CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
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The new womanhood has been depicted in one of the resolutions of a woman's organisation thus “We are neither ethereal damsels nor dolls, nor bundles of passions and nerves we are as much human beings as men are and are filled with the same urge for freedom”.

The role of women in a society is very important. All of us are aware that women's education is the key to a better life in the future. A recent World Bank study says that educating girls is not a charity; it is good economics and if developing nations are to abolish poverty they are to educate the girls. The report says “The economic and social returns on investments in education for girls are substantial and on the whole probably greater than those for boys”. There has been a constant search for a unique policy and programme for women and naturally the priority is given to education because education is a tool of social change through which the future women can be shaped. This is also in turn supported by the view of equality, because today equality of sexes is regarded as the basic tenet of modern democracy, especially in the context of the Indian social construction.
Women’s Education in Post Independence India

In the post Independence era women’s education made progress beyond expectations. Among the many changes in social life the most striking one was in respect of education. The Government of India appointed University Education Commission in November 1948, under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. On the importance of women’s education the report observed “there cannot be educated people without educated women”. The report urged to formulate educational schemes that would affect a harmonious adjustment between women's economic interest within and outside their homes.

The Indian Constitution has also laid down that women should have equal opportunities in all respects. It was stated by the University Education Commission that there were two views regarding women’s education. One view emphasizes the traditional role of women as housewife within home and the other view emphasizes the importance of women’s life in public life. The commission pointed out that India greatly needed the service of women outside the four walls of their homes and its backwardness in the last century was due, in no small degree, to the low place in society accorded to women. They insisted that women must be given exactly the same education as men so that they may compete with them on equal terms at school and college as well as in the various profession and service. However, there was a general agreement that for girls as well as for boys education needs to be more closely connected with the home and community.
The rapid expansion of women’s education in India is one of the most striking facts of the post Independence period. The National Committee on Women’s Education was set up by the government of India in 19th May 1958. The significant feature of this report of the National committee on women’s education in rural areas, as suggested by the National Council of Women’s Education was to advise the government on the problems of girls and women’s education, at all levels and stages.

**Indian Women from Economic Perspectives**

With the spread of Modern Education accompanied by the new ideas of equality and self respect, women started acquiring freedom to decide the pattern of life in society. However, this advancement is not uniform in all sections of the Indian society. There are still millions of families where women are kept in subjugated position; yet there is a tendency towards social progress in terms of women’s liberty and economic independence. The modern women are slowly breaking through the shell of ‘the narrow domestic walls and are beginning to partake in the larger life of the nation’.

A women can take her own decision on remaining single or married only when she is economically independent. Economic freedom for women is the only guarantee of social progress. Legal equality of the sexes would help ensure justice to women. In the present economic situations women would like to contribute to family income to meet household expenditure.
With the spread of education there are increasing opportunities thrown open for their economic independence. Participation in broad domestic socially useful activity has also been made possible due to the development of mechanical devices and electric gadgets which arrest to decrease the drudgery of domestic work and permit women to have more leisure.

**Indian Women from Sociological Perspective**

The political and social movements and the women’s organisations have created an ideology of woman-hood which has some broader social purpose in life. Women are slowly realising the fact that the home is not the only centre of activity for them. Even the upper-class women think that they should associate themselves with some social activity and should not while away their leisure time. A number of women are devoting their lives to education political, trade, union, Kisan, academic, social, Cultural or general emancipation work. Women are thus generally realising that they have personalities of their own as humans and that their mission in life does not end with becoming good wives and wise mothers, but also in realising that they are all members of the civic community and of the body policies. The modern women are slowly revising their attitude towards caste, joint family, marriage and such other social institutions.

**Indian Women from Political Perspective**

Women’s participation in the national movement was practically nil in the early years but in participating in the social reform now their sympathy has been expressed in deeds rather than in words.
In the entry of his Indian diary dated Nov. 10, 1977, Edwin Montagu says thus “I received a letter from Jaipur in the vernacular and a request of an interview from the women of India. Here is one of the earliest hints of feminine activity on the political plane”.

