CHAPTER-3

WOMEN STATUS IN INDIA AN OVERVIEW
The worth of a civilization can be judged by the place given to women in the society. Of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture, one of the greatest is the honored place ascribed to women. Manu, the great lawgiver, said long ago, 'where women are honored there reside the gods'. According to ancient Hindu scriptures, a man without the participation of his wife can perform no religious rites with perfection. A wife's participation is important in some religions, such as in Hinduism. Married men along with their wives are allowed to perform sacred rites on various important festivals. Wives are, thus befittingly called 'Ardhangani' (better half). They are given not only importance but also equal position with men.

The Muslim influence on India caused considerable deterioration in the status of women. They were deprived of their rights of being equal with men. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started a movement against this inequality and subjugation. The contact of Indian culture with that of the British also brought improvement in the status of women. The third factor in the revival of women's position was the influence of Mahatma Gandhi who induced women to participate in the Freedom Movement. As a result of this retrieval of freedom, women in Indian have distinguished themselves as teachers, nurses, airhostesses, booking clerks, receptionists, and doctors. They are also participating in politics and administration. But in spite of this amelioration in the status of women, the evils of illiteracy, dowry, ignorance, and economic slavery would have to be fully removed in order to give them their rightful place in Indian society. This situation led the investigator to work in this area and collect the views of postgraduate students of education regarding the status of women in the past present and elicit the responses to the question of status of women in Indian society.

**FAMILY SYSTEM IN VEDIC PERIOD**

The roots of the Hindu way of living are in the Aryan Society of earlier period. The unit of Aryan society was the family which was patriarchal. The family unit was a large one, generally extending over three generations and with the male offspring’s living together. The birth of a son was especially welcomed in the Aryan family as the son’s presence was essential in important ceremonies.
The most striking feature of the family during the Vedic period is that it is more or less a joint family. According to J. Karve “A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred”\(^1\).

In the words of Davis, “The joint family consists of males having a common male ancestor, female offspring not yet married, and women brought into the group by marriage. All of these persons might live in a common household or in several households near to one-another. In any case, so long as the joint family holds together, its members are expected to contribute to the support of the whole and to receive from it a share of the total produce”\(^2\). As per I.P. Desai, “We call that house a joint family which had greater generation depth than under family and the members of which are selected to one another by property, income and the mental rights and obligations. According to Jolly, “In a joint family not only parents and children, brothers and steps live on the common property, but it may sometime include ascendants and collaterals up to many generations”\(^3\).

**CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY DURING VEDIC PERIOD**

**Joint Habitation**

Members of the family live in one house where father and mother, sons, son’s wives and their children live together. No separation or particularization of accommodation is thinkable in the joint family.

**Common Eating Place**

There is a joint kitchen for all the members of a joint family. It was commented by Brihaspati that the people who had a joint kitchen, their ancestors, Gods and Brahmins are worshipped at the same place.

**Joint Property**

Besides common eating place, there was a common shelter. It was another striking characteristic of joint property. The members of the family jointly undertake the production and consumption and are joint owners of the wealth of the family.
Because of its joint ownership and presence of o-operation among the members it has been called Co-operative Institution.

**Headship**

The whole life of members revolved around the head of the family who is generally the eldest male among the members. He rules over the family and subsequently obeyed by all the members. The head rules the family with love, affection and persuasion. It is the duty of the head to keep in view all the requirements of every member and Endeavour to satisfy them all.

**RELGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL INVOLVEMENT**

The members of the family enjoyed an intimate religious and spiritual affinity. Duties are emphasized more than the as rights status in the family determined by the role of a member in the family.

**Honor to Guests**

Guests are treated as next to God and they are always welcome. The hosts provide every facility to the guests without paying any attention to his economic condition. Dishonor to the guest is treated as a sin:

The joint family had many advantages

i) It secured the advantages for leisure to the members

ii) It secured economy of expenditure

iii) It provided opportunities for leisure to the members

iv) In a joint family the orphans find a comfortable asylum instead of being thrown out

v) It fostered great virtues like sacrifice, affection, co-operation, spirit of selfless service, broad-mindedness among its members and makes the family a cradle of social virtue
CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN VEDIC PERIOD

In the Vedic period, the women enjoyed equal status with men. They were respected and honored the position of women was, on the whole, free.

Hindus consider man and women as represent in the two aspects of one person. Scriptures say that “Having divided his body into two parts. He the Lord (Brahman) became male by means of the (one) half, and female by means of the other, and on the female he begot Viral” (Manu: 132). Lord Siva consists of a body of two halves one is of male and the other is of female and he is called “Ardhanareeshwara”. Women was considered more powerful than man and treated as goddess of “Shakhti”. Thus man and women are inseparable.

The society was governed by certain established norms approved by Dharma Shastras. The highest social ends in ancient Indian society were four: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Women along with man participated in all activities equally and hence she was considered as “Saha Dharma Charini”

In the Vedic period, the education of women was looked upon as so important that the Arthavanaveda asserted, ‘the success’ the Brahmacharya’. According to Sarvanu Karmanika there are as many as twenty women who composed the hymns of the Rig Veda. Some of the renowned Vedic women are Lopamudra, Maitraye, and Gargyechakuave.

During the Upanishad period there were great Brhamavadinis who were enriched with deep knowledge of philosophy. Brihadaranyakopanishad had the reference that the great thinker Yagnavalkya faced the greatest challenge from his wife Gargi, who asked very difficult questions to answers when Yagnavalkya decided to divide the property to his own wives and take Vairagya. Maitraye preferred to get initiation to the knowledge of Brahmavidya rather choose to inherit her husband’s property.

There is an argument that the Vedic Desai (women in servitude) was captured subjugated, and enslaved by the conquering Aryas. But Ram Mohan Roy argued against the subjugation of women. He used the Maitreyi episode to show that in three area of spirituality women were not inferior to men. He stated that Yagnavalkya had
imparted divine knowledge of the most difficult nature to Maitreyi and that she had not only been able to comprehend the high philosophy but had also actually attained divine knowledge.\(^4\)

Joines made a passing reference to Gargi who is considered eminent for her piety and learning during the ‘Golden Age’ of Aryans.

Peary Chand Mitra provided evidence for his argument that in the past women had access to Sanskrit learning and had provided many notable philosophies and debates. He also quoted form the ‘Mahanirban Tantra’ which stated that ‘the daughter should be nursed an educated with care and be married to a learned man.

Speier portrays of ancient Indian womanhood thus:

“A thousand years B.C. Hindu women appear to have been as free as Trojan dames or the daughters of Judge. Hymns in the Rig Veda quoted them with respect and affection. Even in succeeding phase, when Brahmins contemplated the soul beneath the Himvat women attended the discourses. We found in one of the Upanishads a king holding a solemn sacrifice and inviting his chief guests to state their opinions on theology. Amongst these guests a learned female named Gargi is conspicuous. A more pleasing instance of women’s interest in holy themes is afforded by a conversation between Yagnavalkya and Maitreyi. In conversation, Maitreyi chose’ immorality’ in place of mere riches’ and learns to ‘contemplate’ the soul above since everything is soul, the aim being to merge all the thoug and feeling in to the universal soul. Thus Vedic women are being epitomized by Gargi and Maitreyi\(^5\)’.

Bader noted with approval the fact that women were no excluded from ‘labouring’ for the sacrifice as it was women who collected the Kusa grass for the sacred enclosure, and the plant from which some juice was extracted; they had the right of offering sacrifices in their own names well as by comprising hymns. The example of Vispala who participated in battles is cited to show that women had been the recipients of the beneficence of the Gods.
Manu: the parent of Hindu Jurisprudence’ glorified ascetic widowhood Manu in plain terms enjoins a widow to continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing austere duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practicing the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to only one husband.

In Aryan Golden Age wherein men were free, brave, vigorous, fearless, themselves civilized and others, noble, and deeply spiritual; and the women were learned, free and highly cultured; conjointly they offer sacrifices to the Gods, listening ‘sweetly’ to discourses, and preferring spiritual upliftment to the pursuit of mere riches.

Additionally women represented the best example of conjugal love, offering the supreme sacrifice of their lives as a demonstration of their feeling for their partners in the brief journey of life. This was to be an enduring legacy of Vedic women who performed sacrifices to the Gods by the side of her husband as an equal partner in offering oblations.

In ancient India, marriage for male and female was considered necessary from religious as well as social view-point. There was a fair amount of choice in the selection of a mate and very early marriages were not customary. Marriage was not considered necessary for every girl. Women who remained unmarried and aged at the house of parents were called “Amajur”. Both ‘dowry’ and ‘bride-price’ were recognized. Later Vedic literature refers to the remarriage of widows, generally, to the husband’s brother.

Ancient Hindu scripture does not mention the prevalence of Sati system. Neither there are any references of widow burning. To quote Shakuntala Rao Sastri “The Rig Veda does not mention anywhere the practice of the burning or burial of widows with their dead husbands”.

Monogamy appears to have been the accepted pattern, although polygamy was known and polyandry is mentioned in the later writings. Marriage within related groups was strictly regulated.
Marriage age in the Rig Veda seems to be 16 or 17 the wife as a *grihapatni* controlled the household. The wife reached the climax of her power and importance when she became a mother of a male child.

The father’s property was generally inherited by son. The daughter could inherit it only if she were to be the only child of her parents. Right to property was known in moveable things like cattle, horse, gold and ornaments and so also in immovable property like land and house.

According to Vedic hymns, wife and husband had joint ownership rights of the property. Citing many instances, Romeshchandra Dutt comments, “The Hindu women held an honoured place (In Vedic period) they inherited and possessed property; they took share in sacrifices and religious duties; they attend great assemblies and state occasions; they also distinguished themselves in science and learning at their times considered as intellectual companion of their husband, as the friends and loving mate in the journey of life of their partners, in their religious duties, and the centre of their domestic bliss, Hindu wives were honored and respected in ancient times”.

The bulk of colonial writing in India focused on demonstrating the peculiarities of Vedic civilization, and the barbarian practices pertaining to women by overlooking the actual status of women in the society.

Mill states about Hindu women, “Nothing can exceed the habitual contempt which Hindus entertain for their women. Their women are held in extreme degradation, excluded from reading the sacred books, deprived of education and of a share in the parental property. That remarkable barbarity, the wife held unworthy to eat with her husband, is prevalent in Hindustan6.”

According to Deb, “Men in India looked upon women as household slaves and treated them with a superciliousness which even the Sultan of Turkestan does not show towards his meanest serf7.”

Max Muller8 quotes from the *Srauta and Griya Sutra* where it is stated that women were not allowed to learn the sacred songs of the Vedas. There is nothing in Max Muller’s writings to suggest that he considered women to be spiritual or learned in the Vedic period.
Speier\textsuperscript{9} says that Manu’s code depicted changed status of women which is characterized as “obedience to her husband is the beginning, and the middle, and the end of female duty”. Speier further states that the women’s rights “were wholly ignored by the Brahmanical Code” because daughters and wives are often too happy to require rights.

Bader\textsuperscript{10} says that Manu did not recognize the right of a women to lift up her soul to God and he debased her instead by the exclusive adoration of a ‘creature similar to herself, women’s zeal was now to be demonstrated in the service of the husband instead of a spiritual father, in the care of the home instead of the maintenance of a sacred fire’.

The traditions landed the women into slavery by fixing her duties to serve like Dasi (servant); to feed like mother; give advice like a minister; and give conjugal satisfaction like Rambha of heaven. At the same time, women were considered to be under the protection of father during childhood; under the protection of husband during the youth and under the protection of son during old age. If the woman lost her right to property she would lose independence and becomes a lifelong dependent and dasi.

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The goal of the women, as spelt out by the ancient Hindu legislators was Pativrata dharma (devotion to the husband). Brahminical law made woman the property of man and it commanded her to identify her life with her husband’s. The purity and chastity of woman was considered very important in family life.

Bader says, “The law commanded the woman to identify her life with her husband’s; and she went ‘further’ and identified her death with his and she accepted the traditional fate of woman is that death upon the funeral pyre when her husband would die. For her, “Ardent piety, spiritual and ascetic tenderness, complete abnegation of herself, unlimited devotion to her family, boundless need of love, formed the character of such women”

Rajput women have kshatriyani virtue such as the resolve to mount the pyre to allow the men to go and fight without the fear of their women folk being ravished. When the kingdom was surrounded by alien armies, the Rani calls all the womenfolk together and performs sati to prove that they are chaste while their men are heroes.
Women of the past were valorized in two separate ways; for their spiritual potential and their role as *sahadhaminis* (partners in religious duties) in ancient times, and as heroic resisters to alien rulers who cheerfully chose death rather than dishonor.

