects of gender access to basic amenities such as education, health care, and labor force participation (Why women stay poor: an examination of urban poverty in India).

Rajwade, K (1980), in her study analyses socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Muslim women (Status of Muslim women in Indore City). Aggarwal, M. (1980) analyses the extent to which education was successful in inducing a change in the attitude of Hindu and Muslim women in his study (A


Beena and Sushma (2003) in their study found that the contribution of the self-employed women in unorganized sector is enormous to the economy.
These small business women facilitate certain important activities in the common man's life like food, laundry, disposal of junk, paper (Women Entrepreneurs Managing petty business: a study from Motivational Perspective). Sneha Joshi and Archana Tomar (2003) in their study analyzed the position of women in higher education and bottlenecks in achieving leadership position and they suggested that the action strategies to be done to develop women as educational leaders (Initiative for Women Managers in Higher Education). Haremani Naik (2001) in his study, found that for the women entrepreneurs, the risk perhaps is even greater as she has the additional problems of being in a male dominated area, having few role models and lacking confidence in her business skills (Problems of Women Entrepreneurs - A Pilot study).

Shreegouri Savedi (2001) in her study attempts a macro level analysis on the growth of women entrepreneurship which has socio-economic significance in a country like India where economic participation has been low. By opening a large number of small industrial ventures to provide employment opportunities and achieve balanced regional growth (Women Entrepreneurs in India : Scope and opportunities) Manimekalai and Ganesan (2001) in their study focused on the impact of micro enterprises is creating women entrepreneurs both in rural and urban areas need not be exaggerated. It is also true that the SHG women both in rural and urban areas are really making a revolution both socially and economically in addressing various issues and questioning and establishing their
rights (Women Entrepreneurs in India: Scope and opportunities). Muguntha Raj and Bharathi (2001) in their Study, (Problem of Farm Women in small holdings: A case study in Karnataka) found that women were fully engaged in some task or the other which directly or indirectly contributed to the family economy. Mechanization of agriculture rural development programmes and market oriented economy has accelerated the active participation of rural women at home and also in agricultural and allied activities. But she is not economically empowered (Problem of Farm Women in small holdings. A case study in Karnataka). Mill Koshy and Mary Joseph (2001), in their study, found that women have been associated with economic activity since ages. A need to accord a special place to the role of women and take due recognition of their capabilities have been increasingly recognized at national international level (Women Entrepreneurship in the small scale industrial units: a study of Kerala). Usha Umesh (1999) in her study suggested that a development plan needs a positive and liberal approach to women entrepreneurs through alternative policies (Women Entrepreneurship in the informal sector ; A study of Kerala)

Anitha and Laxmi Mishra (1999) in their study analyses the emergence of women entrepreneurs in a society depends to a greater extent on the economic, religious, cultural, social, psychological and other factors. (Women Entrepreneurship in India) Jaya Anand (1998) in her study, traced that the role and status of women have been undergoing a definite improvement in recent
Paramjit Kaur Chauhan (1998) in his study, found that the proportion of women who migrated for employment is very low both in urban and rural areas (Migration of Women Labour and their Problem: a micro study). Nancy David (1997) in her study, analyzed that by overcoming the industrialization of the privilege within every organization gender equality will go a long way in promoting social justice (India's Women need More than a common Minimum Programme) Sujatha Viswanath (1997) in her study, focused on action for equality of opportunities for women can be effectively taken only if the needs are identified clearly (Focus on Are: Need of the Hour in gender planning) Sneha Joshi and Pushpanadhan (2001) in their study, provide an excellent analysis on the question of women's access to leadership positions in education; explores the need for women educational managers and considers measures that could be undertaken to enroll more and more women into leader positions in education (Empowering Women for educational management). Jaya Indirasan (2002) in her study focused a model that has been developed for a gender audit of colleges in India. And suggested that a need for a gender audit to assess how far educational institutions are taking steps towards achieving the objective of National Educational Policy (Gender Auditing in Women's Colleges).

The literature review relating to the studies conducted on women empowerment reveals that most of the studies covered women in politics, women
status, feminism, women entrepreneurs and few on historical aspects on women.

No attempt is made in the directions of education and information needs of women. Hence the topic chosen by the researcher is appropriate and relevant to the context of women empowerment in the developing countries like India.

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