The role that Indira Gandhi played in the Indian and the world politics bore testimony to the par excellence to which Indian women could soar in the ‘political sky’.

A Conceptual Analysis of the Present day Role of Indian Women

A model of women in Indian society is portrayed, with essential attributes of being daughter first and then wife and mother. Her role is ordained by the society to be a submissive character. Indian society expects each and every Indian woman to be a loyal partner to her husband in life. She is expected to be the queen of her home.

In due courses social changes have dynamised the infrastructure of the Indian society. She comes outside and mingle with others in multifarious activities connected with social and economic development of the society.

Radical changes are taking place in every aspect of social life. Women who were initially cocooned in the kitchen and hearth are now being gradually pulled out of their cocooned life by the magnitude of the pressures excited by the social changes. This gradual pull paved way for the changing role of women in Indian society. Nation’s expectations and the economic criterion of the society have brought in changes in the role of women.
The present day woman is biologically bound by a traditional role of procreation. Because of education and employment she comes out of the family and mingles with the society. Therefore her role expands. She is expected to cater to occupational, religious, political and recreational roles. In transition women have become bread winners to supplement the family income. If educated, she can seek a suitable job and occasionally she can assume an informal role of being a social worker/helper.

Today the role of women has changed dramatically. A woman perceives herself to be a productive and constructive unit of national development. Hence the educational system must be geared to meet all the needs of the women population. In 1958 National Committee on Women’s Education under the chairmanship of Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh recommended the two existing views on women, the dominant opinion was that (i) a woman did not have much of a role to play outside the home, and even if she did, this was definitely secondary and subsequent to the demands and exigencies of her role within the home, and (ii) a woman should have open to her all avenues of life which are open to men. Also the Committee on Status of Women (1964) stated that, “In the progressive society of tomorrow life should be a joint venture of men and women. Men should share the responsibilities of life and women in turn should share the social and economic responsibilities of men”. In this connection I wish to quote the observation made by the learned author Mr. Natarajan. “If a person who died a
hundred years ago came of life to-day the first and most important change that would strike him is the revolution in the position of women”.

**Upliftment of Women**

Women of the Tamil Sangam age enjoyed a respectable status in the society and they excelled in various arts including education. Their occupations differed from one and to another but their patriotism, unity, charity and hospitality remained the same. But literacy reached such a low ebb after 1857 that there was hardly one woman in a hundred who could read and write. This was so because of the evil Socio-religious practices, sinister customs, irrational religious rites and inhuman superstitions and ceremonies, unknown in the ancient period which had crept into Hindu Society.

From the date of the establishment of the University of Madras up to 1893 only 183 women had passed the Matriculation examination. From 1900 onwards there was a radical change in the attitude towards women’s education and Hindu and Muslim girls took to collegiate education.

By the end of the 19th century and from the beginning of the 20th century there was lot of change in the life of women in the Madras province. It was due to the long prevailing British rule and the imitation of British customs among the people. They also had English education which resulted in the emergencies of a number of social and religious reforms.

Dr. Muthu Lakshmi Reddy had high education in the medical field for the first time. She also served as the first woman legislative member of Tamil Nadu
Assembly. Subbulakshmi Ammal had great service to widowed women and orphan. Thus during the dawn of Independence a large number of women came out of their seclusion and fought for their rights such as right to property, equality, education and office.

In 1917, Agitation for franchise for women was started by Sarojini Naidu and she also urged for expansion of education for girls. As a result, the reforms of 1919 provided voting rights to women in India. Social solidarity among women is essential for their upliftment. Unfortunately this is not found among the Indian women to the extent needed.

The year 1975 was declared as the International Women’s year. The period from 1976 to 1985 was announced as the Decade of Women by the United Nations. Women in India have been described as “the country’s largest oppressed group”.

In Tamil Nadu the progress of education and particularly women’s education had improved and it has changed their position in the society. They preferred to work as teachers and they were responsible for creating awareness among the women folk about the social evils practiced and the legal protection given to them. The educated doctors and nurses had shown reluctance to go to rural areas thus depriving the rural women from getting better health services.