Swami Dayananda believed that in the ideal society of the Vedic period women lived in idyllic existence, fully participated in all areas of public life, and it was Muslim influence that taught Hindus to imprison their women inside the house.\(^\text{11}\)

Early marriages have become common to get the guarantee off chaste. This tradition led towards child marriage. A large proportion of upper caste women were widowed due to child marriages. With the abolition of sati by the British in 1829, the number of widows increased. The management of sexuality was the key to the thorny problem of widow remarriage. Throughout the nineteenth century the most problematic category of women was widows, and reforms were aiming at, to resolve the problem by propagating the abolition of child marriages and encouraging widow marriages. If remarriage of widows is not allowed “widows and widowers will resort to formation and adultery, procures abortion, and commits wicked deeds. For these reasons the objector suggested that remarriage was desirable.

The miseries faced by women in nineteenth and twentieth century’s (female seclusion) are purdah sati, child marriage, kulin polygamy and enforced widowhood which are unknown in ancient times’. The present day Constitution of India provided equality between sexes and equality before law based on Human Rights of U.N. declaration.

The present chapter attempts to provide a historical context to the study of position of women in Indian society. In order to have a better understanding of the present social structure and position of women therein, it is imperative to know the operation of various historical, political, cultural and economic factors molding the society. And such historical perspective is all the more necessary in the case of a society with a continuous history of more than three thousand years. It is also crucial to have a brief look at the past society, because some of the norms and values affecting women today have their roots in the past. Of course, the attempt here is only to provide a general overview and not to go into the details of periodisation and its controversy.
Though the necessity of reviewing women’s status across historical phase is non-controversial, the task is fraught with innumerable difficulties. The hazards experienced while examining the position of women in contemporary society as described by Prof. Srinivas, acquire much more validity in terms of delineation of women’s position in early society. Prof. Srinivas remarks “It (The changing position of Indian women) has many facets and generalization is well high impossible because of the existence of considerable variation among regions between rural and urban areas, among classes, and finally among different religious, ethnic and caste groups. While in certain contexts the Indian sub-continent is single cultural region, in many other it is heuristically more rewarding to look upon it as a congeries of micro regions, differences between which are crucial”. Historian Romila Thapar also refers to the same predicament when she remarks “Within the Indian subcontinent there have been infinite variations on the status of women diverging according to cultural milieu, family structure, class, caste, property rights, and morals”. Besides, the difficulty of providing a monolithic picture of women’s position at various phases of development, there is a serious difficulty of locating authentic sources which can help construct a profile of Indian women. This problem has acquired significance when history is being looked at through subaltern sources and with a feminist perspective. Thus while on the one hand, historical documents that have been discovered and used by the mainstream scholar’s, tend to be elites, on the other hand, the historians who have attempted to build up history from the very beginning have not paid enough attention to women’s problems. Recently, some women historians and Sanskrit’s Scholars have attempted different interpretation of the original Brahminical texts; also, some of them are trying to discover new data sources. Sukumari Bhattacharya, a Sanskrit scholar, while unraveling the picture of women in the Mahabharata mentioned. “The Mahabharata presents two different pictures of women, one of which emerges from its prescriptive section and the other from the core section and there is a clear dichotomy between the two”. Further, she feels that women in the core epic behave with much greater freedom while those in other section are presented as mere chattels. Similarly Uma Chakravarti, a feminist historian, while examining several of Ramayana story, remarks: “An analysis of the development of the Sita legend in a historical context however reveals that the emphasis on chastity and the assumption that ideal marriage is based on female devotion are aspects which were grafted on,
to an originally simple story. Over the centuries, important details were added to the story, have had crucial influences on the shaping of the feminine identity. Thus only the beginnings have been made to reconstruct history from the women's perspective. India's past being a very lengthy one, much concerted and collaborative efforts are to be made to attain the goal.

It is evident from all available accounts that in early Vedic society, women occupied the same position as men. Reference to complete gender equality is found in all parts of Vedic literature. Women reached a very high standard of learning and culture, and made all-around progress. They could move freely with their husbands, and were employed in a number of professions. Some of the Vedic poets were women. The Rig Veda, the oldest known scripture in the world, containing hymns (suktas), was composed by as many as twenty-seven women. Some of these hymns are frank expressions of their inner womanly desire for a loving husband, a happy and prosperous home life free from co-wives and sons. Literary women scholars like Godha, Ghisa, Vishwahara, Apalla, Rousha and others were well known and acknowledge for their intellectual and literary abilities. The Mahabharata describes in details several women scholars like Shiva, Shandiha, Shuvravathi, Sulma, Dhararini, Naina and Vedavathi. The practice of allowing women to select a husband out of a chosen group ruled out the possibility of child marriages. A man could not undertake any social or religious duty without his wife. Divorce was not permitted and there is evidence to show that levirate and widow marriages prevailed. Sati did not exist in the Vedic age. Women has absolute control over parinaya (gifts and property received at the time of their marriage) and it was considered a sin if relatives took away stridhana (property exclusively belonging to the wife). Since Manu was the first who codified the laws, let us take a glimpse at what he said on women. He wisely pronounced that “where, however, they are not honored, there the gods rejoice. Where, however, they are not honored, there all sacred rites prove useless: And he further declared; “In whatever” house a women is not duly honored, there all sacred rites prove useless.” And he further declared: ‘In whatever’ house a women is not duly honored, that, with all that belongs to it shall utterly perish”. Later, in the subsequent period, while glorifying our women we started taking away all these rights and privileges. During the period of the Smritis, the period of codification of social laws, women were bracketed with ‘Sudras, and were denied the right to study the
Vedas. Marriage or domestic life became compulsory for women and unquestioning devotion to, and self-effacing service, of their husbands their only duty. Women of course, were protected at home and in society. Manu, who was also called Brihaspati, laid down that if a man violated an unwilling woman, his property was to be confiscated and he would be paraded as an ass. Reference to Punarbhā (the remarried women) appears in Dharma Sastras. When her husband says, “Narada is lost” (i.e., gone to no one knows where), or dead, or is impotent or has become a religious ascetic or been expelled from the caste, these are the five cases of legal necessity in which a women may be justified in taking another husband. The Moghuls, during their rule, allowed a sudden fall in the dignified position occupied by Indian women. Education for women was stopped and they became victims of evil practices like early child marriage with the attendant fallouts. The Purdah system came to be established in this period even within the four walls of the joints family homes. Though in matters concerning ownership of property and rights to divorce, Muslim women were to some extent protected by their law, in practical application, due to threat of instant divorce and little maintenance, the Indian Muslim women were to go through such ordeals whereby they lost as much as, if not more than, any other Indian women as brought out lately by an Indian scholar. Some social scientists have very rightly described the Moghul era as the dark age of women. Women no longer enjoyed the freedom of the earlier times, even within the family and their importance became nil. The atmosphere was so vitiated that even the horrid acts like female infanticide, had to be performed for self-preservation, and even a marriage had to be celebrated secretly at the dead hours of the night to pre-empt the new bride on the way to her new home from being abducted.¹⁸

Many sociologists have also expressed opinions about the status of women in the Vedic period. With the coming of Aryans, patriarchy got well established even before Varna became caste. The birth of the daughter was not greeted as was the son in the Vedic period. Vivekananda possessing the Vedic mind in this century thought that the educated girls “will inspire their husband with noble ideals and be mothers of heroic sons”. The theory of Karma believed that women who followed their duty religiously would be born as men in their next birth. Jainism and Buddhism which sprang up challenging Brahmanical (Vedic orthodox) religion too were based on the philosophy of avoidance of materialism, and women were regarded as part of
materialism. Despite this patriarchal onslaught women did change the worldview of their periods, while Gargi, Maithrey, Apala, etc., did so in the Vedic period and Sita, Draupadi, in the period. King Ashoka had to face brave women in the battle of Kalinga, which changed his ideology thoroughly. The coronation of Razia Begum as Sultana in the early medieval period was no less an evil which angered the Turks. Mirabai flouted the patriarchal norms of the Rajputana, even though from a male deity. Noorjahan and Jahanara’s role in the Maughal time cannot be easily forgotten. The modern period is reminiscent with memories of Rani of Jhansi's Begum Hazarath Mahal, Pandita Rambai, etc., but in the textbooks, we hear so little of these path breakers, and their sacrifices. Truly, today, history is more his story rather than a ‘her’ story. No wonder important contribution of women, from who even the present day feminists draw inspiration, has been neglected and ignored from the printed books read by the children and the youth.¹⁹

Srinivas defines caste in the following words” Caste is a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group having traditional associations with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among other things by the concepts of pollution and purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the castes.”²⁰ Features like caste endogamy as a mechanism of recruiting and retaining control over the labour and sexuality of women, concepts of purity and pollution segregating groups and also regulating mobility of women are very crucial.

The concepts of anulom and pratilom marriages by definition denigrate women. A marriage where a boy of upper marries a girl of lower caste is approved and called anuloma, while marriages of women of ritually pure groups with men of lower ritual status were considered pratiloma. Most serious punishments like excommunication and even death could be evoked for transgressing the norms. Women as a guardian of ‘purity’ has not to lower herself but she could be raised high. Another manifestation of caste inequality is the differential status of bride-giver and bribe taker where the latter is always superior. Even within the caste there are groups which are considered superior and for climbing high in the status ladder, the bride-givers have to give compensation in terms of dowry.²¹
The other very important feature of the caste system is its control over women’s labour. Caste not only determines social division of labour but also sexual division of labour. Certain tasks have to be performed by women while certain other tasks are meant for men. In agriculture for instance, women can engage themselves in water-regulation, transplanting, weeding, but not in ploughing. With upward mobility of the group, women are immediately withdrawn from the outside work. Physical mobility is also restricted through castes norms. The significant symbol of the low status of women in society is that the women of lower castes are accessible to men of higher status, while there is a very severe punishment for men of lower castes who dare to approach any women of higher groups. Evidence has been documented in various studies and folk literature.\(^{22}\)

The linking of women and shudras together is more evident of the low position of women. Prescriptions and prohibitions for shudras and women were same on many occasions. The prohibitions of the sacred thread ceremony for women and shudras, similar punishment for killing a shudra or a woman, denial of religious privileges, etc., are some of the illustrations which indicate how caste and gender get entrenched. In fact medieval saints through their plea for direct access to god and elimination of intermediaries provided a space both for women and shudras in the religious sphere.