In the last two decades due to advancement of science, the household work has been made easier and quicker by the introduction of different types of time saving gadgets in India. The result is that women have time to spare after
doing their household work. They want to utilise the leisure for personal and social development. Indian women have achieved reputation as active politicians, efficient administrators and good jurists. The old order which confined women to the home as servants and helpers to their men folk is being replaced by a new one in which women increasingly undertake to fill many roles, in the home as wives, mothers and home-makers, and outside it, as partners and co-workers with men in different types of enterprises.

Women’s organisations like “Forum Madras” and “Sneha” contribute for women’s upliftment. However, their services were not utilised by the rural women. This was because of low literacy in rural areas. The spread of literacy to the rural areas improve the status of rural women.

Swami Vivekananda said that just as a bird could not fly with its one wing only, a nation would not march forward if the women are left behind. Education of women is a pre-requisite for reshaping and transforming the rural communities from the state of deprivation to prosperity and prolonged stagnation to sustained development.

The establishment of Mother Teresa Women’s University in Tamil Nadu may be considered as a beginning to achieve the goal of women’s upliftment by bringing social changes.

The status of women in a society is the true index of its cultural, social, religious and spiritual levels. The position of women in Indian society is very complicated. Women represent a kind of social problem in India. The majority of
them are illiterates, economically backward and always dependent to men. The names of Gorgi and Mithreye in Vedic literature were the samples for the glorified position of women in Ancient India. Avvaiyar and Kannagi are the example for the learned and chaste women of ancient Tamil Nadu.

Several men had contributed for the achievement in the upliftment of women. The list includes Mahatma Gandhi, Subramanya Bharathi, Thiru Vi-ka, E.V.R.Periyar, C.N.Annadurai etc.

Many women have contributed a lot for women’s development. Some women have risen to greater positions in various spheres of activity after overcoming the limitations of social and economic constraints. The long and unending list includes the following names from Tamil Nadu, Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy, Mrs.Ambujammal, Mrs.Krishna Rao, Lady Venkata Subba Rao, Mrs.Clubwala Jadhav, Mrs.M.S.Subblakshmi, Mrs.M.L.Vasantha Kumari and D.K.Pattammal. A score of others have remained pioneers on different fields. In Tamil Nadu we had J.Jeyalalitha as the first elected Woman Chief Minister. It is all because of the awareness created among the women by the spread of education and services of various organisations.

Dr.Annie Besant and Mrs.M.Cousines deserve more admiration as foreigners and for their dedicated services in women’s upliftment. Their names shine as bright as stars in the annals of the history of women’s movement in Tamil Nadu. The above said ladies remained as “Creative minorities” in awakening the womenfolk to improve the status of them.
Annie Besant always said, allow women to grow freely, to develop as nature bids them and they will find room for home cares in their minds; and the warmest nestling place in their bosom will be the heaven of little child. But if you check, fret and carp at them, you will not succeed in keeping them back, but you will succeed in souring them and in making them hard and bitter.

Lady Mehrbai Tata's contribution to the women's movement, and her noble participation in the uplift and emancipation of Indian women will never be forgotten by her sisters in the country. Lady Tata was one of the moving spirits in the formation of the National council of women in India. She was very much interested in the education of Indian girls, and realised the defects of the educational system in India. Her chief aim was to bind the educational system with the social and political system of the country. She was known by all her friends to have been a "Women's Woman", and yet, her intellect and energies were almost masculine.

The stage of feminine upliftment in specific societies appears to be the major determinate in the kind and extent of education offered to them.

Distance Education

The majority of the Indian population in rural areas are poor and their opportunities for higher education are very meager. Education is an essential ingredient input to the quality of life. Distance Education provides new resolution and positive step towards social equity in terms of educational opportunity. Besides being a very tool for meeting the current and future demands on the
system of education the world over, Distance Education is emerging as a discipline on its own right. This can make the process of learning possible without attending a formal institution.

Distance education carried different names such as home study, postal tuition, correspondence education etc., in different parts of the world. Distance Education is an expression which officially replaced the earlier correspondence education in the twelfth world conference organized by International Council for Correspondence Education held in Canada in 1982.