In short, caste system not only provided a legitimization to feudal relation of production but ideologically also provided justification for subordination of women.\(^{23}\)

There has been a great dichotomy in the laws, and rituals sanctioned by custom, which are strongly title against the women. Virginity at the time of marriage was an essential condition for the women, but not for the man. Divorce was a man’s privilege, and the ground for divorce was simply for the man, i.e., if the wife does not find favour with the husband, he would then write a will of divorcement and send her out of the house. On the birth of a male child, the period of ritual uncleanness was seven days, and for the girl child it was fifteen days. But strangely enough this has not always been the case. In the Indian religious text of the earliest periods we find a considerable measure of freedom for the women.
“Bhadra adhere bhavati yat supesa swayam sa mitram vanute jane cit". The wife walked before, and not behind the husband. (Rig-Veda: 115; 2)

Her sexuality was not despised or reviled as later was; the maid displayed her bare bosom before all; a woman could make advances to a man with impunity; ‘sexual aberrations were openly admitted; illicit lovers of both sexes are frequently mentioned in uninhibited tones. However, quite soon, this free and open relationship between sexes became a thing of the past. Nomadic tribal values pave way to the conservative ethos of settled agriculture. The women had forfeited her right to education when as a result of racial miscegenation she lost her right to ritual initiation (upanayana) without which there was no formal education. All the rituals for women were without mantras. Panini lays down grammatical rules for the formation of Feminine words like acharya and ‘upadhyaya’ in the sense of men teachers. Yet generally none but the courtesan had a right to formal education. Courtesans were trained in the sixty four arts at the expense of the state. Other women were trained in household chores and possibly in music and dancing. The Rig Veda called unmarried girls ‘amaju’ amajura’ Vriddhakumar’ and jaratkumari’ and they were looked upon as unfortunate’ even pitiable creatures. Marriage became compulsory for women. The entire wedding ritual was oriented towards the man’s happiness and pleasure; the wife vowed to obey the husband’s wishes implicitly. The model wife could run the household in the husband’s absence but could not give anything away in charity. She had no right to the wealth and even her own body. She had no economic freedom unlike even the servant. She was provided for, by husband-the lord of the family. With time she lost all her social freedom; her movements were restricted within the house. In the puranic Age, she could not go out of the house unless chaperoned by a socially approved male companion. Women were looked upon as something evil as borne out by many scriptural texts. “Women is false, a misfortune mere passion like wine or chess.” A minor expiatory rite is prescribed for killing a blackbird, rat, dog, a sudra, or a women. From the earliest times women could not participate in the two political assemblies’ the sabha and the samiti. Soon they lost the right to choose their partners. They were given in marriage and customs to the groom’s family. At the in law’s house the woman was expected to serve all the inmates without a murmer, and bring forth male children.
Jasodhara Bagchi (1991) laments the stranglehold of obnoxious practices and beliefs of the early periods and tries to explain their origins: “analyzing the background, the researcher notice that after the Aryans adopted the agricultural mode of life and became a settled people, the bulk of the productive labour fell on the men folk. Women were relegated to domestic chores. Also after society was split into classes, the upper stratum withdrew from manual labour and women of the affluent section were confined within the four walls. This ethos percolated to the lower rungs of the social ladder. Women became redundant in productive labour, except in their functions as mothers ad housekeepers. Economically women became a liability and the breadwinner lorded over her. The entire society apparently existed only for the man. After making sure that the women had no education, no opportunity for economic self-sufficiency, had none or few accomplishments and had lost her physical charm through successive childbearing (an honorific adjective was asunyagarbha-she whose womb is never vacant) and continuous housework, society opened up various avenues for the man’s sexual gratification, through institutions of polygamy, concubinage and prostitution. For the wife dissatisfied with her husband no such alternative was provided. “Even in the eyes of the law men were more authoritative than the women. The law laid down that along with other materials goods, women could be given as gifts in sacrifices, as also for entertaining guest, as dowry, as gifts to priests and kings. Giving over girls to temples as devadasis was a particularly meritorious act. Saheb Deen Maurya (1998) also lay the blame on Manu for the depressed state of women during the early years. According to Manu, “there can be no independence for women for woman at any stage of her life: before her marriage she must remain under the tutelage of her parents, after the marriage under her husband and in the event of her widowhood under that her children”. He, however, feels that the smiritis gave women her due place and regarded her with deep veneration. “All that oriented in the name of scriptures need not be taken as the words of God. Everyone cannot decide what is good and authentic, and what is bad and interpolated. Therefore, there is a need for some authoritative body that would define all that passes under the name of scriptures”.

H.C. Upadhyay (1991) feels that different sociologists broadly agreed upon the downgrading of women’s status from the Vedic period owing to misinterpretation, addition of personal prejudices and soon. When we look at this period of history it is
important to understand what is own perspective D.D. Kosambi has some very valid points to say in the article, “Historical Perspective of Women” which appeared in the book Status of Women in India (1991) by H.C. Upadhyaya: “There was no caste or class differentiation within tribes. Agricultural was the monopoly of women. Women were the first potters and weavers. Weaving was a specialty of the women, through male seers might weave a hymn as if it were a patterned garment of the loom. Women were the rulers and the system of matriarchy prevailed before 400 B.C. in different parts of the continent. During the early Vedic period the women in India enjoyed almost an equal status with men in different spheres of life. Vedic studies were then not the prerogative of man. Girls and boys were required to undergo ‘upanayananam’ ceremonies in order to undertake Vedic Studies”.

The Rig Veda reveals that women were fully the equals of men as regards to access and capacity for the highest knowledge. In the Rig Vedic times women successfully and impressively participated in discussions or public business meetings. She was referred to as ‘Sobhavati Yoga’. Gargi Vachkanvi, and Miathreyi were all known philosophers of the Vedic period. In Panini’s grammar (500 B.C) passages show that women had many careers open to them. Apart from the literary works of men like Patanjali’s Mahabhashya (150 B.C) and Kautilya’s Arthasastra (300 B.C) females were also soldiers armed with bows and arrows. There must have been many more able women, competent teacher’s poets singers, and managers of men and affairs in the Rig Vedic and Vedic periods. Even among these intensely patrilinear and patriarchal people, individuals bore names derived from their mothers only. According to Basham, family was the basic unit of the Rig Vedic Aryans. They practiced a mixed pastoral and agriculture economy. The family was then ‘staunchly patrilinear and Patriarchal‘. The wife though enjoyed a respectable position; she was definitely subordinate to her husband. Marriage was usually monogamous and indissoluble. No reference to divorce or remarriage of widows occurs in Rig Veda. There was no system of Sati. The ‘Swayamvara’ marriages of Sita, Draupadi,etc., gave the evidence of a generally accepted practice. Early marriage of girls became a practice around 100 A.D. only. In Rig Veda child marriage is not referred to, and girls were given away in marriage at a fairly mature age. This custom continued up to the time of the Dharma Sastras from 400 B.C. to 100 A.D., when the opinions are found slowly growing in favour of an early marriage of girls. From 200 A.D., when child
marriage had become a widespread practice, older women had no chance to select their husbands. Brahma Purana disapproved marriage by choice. It said that “It was the highest duty of women to immolate herself after her husband.” The beginning of dowry system is found after 200 A.D. only.

In all scriptures the passages claim that women are ‘naturally’ inferior to men and men have the ‘right’ to control women in all things by all means from her style of dressing to possession of her own body. The scripture is most definitely directed towards man. Women, at best, need only honour her father and husband. The unique aspect of the humankind is that the woman is prehistory believed that conception and generation of fetus did not limit her in actions. She continued to work within the commune, and according to cave art even participated in hunts, fishing and the like. Unlike women of the 19th century, prehistoric woman did not consider herself as ‘invalid’ once she was pregnant, and certainly had neither the time nor the luxury of ‘lay abed’ once pregnant.

Because of her regeneration ability, she was believed to be closer to the deities of the earth, which expressed their pleasure with humankind by generating crops, roots, grains, nuts, animals, birds and fish. She was the inventor of the textile loom and was credited with the invention of the potter’s wheel and applauded as the developer of chemistry, discovering yeast so critical to beer and bread making and she was the child bearer. For these reasons, women sat on the council of elders, and at home on a large and permanent platform, from which she issued orders, bought and sold, kept accounting records, and made judgments and pronouncements of both a civil and religious nature. The deity of these societies was a woman—a fertile goddess who was attended by priestesses—never priests. Women were always represented in the arts, especially in statue, in human form, while men appeared as animals. Women determined the rights of marriage, divorce, life and death.

In the book by Arthur F. Ide (1985), Michel Peissel has found that the Minaro Community constituted a living museum of life in the days of Stone Age man. “The stone age women ‘or’ stone age people were a matriarchal people. The women controlled the family and the community. Women made the laws and enforced them. In general, life was pastoral with women being in charge of the daily routine. Deities mostly were women and female goddesses predominated. When prehistoric males
were at war or on the hunt, women not only tended the homes; but stood ready to battle for the earth. Prehistoric women, like early historic women, were powerful, resolute, determined, interested, crafty, cunning, insightful, adventurous, resourceful, and experiment and ingenious.

In the opinion of Anjali Bhave (1995)31 “the Indian caste system has a rigid hierarchical form of the four-fold typology of Varna (Castes): Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. In all earlier studies on villages of India, one wonders if women were at all important to the village structures and system of social interaction”. Dwelling on the peculiar blending of Brahman and Victorian prescriptions on the appropriate behavior of women in society, and their implications from women across all castes and classes, it has been speculated that social and religious identities in colonial times may have become more caste-bound than they were in pre-colonial India. Gender relations emerged as a powerful new means for the colonial hegemony itself. She has told how gender roles in India are embodied in space. She found that space contains a clue to behavior and is instrumental in communicating social norms. She points to the cultural practices of lumping together women and Sudras, i.e., the untouchables, who are often jointly, referred to as prime pollutants- the former temporarily on account of menstruation, and the latter permanently because of their lowly caste and occupational status. As caste- perpetuated lineage-based structures grew, high value is accorded to those women who maintain the line-age by producing sons. Women, like other underprivileged groups, present a challenge because of the total dominance of the repressive structures. Sujatha Gothaskar (1992) has written about women activists involved in trade unions and of organizations women in the informal sectors of the economy in India. Women’s participation in ongoing struggles is influenced by the diffused boundaries between women’s work and leisure, paid and unpaid work, and in work and non-work relations.

The status of women in any nation portrays the progress of those particular nations. Though the Indian woman has become a long way in her cultural level from the Vedic period to present status of achieving economic independence in the 21st century, yet due to many social, religious, cultural and political demands on her she is still bound by the shackles of certain traditions and rituals, which distort her image to all around her32.
From Vedic period, till now, the ideal woman is portrayed as home-loving, caring, concerned for the welfare of the husband and the children’s material, supportive, helping men to achieve their ambition, not having any desire of her own, even a sacrificing figure. She would accept her role as daughter, wife and mother in the male-dominated society without a whisper, but at the same time be very feminine, pretty and patient. This kind of image has been implanted in the minds of the society by the Vedas, and the religious leaders, and now continued in the present day mass media and even the small screen.

The ‘Shakti’ is portrayed figuratively in the sculptures and the temple architecture but in reality she is confined to her traditional role in society. Religious sanctions imposed by the society never changed much from Vedic times. From the early days the street theatres in various forms were able to convey the messages of the performers to the audience (communication). The dramas based on life stories of saint Andal, Bakthi Meera and Shantha Sakkubai were presented and a religious bent was embedded in the Indian woman mind and she was expected to be like one of them. History has placed the woman in a lower level due to social, economic and political situations. She has been developing within herself an image of self-sacrificing person devoid of any individuality. In Kautilya’s Arthasastra and Manusmriti, a woman’s dependence on man, financially and emotionally, has been accepted. There were no social issues brought out in these dramas as they were not discussed openly.  

Established sociologists have uniformly described the post-Vedic period as a period of decadence for the status of women in India, though the colonial rulers tried to ameliorate the situations, perhaps for their own ends. In this comprehensive work, B.R. Sharan (1992) comments: “By the time the British established their trading posts firmly in India, the Moghul empire was already fragmented. On the pretext of non-interference in religious, local customs, however abhorrent and against established tenets, were upheld. It was a process of burying down the fine traditions of the Vedic period- the golden age for women- under the debauched customs. Yet one must admit that when things became so perverse for women that it called for actions on humanitarian grounds, the British listened to the wise counsel of social reforms like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Eshwerchandra Vidyasagar, Kesave Chandra
Sen and Swami Dayanand Saraswati and enacted several laws to improve the position of women. Some of these enactment’s were the Act prohibiting the practice of Sati, in 1928; Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850; the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act 1856; the special Marriage Act III of 1872; the married Women’s Property Act, 1874;the Child Marriage Act, 1929; the Hindu Gains of earning Act, 1930; the Hindu Women’s Right to Property, 1937; the Christian Marriage Act, 1872; the Parsee Marriage Act, 1939. The Acts in themselves were largely on paper and were not reflected in the actual society at large”.

Many educational Institutions were also established for women by the British government and Christian Missionaries in 19th Century for spread of education among women.

In India, women had little chance to assert themselves in imperial regalia except when forced to during regency. The non-so-well-known, small-time queen Qudsia Begum invited the wrath of her whole ethnic groups when she preferred an Abyssinian to any of her own in court. The famous Rani of Jhansi is only remembered for her role as a fighter for Independence. As for the only other absolute female power of our times, Indira Gandhi, we are deprived of any intimate knowledge of her personal affairs because M.O. Mathai, who was the personal secretary to Nehru, conveniently did not get published the chapter on “She” in his book though he published everything else that a master’s valiant comes to know of.

The earlier contemporaries like Manu and Kautilya gave divergent views. Those that were more favorable to women were kept clamped down for centuries, and when these observations saw the light of day, hardly any notice was taken of them. Manu did still reign supreme. The greatest harm was done by those sages who deprived out women of the right to read even scriptures. Indian women were denied basic education as it was considered an unnecessary luxury that would come in the way of their lives as good housewives. Various invasions, of course, forced us to keep the women behind, away from the ‘evil eye’. The overall picture of women of that era that emerges is of her having been kept under strict male control, and required to lead a chaste life. And on her doing so, she was given the best of respects and traded as an adviser on all major issues concerning the family. And
present Indian society forced the male dominant attitude to let loose clutches on female control so; today's women learn sever issued in spheres of activity from earth to sky no limit to women.

The present chapter is devoted to a discussion of the status of women in Indian society. The establishment of democratic political system after the independence has given impetus to the people to assimilate technological changes, which come though the process of modernization, to initiate and give impetus to economic progress to overcome the inequalities of the traditional system of social satisfaction based on ascription. Establishment of the democratic institutions and providing equality to the citizens without any discrimination and fundamental freedoms and rights are ensured. The implementation of liberal education, universal adult franchise, providing equal opportunity in education and employment sectors had created a congenial atmosphere to improve their living standards, and periodical elections has created political consciousness and enhanced their bargaining power with the system. The half of the population could not enjoy the privileges till the 70's when U.N. declared the decade of women, it did very little to improve their status in the society. The U.N. declaration motivated a large number of educated women at National and International levels. In fact, they became articulate about their rights and status. This kind of consciousness enabled them to demand economic, political and social justice and also equality on par with men. A prominent sociological A.R.Desai\textsuperscript{36}, aptly says that, “... Indian women are developing a new sensitivity and consciousness, which will no longer tolerate the suffocating, familiar institutional, political and cultural norms which place them in a humiliating and subject status... slowly acquiring a higher voltage and is acting as a powerful posts in the innermost depths of society”

The development of a Nation highly depended on the participation of different segments of the society. One such important segment of the society is women, who constitute fifty percent of the population. The optimum level of women’s participation in developmental activities will change in flavor of political, economic and social aspects of the society. Even it will influence the social value framework of the society. But their issues are not isolated. In fact they are integral part of the problems of overall development. They represent half of the global population and constitute one
third of the labor force of the globe. But, they receive only one tenth of the global income. However, they possessed less than one percent of the world property. They are also responsible for $\frac{2}{3}$ of all working hours and also $\frac{2}{3}$ of the illiterates of the world are from women. All this information is based on the U.N. Commission on status of women. The situation in India is no way different from the presentations of U.N. Report. The status of women in India is lagging behind the industrialized and developed societies.

Hitherto, status of women was not granted by the Indian Society. They never had enjoyed and kind of equality in any respect even the laws allow them to enjoy the equality, though they were not considered as integral part of the society. The great exponent of Hindu Law and Padmasree Awardee P.V.Kane, the writer of History of Dharmasastra concluded that even in Vedic times women were often looked down upon, had no share in property and were dependent. He cited from Dharma Sastra literature the position of women became worse and worse as time went on, except as to right of property. Therefore, he observed that during the Vedic period the women’s activities were restricted.

Since the Vedic period the status of women in Vedic literature and Manu Smruthi depicted as they are dependant on father in their childhood, husband in their middle age finally under the guardianship of their sons. There were several works depicting the women’s place in the society and give us a detailed account of references about their marriage, the role mother, wife and even discussed the remarriage and widower ship and virtually they were secluded from the social life. So majority of the restrictions are drawn from the fictitious traditions of the particular period of time. Even smruties discussed the status of women and even Sanskrit scholars and commentators of the Manusmruti depict the status and place of women in the society. It abstracts certain functions to women and explains how they ought to be obedient servants to men in the society. Whatever the commentaries and explanations that came out from Vedic literature became the principles of law for women folk. Both Indian and foreign scholars assumed with the customs regarding women in Indian society are peculiar. Even the great Sanskrit scholar Kalidasa was no exception to depict the role and position of women in the society. Though here and there the women were depicted as goddesses (deity) in order to idealize yet the
women-folk has not been changed. In fact their position had been worsened at the time of 11th and 12th centuries in Indian sub-continent faced several external threats, which resulted in “Sati” (self-immolation of widows). The practice of Sati is glorified and considered as a source of inspiration for the men folk to attain the victory. This is one perception the sati. That is the reasons why majority of the texts of the period 400 B.C. to 1200 A.M the women’s status and position was lower than the earlier times. But not to speak even the status of widows, their status was enormously affected and they were thrown into miserable conditions. There were several reason’s which have been put forward to account for the deterioration of women’s position in the society. To some extent, customs and traditions during that period which were prevalent in the society and foreign invasions of India effected the status of women adversely, discontinuance of Upanayana of girls lack of education facilities for women, thrown to the backwardness. They were condemned to acquire education, which was partly; influenced by the role of caste system, joint family system, feudalism and other such social institutions and are responsible for the plight of their position in the society. An examination of the existing literature which is available on status of women indicates that the changes took place over a period of time38.

The position and status of women deteriorated with the constant and continuous various social customs and social institutions broke down and forced them to confine to the four walls of their house. In fact, this to a number of evil practices like ban on child marriage and pardha system and ‘polygamy’ which condemned the women. The immediate outcome is the status of women is shortened and lowered by the social customs. Women’s position had been declined. Patriarchal values that regulated her movement and purity led to entrenching their place in society. The social customs exercised to both overt and covert regulations subjugated the women in every respect in the society. The social practices and rituals, the age-old social values are still persisting today. The woman during this vast span of time not only occupied an inferior position but was made to feel that her position insubordinate to men in the society. Still their position and social situation has not changed till the arrival of colonial rulers in India39.
The first cultural contact of Indian society with the western world began in 1498 A.D. when Vasco Da gamma anchored the ships on Indian shores and a more lasting impact came with the British rule particularly after 1820. The advent of British rule did not merely mean a new political rule but it has deep-rooted implications on economy and ideology of Indian people. Particularly after the Industrial revolution in England, the rulers turned India into a colony, which produced raw materials for Britain. The imperial rule initiated and elaborated the capitalist mode of production but retained many feudal institutions like the caste system in human socio-religious practices. The capitalist mode of production had a far-reaching impact not only on the economy but also on entire social structure. The imperial rule provided a gateway for the ideology of liberalism, which enshrines the values of liberty, equality, respect for the individual freedom and secularism etc. Though in colonial India, these values did not hamper the interests of the imperial rulers. The net result is during the period of imperial rulers there were two major movements, which affected the position of women. These were the social reform, movement of the 19th century and the Nationalist movement of the 20th century. Both these movements raised the question of equal status of women.

The Social Reform movement has been considered as a corner stone for the building up of the modern India. The major issues, which attracted the attention of the 19th century social reforms i.e., ‘Sati’, ill-treatment of widows, the ban on widow remarriage, polygamy, child marriages, denial of property rights and education to the women. They thought that, all these social evils education to the women. They thought that, all these social evils should be eradicated by raising social consciousness and making people sensitive to the injustice perpetuated on women. They strongly believe that, by giving women access to the education and enacting progressive legislations: the required social change could be expected. All of them raised their voice against ambiguous practices throughout the country. However, the revivalist like Dayananda Saraswathi, Swami Vivekananda and Annie Besant believed in reviving the old society presumed to be ideal society for women. One of the important off shoots of social reforms was the establishment of the National Social Congress in 1887. This provided a forum to the reformers from all over the country to discuss various ill practices. The net result is women slowly raised their problems in their annual meetings and tried to improve their living standards. Another
very powerful force which helped change the position and attitude of women during the Nationalist movement particularly is the Gandhian phase. More so after 1920s in the Non-Cooperation movement and the Civil Disobedience, movement women actively participated because of the new tactics of struggle like picketing and boycotting of foreign goods, liquor shops, Non-Cooperation in various governmental activities were abused which provided avenues for mass participation. Gandhi was a bitter critic of the custom of child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage and the custom of Purdah. However own concept of women was a peculiar blend of religious and rational elements. He had immense faith in women’s inner strength and moral appeal. Aparna Basu summarizes the contribution of women in the Nationalist movement “Women organized themselves into groups and were willing to join professions, face police firing and go to prison. There were women who joined terrorist groups and helped in editing and distributing banned newspapers, even they participated in manufacturing bombs”.

Aparna Basu contents that, by the time of Indian Nationalist Movement Indian women enhanced their consciousness and increased their participation in electoral politics.

Obviously, this generated strength and confidence among the women-folk. It helped them to organize the women folk and to fight for their own cause rather than depend upon the ‘benevolence of the men in the society to promote their cause. The formation of the All India Women’s Conference in 1927 was considered as a crucial event in women’s march towards equality’. The majority of the rural and urban women were attracted by the Gandhi’s leadership and assumed the leadership positions and organized different agitations by using various methods including voluntary dharnas, processions and other various kinds of activities on a massive scale. Popular agitations were organized particularly among Harijans and Adivasis and drew them to electoral politics. Though the movement for emancipation of women began in 19th century initially the social reformers were bitter critics of outmoded social practices. However, they attempted to change some of these practice by applying the rational and humanitarian criteria to the problems. They further laid greater stress on the education of women as a liberating activity. The Nationalist movement not only drew a large number of women to political activity but
it also generated strength and confidence among women for the redressed of their problems. In the pre-independence period the process of awareness among the women folk gradually developed against the oppressive social customs. In fact, during this phase favorable climate was created to improve the status of women through different legal reforms. Many of these laws during 1920 and 1940, to mention a few, the Child Marriages Restraint Act, popularly known as Sharada Act, prohibited marriage below the age of 14 for a girl; also the Hindu Women’s Right to Property Act in joint family’s property. Besides these social legislations, other laws which enhanced women’s status, such as limiting working hours, prohibiting night work, restricting working in mines etc., and all these legislations greatly improved the status of women. The Pre-Independence women organizations deliberately enhanced the awareness to overcome the social disabilities and the doors of education were opened for them. Women’s organizations emerged to represent the needs and cause of middle class urban women. Women’s political participation enormously increased and a congenial atmosphere was created to interact with other section of society and women’s mobility was encouraged. Lastly, several legal enactments rectified the women’s unequal position to some extent.

The task of Indian Constitution to fill the gap between the people of India ensured the right to equality and provided equal opportunity for their advancement. The Constitution barred the distinctions on the basis of sex. It provides rights, freedom and privileges equally to both men and women. All these ideals were promptly incorporated in the preamble of the Constitution. The Constitution declared equality before law and the equal protection law shall not be denied to any person on the ground of the sex (Article14). Similarly, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the ground of sex (Article 15). Article 16(1) guarantees “Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment in public office under the state. Besides, the provisions free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years was ensured. It also declared certain measures like right to have an adequate means of livelihood for men and women on equal table basis. The equal pay for equal work and maternity leave are some of the welfare measures declared exclusively in both fundamental rights and directive principles of State Policy are declared to attain in the National objectives of Natural justice, Liberty and equality.
The Indian Constitution also guaranteed the universal adult franchise to establish the democratic polity\(^43\).

Criminal Law (Second Amendment Act, 1983) provides concerning women in Indian Penal Code, noteworthy feature of Criminal Law Act 1983 created a hue and cry in the society. Ultimately, a nationwide anti-rape movement during 1980 forced the government to review the rape law. In the amended law custodial rape has to be severely punished, putting the burden of proof with the rapist. Obviously, the Government of India considered the demanded of women in 1984 to establish family courts for the speedy conduct of matrimonial disputes through the provisions of informal process of cancellation. It also authorized the courts to seek the help of social workers, specialists, psychologists, recognized organizations and institutions for resolving disputes. Thus, law is not only an instrument to remove social disabilities but also a tool for empowering the women. The establishment of women cells and a creation of Ministry for Women Affairs are positive steps in the direction of improvising conditions. The dawn of independence of India and the policy measures pursued by the different successive governments have tried to fill vacuum between the men and women. Though, it led to the other sections / one class hampered the interest of the other sections. Ultimately, the women folk were the sufferers of the economic policies of different successive governments\(^44\).

The economic development of the nation is dependent on the participation of all the section of the society, more particularly women, who constituted fifty per cent of the population and workforce drawn by different policies by creating educational facilities to the women folk. Massive employment potentialities can be utilized by women folk. Women hitherto, who have been secluded from the main stream of economic process? Since 60’s and early 70’s entire world recognized the importance of the women workforce in the economic development of the nations. The national governments have taken care for optimum utilization of the women in the economic spheres. Hitherto, they were kept away from the economic activity. The social values and normative structure in the society did not utilize their services they did not allow them to act independently. However, the Constitution has ensured judicial equality, which facilitates them to enter into different professions and occupations, even to the extent of scaling to the political positions. For the past two decades, the educated
women have entered into each and every economic sphere and in certain occupations they excelled men, making a mark of their own.