India has one of the largest distance education systems in the world. Its tradition is as old as Ekalavya. Yet the girls for whom this facility was created are the last benefited. It is the urban male and not the rural girls who is the greatest beneficiary. The situation needs to be reversed immediately.

Distance education was formally introduced in 1962 as a Correspondence course in the Delhi University. Today, there are more than 60 institutes engaged in this field. There are four State Universities and one National University. Together with the University departments they constitute 12 percent of the total enrolment in higher education. By the end of the 8th Plan, it is expected to be 16.5 percent.

In absolute terms it means an additional enrolment of 4 lakhs students.

In September 1995 IGNOU (National Open University named after Indira Gandhi) completed 10 years and its is time the performance of the university is assessed with reference to its objectives.
IGNOU came into existence a year before the National Policy on Education (1986) was finalised and approved by Parliament. The major objectives of IGNOU were to widen access to higher education, directed particularly to the disadvantaged groups, organising programmes of continuing education and initiating special programmes for specific target groups like women, people living in backward, hilly and remote areas. Rural women were identified as the priority sector. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were another priority, particularly girls, who were more deprived than girls in the general category.

At present IGNOU offers 43 programmes. There are 16 regional centres and 220 study centres located throughout India. In 1992, a Distance Education Council was established as an apex body to operationalise the functions assigned to IGNOU. According to the IGNOU'S Annual Report for the year 1992-93, the male – female ratio of enrollment is 73.3 percent for males and 26.3 percent for females. As per the objectives, this ratio needs to be reversed. As regards the Urban – Rural ratio, is 79.1 percent for Urban while it is only 20.9 percent for enrollment, which also needs to be reversed. The percentage of rural women enrollment is not known but judged from the above percentages it cannot be more than 10 percent. Therefore, unless drastic measures are taken, IGNOU will cater only to the urban society, while the facility is basically for the rural population.

In the past, distance education has been impoverished and funds pumped into the formal system. Unless the trend is reversed, "education for all" will remain on paper. What we badly need and sadly lack is the faith in the open
system as against the closed one which has outlived its utility and over-run its own credibility. A conventional formal system puts the institution first and the student later the scales are reversed in the open system where the student comes first and the institution later. In this system, our priorities should be women motivated, drop-outs and the handicapped in rural areas. Time has also come to liberate the correspondence course from the thralldom of the rigid university system. It is rather ironical that the profits generated by the Distance Education System are used to cater to the needs of the formal system.

Distance Education in Indian Perspective.

India achieved independence in 1947 and fundamental changes were brought out. As a democratic welfare state India announced ‘Universalisation of Education’ and “Equal Opportunities for All” as the basic principles of educational policy of independent India. As the number of institutions increased, the heavy reliance on formal institutions of providing education developed. There were disparities in curriculum content, mismatch between education and development needs, inequalities in education, imbalances in education and employment, rising costs of education and the funds the countries would be able and willing to invest in it. An alternative system of education is needed.

Moreover, the twin phenomena of ‘Demographic Explosion’ as well as ‘Knowledge Explosion’ and the wild eraze for degrees and diplomas have made ‘Distance Education’ and particularly that ‘Postal courses’ to acquire root in the Third World Countries in quite distinct a way than the related scenario in the
developed realm. In India the two critical problems, faced are population and illiteracy. Both are interrelated. The challenge of illiteracy in India is gigantic.

Due to the inadequates, rigidities and limitations of the formal system, "the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1961 resolved for the introduction of correspondence Courses in India". The Expert Committee on Correspondence Course and Evening Colleges in 1961 headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari (Ex-Chairman UGC) said that "the correspondence method admits of greater flexibility than classroom education, particularly in the combination of subjects leading to a degree and this is an advantage that should be fully exploited in the interest of sound education". It also felt that the Correspondence courses expand and equalise educational opportunity.

This report contributed a lot to the entry of correspondence education into the entry Indian educational scene.