They are competing with the men-folk in organized sectors’ but they were treated as “reserve army” in the informal sector. Discrimination of wages still persist several studies on status of women, indicate that the miss-conception of women-folk that they cannot discharge heavy and hard work. They can only take up very light and white collar jobs. The misconception of women has eroded and they are proving their mettle in certain challenging professions. They are also contributing their might in the process of economic development of the nation. They have acquired the skills and educational qualifications. Once they raised their voice for equality in employment opportunities in organized and unorganized sectors of the economic spheres. It alerted the Government of India to formulate certain employment policies and programmes. For this purpose, the Government of India constituted several committees and the recommendations made by these committees for providing employment opportunities and economic facilities to enhance the status of women in the society. The recommendations of the committee on status of women had been approved by inter ministerial committee of government and they coordinated different policies. The programmes kept them under the national plan of action of the Government of India. The National Action Plan envisages such as promotion of self-employment opportunities, special and intensive training programmes were also considered to improve their participation in the economic activity. It is mentioned even in the sixth five-year plan documents diversification and expansion of educational training Programmes for women. All the comprehensive areas of development programmes were designed to enhance the work opportunities to women. The working group categorically stated that to increase the greater involvement of women in science and technology, not only public sector, they should be encouraged even in private sector also. For the past two to three decades, experience reveals that all successive governments had taken several measures and certain policies are exclusively designed such as Nutrition programmes and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) etc. The Government of India streamlined all women development programmes under the administrative control of Central Social Welfare Board to promote welfare and development service for women. It will coordinate all the policies, which were initiated by different ministries at the Centre,
State and the local level. The fifth plan has given priority to the training programmes for women. However, sixth five year plan emphasized economic independence, educational advancement, access to health care and family planning has essential elements for women’s development. The Government of India constituted a National Committee for Women, after the declaration of U.N. Decade on women (1976-1985) initiated several pilot schemes called Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas was initiated by the Department of Rural Development in 1976. The ministry of Education constituted another steering committee and an inter-departmental coordination committee for women and child development. A number of working groups, task forces and National Conferences were organized during the period of 1978-86 to discuss the issues of rural women. For example working group for development of village level organization for women (1978), working group of employment of Rural Women (1978), National-Conference on Women (1979), a committee was consisted to review and analyze the rural participation of women in Agricultural and Rural Development (1980), working groups on personal policies and their greater involvement of women in Science and Technology (1983). These policies are intended to draw the rural women-folk into the economic activity and improved a lot of women literacy rate from 7.9 per cent to 24.88 per cent over period of 1951-81. Despite all these governmental efforts, the disparity between the men and women has not been reduced. This trend has continued even in employment sector. Education is confined only to upper and middle class and urban areas, in fact lack of educational facilities in the rural areas hampered the rural women’s folk advancement or rural women development. However, with the adoption of National Policy for Children in 1974 and the launching of Integrated Child Development Schedule in 1975-76 this programme inspired and forced the Government of India to design another child and women development programme. The net outcome is launching of DWACRA programme for the upliftment of highly neglected sections of the rural women.45

The seventh plan (1985-90) the development programmes for women continued with major objectives of raising their economic and social status, in bringing them into the mainstream of national development. A significant step is to intensify the ‘beneficiary oriented programmes’ for women in different development sectors with dual benefits.46
The eighth five-year plan (1992-97) marked a shift from development strategies to empowerment in approach to women development schemes. In spite of consistent efforts of the Government of India, it could not achieve the desired levels of the equality among the men and women in the society.

In the approach paper of the Ninth Five-year plan (1997-2002) two major steps towards gender justice have been taken up for the first time in the history of planning. The first is the listing of empowerment of women as a major plan objective. The other is to propose inclusion of a women’s component plan in the plans of all the Central ministries/Departments and of State Governments/Union Territory administration.

In the social front, the Government of India constituted a core group of experts to prepare a draft on the National Perspective plan for women (1988-2000) is more or less a long-term policy document advocating a holistic approach for development of women. National Commission, self-employed women and women informal sectors (1998) prepared a report called as Sharma Shakhty. It examines a whole gamut of issues facing women in unorganized sectors makes a number of recommendations for the betterment of status of women in the informal sectors relating to employment, occupational hazards, legislative protection, training and skill development, marketing and entrepreneurship development and other related sectors, enhanced the status of women in general, particularly in rural areas. All the specific women policies have enhanced the status, welfare and development of women and children in the country. Now the Government of India is concentrating on the National Policy for the empowerment of women.

**Exploitation of Women**

A woman in Indian society has been victim of humiliation, shame and exploitation. There are many episodes like rape, murder, dowry, burning, wife beating and discrimination in the socio-economic and educational fields. Indian society is predominantly by men, hence women are a victim of male domination in their respective spheres of life; especially in economic life, for instance, over decision making on resources, on utilization of her earnings and on her body. Hence a woman’s life lies between pleasures at one end and danger at other end. In daily life women are routinely defined by sex and they are potential victims of kidnapping and rape.
The human species has made significant progress in several spheres of life. But man has not grown enough to overcome the self-made mental slavery to the laws of the jungle. Since time immemorial the laws of physical strength thrives at the expense of the weak and has made women the primary under-dogs of an exploitative society. In the lower socio-economic level of society, women do more hazardous manual labour than men. Women do more than half the agricultural work in India. Still men are considered to be the “bread winners”. This sense of women being inferior is passed on from one generation to the next through psychological conditioning.

The most widespread and de-humanizing discriminations and assault against women are on the psychological level. The female psyche is being crushed at childhood. The female psyche is brutalized long before bodily violence is inflicted on her. They are conditioned to accept inferior positions in society. Women from childhood undergo a slow unconscious process of destructive or denial of their self worth. Society, through a process of conditioning, creates in girls at home and in school certain thinking patterns, which ascribe to the female sex an inferior status. Besides, society gradually trains them to make this value system their own. Usually baby girls are given bangles, anklets etc. thus communicating a sense of fragility. Another result of the social conditioning is that man either as father; brother or husband considers women as socio economic gift of his household. A woman’s value is judged, not so much in terms of her worth as a person with rights and dignity as in terms of her utility to man. Expression of this mentality is found in different language and society. For example, in Hindi, girl is called “paraya dhan” and boy “apana dhan”

THE VULNERABILITY OF RURAL WOMEN

The condition of women is more miserable in rural India with respect to various socio-economic aspects.

Poverty

Rural poverty is one of the important characteristics of India and nearly 45 percent of rural people are below poverty line. Most of them are just surviving with day-to-day earnings. If we take International poverty line (1994) into consideration in India there were 47 percent of the population at below $ 1 a day category and 87.5 percent at below $ 2 at a day category (Vijaya Kumar et al, 2009). Under such
circumstances, within the family, the worst sufferers are needless to say women and girl children. For this category of women, neither credit nor skill training is accessible. Better health care and higher educational opportunities are far reaching dreams for their children and there is no need to say about the status of girl child in such families. She (girl child) is treated as a “silent lamb” born to suffer all evils in the male dominated society. So far much has not been done for this vulnerable sub-culture of the society.

**Violence**

Indian society has been bound by culture and tradition since ancient times. The patriarchal system and the gender stereotypes in the family and society have always showed a preference for the male child. Sons were regarded as a means of social security and women remained under male domination. Due to her subordinated position, she has suffered years of discrimination, exploitation and subjugation. She became the victim of several evils like child marriage, sati, polygamy, Purdah system, female infanticide, forced pregnancy, rape etc. In such incidents/recorded cases surprisingly mother-in-law are also taking active part (forgetting the fact that they are also women and some time back they also played daughter-in-law role). This discrimination and violence against women had an effect on the sex ratio in India. Also the main causes of violence are unequal power-relations, gender discrimination, patriarchy, and economic dependence of women, dowry, low moral values, negative portrayal of women’s image in media, no participation in decision-making, gender stereotypes and a negative mindset. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi (May 10, 2014) reported, Delhi is not only the rape capital of India; it has now taken lead in all types of crimes against women. As against 135 cases (number of atrocities against women at the hands of their husbands and relatives) reported in 2013, the figure jumped to 1211 in 2014.

Crime records compiled for 35 mega cities in December 2013 by National Crime Records Bureau shows that Delhi accounts for 30.5 percent of the total crime against women”. If such is the magnitude of domestic violence against women in Delhi, the capital city of India, it would not be surprising if the situation is worse in other areas. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest cases of cruelty by husband and his relatives against women (15%) in the year 2011 (see Status of violence against
women in India: Decadal trends 2001-2011, NIPCCD). The information Brochure published by SWAYAN, an NGO, has shown that in 2005 there was a rape every 42 minutes, a molestation every 22 minutes, a dowry death every 106 minutes and a criminal offence every five minutes all that does not include the innumerable cases that go unreported. Data of 2011 also reveals that every hour there is a case of one sexual harassment, one dowry death, two rapes, four molestation and six cases of cruelty by husband and his relatives. Dr. Brenda Gael Mcsweeney, UN Resident coordinator has rightly remarked “we must ask ourselves when the female half of the world is living with the daily threat of physical violence or mental violence, are we truly free?”

**Economic Exploitation**

On the world level, women and girls together carry two-third of the burden of the world’s work yet receive only a tenth of the world’s income. They form 40 percent of the paid labor force. Though women constitute half of the world’s population yet they own less than one percentage of the world’s property (UNDP Human Development Report 2005). The condition of women in India is more miserable in every field of social life. They are paid half of three-quarters of the money which their male counterparts earn for the same job. In India a predominantly agricultural country, women do more than half of the total agricultural work. But their work is not valued. On an average, a woman works 15 to 16 hours a day unpaid at home and underpaid outside. According to National Committee of Women, the growth in the percentage of women labor force in the organized sector is minimal in the last sixty years i.e. 3.44 percent in 1911 to 20.35 percent in 2010. Besides, the work load either in the field or in the factories or offices, women have to do the household such as cooking, washing, cleaning up the house etc. The younger women, besides all these, have to carry the burden of early pregnancy, childbirth and breast-feeding. In terms of help offered to people for their various functions women seem to receive the least attention from the society.

The status of women is intimately connected with their economic status, which in turn, depends upon rights, roles and opportunity for the participation in economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of a society’s stage of development. However, all development does not result in
improving women’s economic activities. Pattern of women’s activities are affected by prevailing social ideology and are also linked with the stage of economic development.

**Educational Deprivation**

In India the literacy rate of women is much lower than men because boys receive more schooling than girls. T.P. Sechan says that there are parts of India where the literacy rate of women today is as low as 3 percent. So stark is the gender inequality in India that it is one of the 43 countries in the world where male literacy rate is at least 15 percent higher than female. Educational deprivation is intimately associated with poverty. The UNICEF Executive Director Mr. Carol Bellamy says; “No country has ever emerged from poverty without giving priority to education.” (*Indian Currents*, 13 June 2004). However, modest improvement is gradually coming up in educational level of women. After Independence many steps have been taken to improve the lot of women. Many laws have also been passed A National Commission on Women was set up to act as a watchdog on the matters concerning women in 1992. Many programmes in the areas of education, health and employment have been initiated for development of women, rural as well as urban. As a result, literacy rates are going up and fertility rates coming down. Universalization of education, elimination of drop-out from schools, promotion of Balwadi’s and Creches, Girls Hostels, Technical Institutions for women and emphasis on health, nutrition and family welfare programmes etc. are some such initiatives.

**Socio-Demographic Status of Women**

The ratio of female to male population in India has been low. As per Census data, sex ratio of women to per thousand men is as given below:
### SEX RATIO

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<td>2001</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>942</td>
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### Constitutional Privileges of Women

1. Equality before law for women (*Article* 14)

2. The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (*Article* 15(I))

3. The state to make any special provision in favor of women and children (*Article* 15(3))

4. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (*Article* 16)

5. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (*Article* 39 (a)); and equal pay for equal work for both men and women (*Article* 39 (d)).

6. To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities (*Article* 39 A)

7. The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (*Article* 42)
8. The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social justice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46)

9. The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health (Article 47)

10. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51 (A) (e)).

11. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D (3)).

12. Not less than one third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayat at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4)).

13. Not less than one third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality (Article 243 T (3)).

14. Reservation of office of Chairpersons in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislature of a State may by law provide (Article 243 T (4)).

LEGAL PROVISIONS

To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the state has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women.
Although women may be victims of any of the crimes such as ‘murder’ robbery’ cheating’ etc., the crimes, which are directed specially against women, are characterized as ‘Crime Against Women’. These are broadly classified under two categories.