During the decade, 1970-80, nineteen universities started institutes of Directorates of correspondence courses in education. They were Himachal Pradesh (1971); Andhra Pradesh and Sri Venkateshwara (1972); CIEFL Hyderabad (1973); Patna (1974); Bhopal, Utkal and Bombay (1975); Madurai Kamaraj; Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan 1976; Osmania and Kerala (1977); Allahabad and SNDT Women’s (1978); Annamalai and Udaipur (1979).

At present, 24 Universities in India, not to speak of innumerable private institutions have started undergraduate, Post – Graduate, legal and teacher – training courses, with the basic aim of producing a "second chance" to those who
have missed the opportunities of higher education in our society. The total enrollment in the 24 Correspondence Courses units in India during 1979 – 80 was 1.37 lakhs, out of which Madurai and Mysore together account of 66,184 students, that is 48.4% of the total.

Distance Education in Tamil Nadu

Tradition has been that the people of Tamil Nadu have taken the best possible advantage of education under all systems. The universities in Tamil Nadu introduced distance education in the 70's. Prior to that period the students of Tamil Nadu followed the courses introduced by the Delhi University as a pilot project in 1962. Even prior to this period, they earnestly went to different universities such as Nagpur, Bhagalpur, Katmandu and Utkal to take degrees through external studies. In fact, the largest number of enrollment in Delhi correspondence school has been from Tamil Nadu for a number of years from its inception and this position encouraged Mysore University to introduce correspondence courses and open university schemes in 1969.

Madurai Kamaraj University was the first University in Tamil Nadu to adopt distance education in 1976, followed by Annamalai University in 1979 and Madras University 1981. Despite the proliferation of distance education directorates in several parts of the country, the three Universities have been attracting very large number of students as shown below:-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of University</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1979 - 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annamalai</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>18,388</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Madurai Kamaraj</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>48,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The following are the courses offered by the distance education directorates of the respective Universities:

**Madurai Kamaraj University**


**Annamalai University**


**Madras University**

B.A., B.Sc.,(Maths), B.Com., M.A., M.Com., B.Lib.Sc.,

It may be observed that the distance education directorates of Madurai Kamaraj and Annamalai universities have fallen in line with universities like Himachal Pradesh University in introducing teacher education i.e., B.Ed and M.Ed courses which are most sought after by teachers who are working in secondary schools. Annamalai University distance education directorate has taken the lead in
introducing non-traditional courses like M.A(Psychology), M.Sc.,(Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology), B.A.L., B.G.L., and professional and job-oriented diploma courses in law, Management, Computer science etc.,

The syllabi prescribed for the correspondence courses are the same as in regular courses. The method of teaching adopted under distance education/open systems are printed lessons, contact, programmes, guidance and library facilities at study centres. Besides in Madurai University correspondence courses, enrollment has been on the increase from year to year and the system of education has been a boon to tens of thousands of individuals to acquire and improve their knowledge of subjects, better their prospects of employment,career advancement, increase in emoluments and also status. It is also helping regular college students who in the middle of their courses of study take up jobs, get married or move outside their residence to continue their studies through distance education by joining the same course at the appropriate stage i.e., second year or third year of the course.

Advantages of Distance Education

Distance mode of education is known for its flexibility. It is less restrictive in terms of pre-requisites, namely, pre-entry qualifications, duration of study, age, station of study etc., Other reasons are that it uses methods of teaching based on real life situations; that it accepts students from all walks of life without the rigid formalities of the traditional system; and that it adapts the learning process to the dictates of the learner's own setting with limitations. Moreover, a
variety of teaching media are employed, such as correspondence scripts, radio, TV and telephones and the precise curricula and content is as close as possible to the learner's felt needs. Above all at the sublime, it considers education as a life long process and a stimulus for personal perfection in juxtaposition to social advancement.

Times change so also the tools and technology is and more so ideas and needs. The key to success in a progressing human social order lies in "Tackling today's problem with today's tools only instead of earlier days."

Distance education has a great sociological justification as it can help not only in extending education but also in equalising educational opportunities. It can carry education to varied and dispersed student populations, even in remote rural areas, and it can provide instruction at all levels. If distance education institutions can ensure proper organisation of instruction and motivate leaders to evolve a careful study programme, it can prove a much more effective alternative by providing vocational education even to teachers and thereby speed up the expansion of education in the backward sections of society.

It is a system that educates the worker without taking him out of the production process thus helping him to earn while learning.

**Making Distance Education Work**

Distance education system has emerged as a result of the phenomenal expansion of education at elementary and secondary levels. The number of students seeking admission in institutions of higher education has increased at the
rate of about 10 percent per annum over the last three decades. For meeting the needs of the increasing number of colleges and universities more and more courses are innovated. With the ever increasing numbers and relative paucity of resources, the strategy of distance teaching has been evolved to reach out to the 'leftovers'. The constitutional obligation with regard to democratisation of educational opportunities can only be met by the distance education system.

The success of distance education cannot be weighed in terms of the quantitative expansion of the system and the profits earned. The academic credibility and quality of courses has to be maintained in order to meet the demands of distance learner. The threat built within the system is always with regard to its quality.

The distance learner is to be made to approach learning as an act of discovery rediscovering the facts so that he can exercise autonomy in learning through self-reward. The self-instructional material should ensure active involvement of the learner with the content so that he may learn without external reinforcement. Besides the learner, when presented with problems and made to solve them, develops the habit of self-learning through the process of problem solving.

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was set up in September 1985 as an apex national institution to coordinate the development of distance education in India. It has a twin role to play in higher education scenario:
As a University offering academic programmes leading to certificates/degrees/diplomas; and

As a governing body monitoring and coordinating the standards and functions of distance education institutions across the country.

As Edward Shils has pointed out, we live in socio-economic milieu characterised by the fantasies of plenitude on the one hand the reality of scarce resources on the other. Consequently not only the input on, but also the modes of education must be judged in terms of broadbased, speedy and effective social and economic growth. If this is overlooked all that we achieve through elitist education is merely to extend, alarmingly, the already yawning gab between the educated and the uneducated. Moreover, we will also, as Robert Gaudirio has put it, add to ignorance and presumption, “the conceit that a degree proves(one’s) education”. It is in narrowing this gap that the rationale of continuing education seems to lie. This is again, reinforced by the need for a rapid pace of modernization which is an indispensable condition of meaningful social change. Therefore, in a society dominated by conservative ethos, to wait for the benefits of the slow process of elitist education to percolate to the masses is to nurse a fantasy which virtually liquidates the basic aims of education as such. Above all, if the contemporary explosion of knowledge is not speedily and pervasively incorporated into the Indian context, we will be, merely perpetuating the fallacies inherent in the derivative educational system to which we seem to have clung too long. The concept of continuing Education is, in this regard, a concerted bid to transcend these fallacies.
Statement of the Problem

The problem under investigation is entitled “Upliftment of Rural Women folk in the outskirts of Chennai by Correspondence Courses”.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the primary and secondary objectives for the present study.

Primary Objective

The main objective of the study is to find out factors for the upliftment of rural women folk by educational attainment got from correspondence courses.

Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives are

✓ To find out the relationship between upliftment of single and married women
✓ To determine the upliftment of women of different age groups
✓ To study the upliftment of women who belong to different castes
✓ To study the reasons for studying through correspondence education
✓ To find out the relationship between the upliftment of women who are living in joint and nuclear families
✓ To know the socio-economic status of women gained through correspondence education
✓ To study the major upliftment in the area because of correspondence education
To study the social awareness of women gained through correspondence education

To suggest certain feasible ways and means for the upliftment of women

To recommend suitable suggestions for future

Tool used for the study

Survey method was identified as the suitable method for the investigation.

To investigate the details as proposed in the study, questionnaires were prepared and responses were collected.

Sample used for the study

The study is based on a sample of 242 women living in villages in the outskirts of Chennai. The entire rural women population was considered for the study and for this purpose the women were categorised into 8 groups such as

- Single women
- Married women
- Women born in rural areas
- Women born in urban areas
- Women living in nuclear families
- Women living in joint families
- Employed women
- Unemployed women

Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the rural women who are in the outskirts of Chennai. Since it is based on the women living in the outskirts of Chennai, the study is of semi-rural type.