1. **The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**
   
i) Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)
   
ii) Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes (Sec. 363-373)
   
iii) Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
   
iv) Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
   
v) Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
   
vi) Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
   
vii) Important of girls (up to 21 years of age)

2. **The Crimes Identified under the Special Laws (SLL)**

   Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard and their interests are:
   
i) The Employments State Insurance Act, 1948
   
ii) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
   
   
iv) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1954
   
v) The Hindu Succession Act, 1986
   
vi) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
   
   
viii) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
   
ix) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
The child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1979
The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987

CHANGE IN STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

By the dawn of 20th century women become more aware of their social position and started utilizing their potential. Hence there is a substantial rise in their development. In some fields they even supersede men. The steady change in their position can be highlighted by looking at what has been achieved by women in the country:

- 1905 Suzanne R.D. Tata becomes the first Indian woman to drive a car
- 1916 The first women's university, SNDT Women's University, was founded on June 2, 1916 by the social reformer Dhondo Keshav with just five students
- 1927 The All India Women's Conference was founded
- 1951 Prem Mathur becomes the first Indian woman commercial pilot of the Deccan Airways
- 1959 Anna Chandy becomes the first Indian Woman Judge of High Court
- 1966 Captain Durga Banerjee becomes the first Indian woman pilot of the state airline, Indian Airline
- 1966 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay wins Ramon Magsaysay award for community leadership
- 1966 Indira Gandhi becomes the first woman Prime Minister of India
- Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was the first female Indian Cabinet Minister
1963 Sucheta Kriplani She became the first woman to be elected Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and in an Indian state

1970 Kamaljit Sandhu becomes the first female Indian woman to win Gold in the Asian Games

1972 Kiran Bedi becomes the first female recruit to join the Indian Police Service

1989 Justice M. Fathima Beevi becomes the first woman judge of the Supreme Court of India

1994 Harita Kaur Deol becomes the first Indian woman to perform a solo flight

November 1997 Kalpana Chowla becomes the first Indian woman to go into Space

September 21, 1992 Priya Jhingan becomes the first lady cadet to join the Indian Army (later commissioned on March 6, 1993)

2004 Punita Arora becomes the first woman in the Indian Army to don the highest rank of Lt General

2005 Manndhir Rajput, a 34 year old woman from Ludhiana, Punjab, becomes the first Indian woman from become an engine driver of trains with The New South Wales Rail Corporation, Australia

2007 Pratibha Patil becomes the first woman President of India

Arundathi Bhattacharya first women Chief Executive Officer of State Bank of India.

Women Status in United Andhra Pradesh

In recent times, Gender issues have emerged at the central stage of development process. Reducing gender inequalities in the society and empowering women is a major concern of policy makers and planners. Discrimination of women based on their gender occurs throughout their lifecycle starting with their survival, which by itself is the first challenge. There exists evidence that women’s empowerment results in reduction in gender disparities in human development.
Expenditure patterns are geared relatively more towards development inputs, such as food, health and education, if women control cash income (Ranis et al. 2000). The access to resources enhances the economic status of women. The improved economic status coupled with the participation of women in decision-making at the household level results in household budget allocations more in favor of women and children. With this perspective, some critical areas of causality such as sex ratio aberration, preference for the son, neglect of the girl child in various areas like nutrition, immunization, literacy and education, healthcare, marriage, childbirth and employment of women, women protection and security depict the overall status of women and the level of gender development in the State.

Women are referred as ‘Triple Disadvantaged’ in any society. They are discriminated in society on the basis of gender, caste and poverty. A woman with disability experiences quadruple disadvantages along with above mentioned discriminations. When the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are considered, it is evidently seen that they are highly subjected to different forms of discriminations and atrocities which made them socially excluded in the society. In cases of SC and ST women, they are triple disadvantaged who face huge physical, verbal and sexual violence from outside the communities as well as within their own communities. Gender assessment across the various parameters is done below to understand the reasons for women being excluded from the main stream.

**Girl Child**

The sex ratio (as females per 1000 males) is a composite indicator of women’s health, nutrition and survival status. The overall sex ratio in Andhra Pradesh has improved from 978 in 2001 to 992 as per 2011 census. In around 50% of the districts, the sex ratio is less than the overall sex ratio in the state. The decadal growth rate of the female population has shown negative trends in Kadapa (-5.21%), Rangareddy (3.64%), Warangal (-2.67%), Visakhapatnam (-1.26%) and Srikakulam (-0.01). Apart from the sex ratio, the Child sex ratio is an important indicator which relates to discrimination against girl child and preference for son or selective pregnancies. The child sex ratio stands pathetically at 943, clearly indicating a strong preference for boys and further need for probing into the case of the ‘missing girl children’ in the state. While the PNDT (Pre-Natal Diagnostic Testing) Act is passed in India in 1994
but enforcement has been lagging. High risk families i.e. households with two or more girl children need to be provided constant support and protection to ensure that they do not get trapped in their vulnerability.

After birth, son-preference continues to persist leading to the neglect of girls and their lack of access to nutrition, health and maternal care in the critical early years. High rates of anaemia amongst pregnant women and low proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel are reported. For e.g. in AP, 56.4% of pregnant women aged 15-49 are anaemic and 74.2% of births are attended by skilled health personnel.

Women of the SC/ST population largely belong to the poorer masses, with little access to resources and livelihoods. Hence the sex ratio of SCs and ST account for women's position among the poor masses that have been socially deprived for a long time. In all major socio economic indicators, the SCs and STs were lagging behind the ‘other’ communities; this was more glaringly evident in the case of STs especially with regard to women.

**Age at Marriage**

Early age of marriage is also a contributing factor to maternal mortality, as it results in early pregnancy with girls giving birth before they are physically mature. If a mother is under 18, her baby's chance of dying in the first year of life is 60 per cent greater than that of a baby born to a mother older than 19. Even if the child survives, he or she is more likely to suffer from low birth weight, under nutrition and late physical and cognitive development. In Andhra Pradesh, the average age of marriage for women is 17.5 years which is below the legal age of 18 years.

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of women in the reproductive age group (15-49) was highest among the STs followed by SC and OBC, and the lowest was among the ‘other’ community. The fertility rate has declined in Andhra Pradesh over the years, and declined to its lowest level during the 1990s (1.79) and reached below the replacement level in the recent past (2005-06). The decline in fertility rate in the state seems to be associated with the increasing rate of family planning. The percentage of ever-married women in the age group 15-49 who had gone in for family planning increased from 59.6 to 67.6 per cent between 1998-99 and 2005-06. There was a
decline in fertility rate and increase in family planning across all social 
groups/communities but at a varying rate. The differences in fertility rate and family 
planning were reflected in the differences in the growth of population across social 
groups.

**Vulnerable Adolescent Girls**

Adolescence is a crucial phase in the life of woman when a girl stands at the 
threshold of adulthood. This intermediary stage between childhood and womanhood 
is the most eventful for mental, emotional and psychological well-being. If a 
household has only one girl child the likelihood of her being sent to school is 56%. 
The bigger the family, and the more boys in it, the less likely the girls are to go to 
school. Female secondary schooling delays the age of marriage and provides women 
with the knowledge to secure their children's well-being in the form of improved 
childcare. The life cycle approach for holistic child development remains 
unaddressed if adolescent girls are excluded from the developmental programmes 
aimed at Human Resource Development. Various studies have clearly revealed that 
the health, nutrition, education and social status of adolescent girls are at sub optimal 
level and the adolescent girls do not have adequate access to vital health and 
nutrition information or services. In order to better address concerns for women and 
the girl child, it is essential to design interventions for adolescent girls with the 
objective of breaking the intergenerational life cycle of nutritional disadvantage and 
providing a supportive environment for self-development. Over the past two decades, 
there has been a rapid increase in the rates of enrollment in and completion of girls in 
primary schools, clearly indicating demand for education. However the transition to 
post primary education is poor. If there is a long walk to school that is insecure with 
no toilet facility, the likelihood of parents allowing their adolescent daughters to 
continue their schooling is low. The lack of female teachers also serves as a major 
disincentive, given that parents are often more comfortable sending girls to their 
classroom with a female teacher.

**Nutritional Status of Women**

The nutritional status of women is critical for their own health as well as the 
health of children. There are different indicators to measure the nutritional status of
women. For instance, the height of an adult woman also reflects the level of nutrition during childhood and adolescence. And the height of a woman often indicates the level of risk of difficulty in childbirth and delivering a baby with low birth weight. Current diet also influences nutritional status. Women from scheduled tribes/castes have a relatively poor diet that is deficient in fruits and green, leafy vegetables. Although there was no significant difference in terms of the mean height of the women, the percentage of women below 145 cm was highest among women belonging to scheduled castes. The body mass index (BMI), which is a measure of weight to height, is used to assess thinness or obesity. A BMI less than 18.5 indicates chronic energy deficiency in a woman. The mean BMI was lowest for SC/ST women and the percentage of women whose BMI was below 18.5 was the highest among SC and ST.

Anaemia is another indicator of nutritional status which usually results from a deficiency of iron, vitamin B or other nutrients. Iron deficiency is the most widespread form of malnutrition in the world and in India and in Andhra Pradesh it affects about 50 per cent of the population. According to NFHS III (2005-06) while on an average about 62.9 per cent of ever-married women in the age group 15-49 years had iron deficiency (were anaemic) in the state, across social groups, anaemia was highest among ST women (67.9%) followed by the SCs (64.9 per cent) and OBC (64%). The severe form of anaemia was highest among ST women (6%) and SC women (4.2%) in the state. The percentage of women with anaemia across all communities has increased between 1998-99 and 2005-06, indicating the worsening situation of iron deficiency of women in the state.

Education and Literacy

In education, there exist great disparities between males and females and it shows the gap between the literacy rates of males and females. It shows how the gap has been persisting since 1961. In 1961 the female literacy rate was 12.03 per cent as against 30.19 per cent among males. The disparity index (ratio of male literacy rate to female literacy rate) in 1961 was 2.51. The literacy rate of females rose to 59.74 per cent in 2011 even as the rate for males increased to 75.56 per cent. As shown in table, the literacy rate among females has increased at a faster rate than among males. This is evident from the successively decreasing trend of
disparity index from 2.51 in 1961 to 1.26 in 2011 indicating a positive response to the educational campaigns conducted by the government as well as non-governmental organizations.

**Women Headed Households**

Woman headed household is defined as a family which is led by widow or separated/divorced from her husband or deserted/abandoned by her husband. There exist a largest percentage of rural households that are female headed in the state. Out of a total of 142.46 lakh rural households in the state, 19.77 lakh HHs are female headed that accounts for around 14% of the Households (Census 2011). It may also be noted that over 30% of the household are headed by women over the age of 60. This indicates the necessity of creating safety nets such as pensions for the older women in addition to productive livelihood options pensions for younger women in order to enable them to support their families. The differential poverty between male headed and female headed households in united Andhra Pradesh is 21.1% (Census 2011) which clearly shows a huge gap between males and females in getting an equal advantage. This shows that the women headed households have triple disadvantage, and have ‘triple burden’ in terms of child care, house work and paid work. One of the major reasons for high number of widows is high consumption of alcohol by men which lead to high crude death rate of men than women. With less or no education these groups are very vulnerable to trafficking and sexual violence. They face day to day challenges for protection and survival.

**Domestic Violence**

The United Nations defined “Violence against Women” in 1993 in Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It defines it as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. 34 percent of women aged “Between” 15-49 in Andhra Pradesh have experienced physical or sexual violence, including 37 percent of ever-married women. (NFHS-3).Women with husbands who consume alcohol and get drunk often are much more likely than women whose husbands do not consume any alcohol to experience spousal
violence. Fifty-two percent of women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence have suffered injuries as a result of violence. Only 22 percent of women who have ever experienced violence have sought help to end the violence. Two out of three women have neither sought help nor told anyone about the violence. Abused women most often seek help from their own families. Very few women seek help from any institutional source, such as the police or a social service organization.

Other Crimes against Women

Andhra Pradesh, with nearly 7.0% of the country’s population, has accounted for 12.4% of total crimes against women in the country by reporting 28,246 cases in the year 2011. Andhra Pradesh is one of the high supply states for trafficking. A survey conducted by the National Commission for Women in 2011 reports around 20.4% of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation, are from A.P and 28.7% (1899) of Dowry cases in the country were reported from Andhra Pradesh. The State has reported 42.7% of the sexual harassment cases (3,658) during the year 2011 indicating the need to ensure efficient and speedy justice for women by the state. When the crimes against SCs and STs in the form of rapes, SC/ ST Atrocities and gender based violence are seen, the number of crimes on the scheduled castes and tribes are significant. Most of the crimes against SC /ST women especially the atrocity cases do not come into light because these victims are the ones who are unable to get access to any support system like police, courts, shelters etc. and they are dependent on daily wages and cannot afford either time or energy or money to get through to the justice system. Even though few women take steps to come forward and register cases most of the cases remain unregistered without filing FIRs.

Access to Justice

A vast majority of poor rural women are not able to access justice in spite of legislations and many efforts made by the Central as well as the State Government, to provide institutional support to women facing violence. Efforts have been made to bridge the gap and nurture processes whereby poor women collectively access justice, address violence against women and provide care and support to the affected women to rebuild their lives. It is understood that mere targeting women is
not enough to deal with the gender specific dimensions of the poverty and that there is a need for designing targeted strategies to address the gender specific requirements. Allocation of resources and power within poor households needs to be addressed to enhance the intra family equity. To reduce gender specific risks and vulnerabilities like the death of life partner, desertion by husbands, domestic violence, reproductive health of the woman became an essential part of the gender planning. Social agenda was formulated taking into consideration all these gender risks. It has been demonstrated through some cases, that for gender specific reasons, households may slip into poverty and move in and out of poverty based on the life cycles.

**Female Work Participation**

Female work participation in Andhra Pradesh is lower than that of male but is the highest amongst all the states in India. However, women workers in the state are not placed better economically since the workforce is concentrated on activities which are unorganized, informal, seasonal, insecure, menial and poorly paid. There is also significant wage disparity between the males and the females. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) has to some extent resulted in shift in rural women’s participation in the labor market and has impacted children’s educational outcomes. While the NREGS’s main objective is to alleviate rural poverty by providing employment to households on local public works, it has facilitated increase in rural women’s access to labor market opportunities at her doorstep. From a gender perspective, there are two interesting outcomes of this program. First, the wage rate offered in the scheme is uniform across gender, and second, it gives priority to female employment on public works and mandates one-third of the program beneficiaries to be women. Participation of women in rural value chain: Share of women in wage employment in non-agriculture sector is as follows all India: 18.6%, Rural 19.6% Urban 17.6% (2009-10 NSSO) projected 23 % by 2015. In united AP the total share of women share is 4.2% out of which rural is 2.4% and urban 8.9%. In 2011-12 it is 3.5 % out of which rural is 3.5% and urban is 3.6%. 
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005 aims at enhancing the livelihood and security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work creating community assets and infrastructure. NREGA is the first Act in independent India that guarantees right to work. Apart from granting 100 days of work the Act also provides better working conditions like availability of first aid kit, crèche for children, provision for shade and drinking water at the worksite. The Act also includes unemployment allowance for people who have applied for Act and do not get work within fifteen days of application. Since employment generation is one of the main emphases of the Act it bans use of machines and contractors. In order to have transparency of the process, the Act makes Social Audit mandatory. Social Audit attempts to streamline the process of service delivery and ensures transparency and accountability of the system. Social Audit also gives an opportunity for the poor to be aware of their rights and entitlements and participate in the design of the programme, decision making process and its monitoring and evaluation.

Protection of Child Rights Act (2007)

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was set up in March 2007 under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. The Commission mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights enshrined in the Constitution of India and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child is defined as a person less than 18 years age group. Hence issues of child labour in RIGP areas should be monitored and addressed through the Social Action Committees and the VOs.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005

As per the Act any conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence if he/she(a) habitually assaults or makes the life of the aggrieved person miserable by cruelty of conduct even if such conduct does not amount to physical ill-
treatment; or (b) forces the aggrieved person to lead an immoral life; or (c) otherwise injures or harms the aggrieved person. (2) Nothing contained in clause (c) of sub-section (1) shall amount to domestic violence if the pursuit of course of conduct by the respondent was reasonable for own protection or for the protection of his or another’s property. Some of the salient features of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 are as follows:

1. “Domestic violence” includes actual abuse or the threat of abuse that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic. Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to the woman or her relatives would also be covered under this definition.

2. One of the most important features of the Act is the woman’s right to secure housing.

3. The draft Act provides for appointment of Protection Officers and NGOs to provide assistance to the woman w.r.t medical examination, legal aid, safe shelter, etc.

There have been instances where it was seen that microfinance programs have led to increase in domestic violence. Hence, RIGP should play an important role in sensitizing and capacity building of the community members on the legal provisions of this Act in particular. If cases of violence are reported immediate steps should be taken to enforce this law. This would be especially relevant for the Gender Based Violence related sensitization and capacity building activities under the project.

It may be concluded that, the impact of plans, policies and programmes on status of women over five developmental decades (1951-2000) have brought about perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status in the country. The important achievements have been made in major thrust areas. Even in the field of women’s health a significant improvement has been achieved. The life expectancy of the women is enormously increased from 31.6 tears in 1951 to 59.7 years in 1989-93.49

Similarly, in the field of education numbers of steps were taken to promote the women’s education in line with the National Policy of Education 1986. The purpose of
strategy is in favour of women’s equality and empowerment. All these efforts yielded
good results and drew the women-folk into the decision making process in the
government (taking the IPS, IFS, IAS services into an account). The consistent
efforts of the Government of India and the programmes initiated by both Center and
State Governments enhanced the social, economic, educational and employment
spheres have been increased.

According to 1991 census\textsuperscript{50}, records the women work force and their
participation in decision-making process have been enormously increased, a certain
degree of women are responding to the economic policies of liberalization processes.
Since 1991 onwards, their presence is felt in every sphere. After the Constitutional
Amendment Acts (73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th}) passed in 1999 by the Parliament, marks a holistic
event in the lives of Indian women. As these amendments ensure one third of total
seats (33.3 per cent) are reserved for women in all electoral offices in local bodies,
whether in rural areas or urban areas. As a result of this, women have been brought
to the center stage in the nation’s efforts to strengthen democratic institutions at the
gross root levels about, 0.8 million (8 lakh) women have emerged as leaders as
decision-makers at gross root levels. They entered into public life through the existing
0.23 million local bodies all over the country. Of these, about 76,200 women are
chairpersons at the village block and district levels\textsuperscript{51}.

In conclusion, all the development schemes policies, programmes and
strategies are designed for women’s development and empowerment to identify the
importance of the ‘Mahila Pan Component’ with both physical and financial outlays.
Presently, the governments at the Centre and State levels could not afford to ignore
the women’s participation in developmental activities. The immediate outcome is,
both the governments are allocating the funds both in annual and five year plans. All
these policies are directed towards the economic independence and for women
educational advancement and empowering the women folk of the society.

\textbf{WOMEN STATUS IN WARANGAL}

Women constitute a major segment of the rural society but are often not able
to reap adequate benefits of progress due to lack of empowerment. It is being
increasingly realized that the goal of poverty eradication cannot be achieved without
the full and active participation of the woman in the process of development. With this objective in view, a number of measures have been taken in the recent past, one of them is formation of women self help groups in rural areas. Telangana is one of the forerunners in the SHG movement. Warangal district with 25132 SHG’s is one of the districts which have been making rapid strides in SHG movement. The SHG movement in Warangal district is not merely confined to savings and internal lending. The SHG’s are fast emerging as instruments of socio-economic changes in rural areas. This has taken a shape of silent revolution and causing social transformation in rural areas. This movement is marching ahead with accelerated speed. It is therefore necessary to study the impact of SHG movement on various developmental activities and the social changes brought out by the movement. The tentative details of demography profile of the district based on 2011 census reveals that there are nearly 6 lakh families of rural poor, of which, families belonging to Scheduled Castes are 1.25 lakh and those of Scheduled Tribes are nearly 1.00 lakh.

S.H.G. MOVEMENT HELPED WOMEN LITERACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>A.P</td>
<td>Warangal</td>
<td>A.P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.12</td>
<td>51.68</td>
<td>70.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>26.08</td>
<td>51.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decade (2001-2011) growth rate of literacy among women (20.46) when compared to last decade 1991-2001 (13.08) is quite high this can be attributed to growth of women S.H.G. movement coupled with special women literacy promotion drive by State Government and District officials.

SHG Activities in Warangal

BOOK BINDING & PRINTING PRESS UNIT OF THARUNI SELF HELF GROUP AT RAMPUR (V) OF DHARMASAGAR (M), DIST. WARANGAL

Women Self Help Groups in Warangal District of A.P. are not confined to mere savings & internal lending. They are coming forward to establish income generating activities in various sectors. Apart from farm sectors rural women are showing
interest to establish I.G. units in Non-farm sectors. One such example is the ‘Book Binding & Printing Press unit of “THARUNI S.H.G., which is established at Rampur village of Dharmasagar mandal. R.Aruna, K.Kavitha and others women have come together to form “THARUNI” SHG. They have undergone training in Book Binding, Printing & Rubber Stamp work for a period of 3 months from 21-7-2003 to 21-10-2003. They have planned to establish a Book Binding unit. The DRDA, Warangal has responded & provided them the work shed along with Machinery & an amount of Rs.50000/- as advance. Today the “THARUBNI” SHG is successfully undertaking the Binding & Printing work. The note books & registers made by this unit is being sold easily in the market gaining popularity due to its high quality low price.

Rudrama Swashakthi Canteen

A group of orphan girls have come together to form a Self Help Group (Rudrama Swashakthi MPS). They have been trained in catering and hotel management. DRDA with the collaboration of SC Corporation, and Warangal has sanctioned them a canteen, which they are running in the premises of Collectorate Complex of Warangal. The above said unit is gaining popularity as a well managed unit where hygienic food is being prepared and the unit’s daily turnover is in between Rs. 6000.00 to Rs. 7000.00 earning a profit of Rs. 700.00 to Rs. 800.00 daily. The orphan girls are no more a helpless and shelter less group, today their lives are transformed after forming their own self Help Group and they are on the road to prosperity.

DWCRA marketing centre, Hanamkonda

SHG Women of Warangal District are manufacturing various DWCRA products. Marketing of Products is a prerequisite for sustenance of the IGAs of SHGs. In order to provide marketing channel for the various DWCRA products; DRDA, Warangal has setup a permanent DWCRA marketing centre which is being run in the heart of the town of Hanamkonda. This centre is functioning opposite Ashoka Complex which is a very busy centre of the District Head Quarters. Hitherto the SHG women use to sell their own products in this centre which was not much viable for them. Hence sales girls system is introduced recently and the centre was renovated to attract the customers; which is yielding good results. Netha Bazar is
also setup under the same roof to market the handloom products and durries manufactured by weavers.

In addition to this “Tharuni Service Centres was also accommodated in this centre to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs.

**Jute Products Manufacturing Unit of Devi macs**

Warangal District is famous for cotton as well as Jute products which got international reputation as the products are very qualitative & cheaper, around 3000 artisans are engaged in Weaving of Jute products in Warangal District. As the demand for Jute products in Western Countries in increasing day by day, the steps for creating awareness, among the producers of the Jute products are necessary. It is also very essential to develop the entrepreneurship among the craft persons to promote sales of the Jute products. In order to compete in the international market it is necessary to develop attractive new designs of the Jute products to meet the fasters of consumers. Further artisans must be imparted need based training to upgrade their skills to develop various Jute products to suit to the faster & desires of the consumers. With this intention “36” women SHG members from Gangadevipalli (v) of Geesugonda mandal were trained in manufacturing of Jute articles under skill development programme at Jute service center Warangal. The said trainees were also imparted training in EDP in TTDC Hasanparthy for a week. The trainees were exposed to different types of Jute articles made in the district other parts of the state. The trainees were imparted training in Screen Printing at Jute Service Center Warangal. After completion of the trainees have started manufacturing Jute products on their own & they have formed “Devi Mutually Aided Co-op. Society Gangadevipally, with an aim to undertake manufacturing of quality & latest jute articles. The D.R.D.A. has supported them to purchase 10 Industrial Mode Machines with an amount of Rs. 45,000/-. The proposed beneficiaries have come forward to contribute each Rs.1000/ towards working capital to purchase raw material. The Jute raw material bank also agreed to supply the raw material without any interruption. Exposure trips to Srikakulam & other district of A.P. Culcutta have been arranged to the members of Devi MACs members to create greater awareness among them. Today this unit is successfully running under DEVI MACs, for which Smt. Pendli Shreevani is President and Kanneboina Swaroopa is Secretary.
Srujana Mahilabhivridhi Upadi Mutually Aided Cooperative Society, Parvathagiri

Through an intensive process women SHGs have reached an understanding that chili processing unit is worth attempting to enhance their income and livelihood opportunities. The idea has been communicated to all the senior groups in a cluster of 10 villages in Parvathagiri Mandal and women SHGs which were strongly convinced came forward to invest and initiate this group enterprise. 514 women organized themselves into “Srujana Mahilabhivridhi Upadi Mutually Aided Cooperative Society (Srujana Women Development Employment Mutually Aided Coop. Society). This society legally came into existence on with 35 SHGs hailing from 12 villages. Each group has raised a share capital of Rs. 15,000/- and demonstrated their conviction in the idea. This further enabled them to access financial support of Spices Board, Govt. of India and DRDA, Warangal. This has now become an example for women entrepreneurship on one hand and demonstration of collective strength and wisdom of women.

Our vision is to eradicate rural poverty and secure better quality of life to the poor. The challenges lie in harnessing the innate potential within the poor and enabling them to manage the natural resources for sustainable development. Enhancement of skills of the poor, access to credit, technology and market has proved to be critical to economic empowerment of the poor women. In this connection, let us briefly discuss some of the major schemes, sponsored by the Government of Andhra Pradesh implemented in Warangal district.

Institutional Buildings

Promotion and building of Self-managed and financially sustainable SHGs and their federations at village, mandal and district level with pro-poor and marginalized communities, promotion of social capital in terms of a cadre of Community Activists, Social Activists and para-professionals for enhancing human resource development and sustainable livelihoods at grassroots level empowerment of CBOs to participate actively in the development programs.

All SHGs in the District has to be maintained Sangha Book Keepers (SBKs) through their own funds.
IB Strategies and Current Status

Expansion of Groups network through Social Mobilization in the Indhira Kranthi Pathakam project, social mobilization process is envisioned as a cornerstone of the strategy for the development of the poor and the poorest of the poor. The project has adopted various social mobilization techniques; expanding the Groups base including new groups formation through the present SHG members, and by the innovative use of Kalajathas, audiovisual aids, and campaigns. A unique feature in the project has been the identifying of active and dynamic women from among the community of the poor and training them to be the Community Resource Persons and Community Activists for mobilizing communities. In the year 2004-05 it has intensively focused on the formation of village organizations in newly expanded mandals and strengthened existing Village Officers and Mandal Samakhyas.

Promoting and Nurturing Community Based Organizations

The project has followed the three-tier Community Based Organizations model where homogenous groups of SHGs with 10-15 members each have been formed into the Village Organizations and in turn the village officers are federated to from the Mandal Samakhyas. SGHs -Groups savings and access loans to meet consumption needs and other productive activities in the district. Mandal Samakhyas take up various social development issues, marketing activities, Rice Credit, Commodities marketing and strengthening of village officers. The project by adopting various local specific strategies Community Centers attending and facilitating village officer meetings, nurturing of community activists, promotion of resource groups, model villages, organizing structured trainings and exposure visits etc.,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total No. of Mandals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No. of Villages Covered</td>
<td>1014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No. of Village Organizations Formed</td>
<td>1791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No. of Village Organizations Registered under MACs Act</td>
<td>1299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No. of Mandal Samakhyas Formed</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No. of Mandal Samakyas Registered under MACs Act</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No. of Zilla Samakyas Formed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No. of Zilla Samakyas Registered under MACs Act</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No. of POP/ Poor House Holds</td>
<td>6.90 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No. of POP/ Poor House Holds mobilize into SHGs</td>
<td>4.84 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Net Eligible House Holds</td>
<td>2.06 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DRDA Warangal Statistical.

Social Mobilization

The DWACRA movement started in the Warangal District in the November, 1994. Later under it SGSY it was converted to Self Help Groups Movement. The project APRPRP has been started functioning in the District w.e.f., November, 2002. The old groups and newly formed groups are strengthened through the continuous facilitation support given by IKP staff such as Community coordinators and APMs along with social capital formed at the village level such as Community Activists, Community Resource Persons, Village Book Keepers, Mandal Level Book Keepers etc., the defunct groups were also revived and old groups were strengthened. On account of continuous intensive training and capacity building initiatives the groups have become more active and self sustainable.

SGHs Social Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>OTHERS</th>
<th>MINORITIES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>168541</td>
<td>101326</td>
<td>167486</td>
<td>9355</td>
<td>33056</td>
<td>479764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.13%</td>
<td>21.12%</td>
<td>34.91%</td>
<td>1.95%</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Micro Finance**

The Micro Finance activity in the district is mainly in the form of Self-Help Groups promoted by D.R.D.A. These Groups of 10 to 15 members mainly consisting of rural poor, pool up their meager wage which is used for meeting the credit requirements of the needy members. As an incentive, D.R.D.A. also provides Revolving Fund or Matching Grant assistance to augment the group’s resources. D.R.D.A. is the major agency for promoting groups of women, earlier under DWCRA programme, and presently as per the guidelines of SGSY. As per the instructions of the Governments of A.P., all the eligible women members, who are having white rations cards, are to form self help groups. Few NGOs like, Spandana, Warangal and CARDS, Warangal have also implemented to SGHs-Linkage Programme. However, most of them do not have exclusive groups and some members of these groups are also members of SGHs promoted by D.R.D.A. / Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP).

**Self Sustaining Movement**

The members of SGHs are poor with low or nil saving capacity, and who depend on moneylenders or private sources to meet their expenditure and other obligations. During the group meetings, the thrift amount is pooled and given as loans to members for utilization, production or investment purposes based on the priorities determined by the group. The group members keeping in view the interests and prosperity of the member take a collective decision regarding all matters. These groups play the role of a mid-wife or money lender.

NABARD introduced a pilot project in 1992 for linking banks with SGHs to encourage thrift and savings amongst the rural poor and to supplement their credit needs through the banking system and constituted working group in the matter. Based on the recommendations of the working group, the RBI decided to extend SGH Linkage programme beyond the pilot phase and advised to banks to make it a part of their mainstream banking functions.
SGH Bank Linkage up to 2009

No. of Groups - 16000 (April 2008 to September 2009)
Amount in Crores - 256.00

SGH Bank linkage up to March 2014

No. of Groups - 25000
Amount in Crores - 1000.00

Interest Subsidy (Pavala Vadi)

Government of Andhra Pradesh is implementing interest subsidy scheme to all Self Help Groups who have availed Bank Linkage Loans after 01-07-2004 under SHG Bank Linkage Programme. The interest amount paid is above 3% will be released as incentive to the Self Help Groups. Interest incentive will be released to the groups on half yearly basis on the performance of the loan account obtaining as on March 31 and September 30th in the respective financial year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>No. of</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Progress up to March 2008</td>
<td>28120</td>
<td>528.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Progress April 08 to September 2008</td>
<td>8021</td>
<td>110.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expected Progress from October 08 to March</td>
<td>26785</td>
<td>508.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>up to March, 2014</td>
<td>98212</td>
<td>4606.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DRDA Warangal

Community Investment Fund

The Community Investment Fund (CIF) is one of the key components of Indira Kranthi Patham project. It provides resources to the poor communities for use as a catalyst to improve their livelihoods and quality of life. The objective of the CIF is to improve and diversify sources of livelihoods and quality of life of the “Poorest of the Poor” and the poor by increasing their income and employment, decreasing expenditure and decreasing risks through the Micro Plans of their groups/ institutions.
Swarnajayanthi Grameen Swarojgar Yojana

The Swarnajayanthi Grameen Swarojgar Yojana has implementing from 01-04-1999. The objective of this programme is to ensure appreciable sustained level of income over a period of time. This objective is to be achieved by inter alia organizing the rural poor into Self Help Groups through the process of social mobilization, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets.

The S.G.S.Y. has the following 5 major Components

1. Training
2. Infrastructure
3. Revolving Fund
4. Individual Loans
5. Groups Loans

Community Development

Pensions

The Government of India introduced National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) w.e.f. 15.8.1995 with a view to support minimum needs of the poor destitute having little or no regular means of subsistence from their own source of income or through financial support from their family members. One of the components is National Old Age Pension Scheme. Under the Scheme poor destitute old aged persons of 65 and above are extended support at the rate of Rs. 75/- per pensioner per month. From the year 2006, it was increased to Rs.100/- and 2007, the amount of pension has been increased 200/- and 2009 to 500/- and 2014 Telangana Government increased pension amount 1000/- 1500/- per month for all the pensions under Old Age, Weavers, Widows, Disabled and INDIRAMMA.

Warangal District Pension Released Amount up to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>OAP</th>
<th>WEAVERS</th>
<th>DISABLED</th>
<th>WIDOW</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>230477</td>
<td>11290</td>
<td>46937</td>
<td>97308</td>
<td>386012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non Pesticide Management

Today agriculture is passing through a difficult phase. The ever increasing costs of cultivation due to excessive dependency on external inputs, high fluctuations in marketing prices due to opening up of markets, reduced public support after liberalization coupled with the monsoon vagaries have made agriculture–based livelihoods unviable. The spate of farmers’ suicide particularly in Telangana and across the country is only the tip of the iceberg. The crisis needs to be understood and several long-term initiatives have to be taken up to solve it. Agriculture chemicals especially pesticides occupy major costs in crops like cotton, chilies etc. The inevitability of pesticides in agriculture is promoted by the industry as well as the public research and extension bodies.

Warangal district in the period 1991-2011 it was observed that male agricultural labour in 1991 it was 24.43 per cent and it is 25.61 per cent in 2011. In 1991 female agricultural labour were 45.82 and it increased to 55.61 in the period 2001 and in 2011 it is 56.09 which show that female labour participation is slowly increasing, and it can be said that female labour participation in agriculture is higher than the male labour participation rate. An against the 46 per cent of total work force female agricultural labour in 1991, the corresponding proportions in 2011 stand at 56 percent. While proportion the male cultivators in 1991 was 42 percent, it is 26 per cent in 2011. The proportion of male cultivators decreased to significance on the other hand the proportion of female cultivators increasing during this period. There is shift from cultivator to agricultural labour in Warangal district which is close to state data. When compared to India data this shift appears to be significant. Finally, it may be conclude that proportion of female agricultural labour force to the total workers has increased significantly in the study area.
### Indira Jeevitha Bhima Pathakam Scheme (Aam Admi Bhima Yojana)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>No. of Persons enrolled in the Scheme</th>
<th>Death Claims reported</th>
<th>@ Rs. 5000/- Paid</th>
<th>Total Claims finalized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>165101</td>
<td>155044</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>38.55 Lakhs</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Janasri Bhima Yojana/ Other Group Insurance Schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total Enrolled Members</th>
<th>Premium paid to LIC and United Insurance Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JBY</td>
<td>OGI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>88054</td>
<td>105925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1673615</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>16811</td>
<td>14818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2341244</td>
<td>31629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104865</td>
<td>120743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19077394</td>
<td>225608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### One Job for every poor family

- Government of Andhra Pradesh is working on “Elimination of Rural Poverty” through the women SHG.
- In the process, it has identified that children of the SHG women family are dropping from the studies and were idle. (It’s been waste of youth power of the nation)
- It’s an attempt to create livelihood (Entry level sustainable jobs) to the 2nd generation of the SHG family so that the family can come out of the poverty soon
- Accordingly Govt. of AP has started EGMM (Employment Generation and Marketing Mission) at state level and the implementation at district level will be through the DRDA
In the year 2004-05, DRDA Warangal has collaborated with Dr. Reddy’s Foundation; Hyderabad to impart the skill development job oriented training programs to the unemployed rural poor youth.

In the year 2005-06, DRDA, Warangal has expanded the trainings and placements by tying up with National Academy of Construction, Hyderabad in the sector of Construction, where the unemployed rural poor youth are trained and shown placements.

From 2006-07, DRDA, Warangal has stepped up the training programs and placements in to various sectors like Rural Retail Academy, English and Work Readiness Programme, Security Guards and then later on to Textile, Hotel Management, Tally, Call Centre and Gems & Jewelers.

2013-2014, Under RIAD (Remote and Interior Area Development) Programme, DRDA, and Warangal has conducted survey in 365 RIAD villages and collected the youth database (8717) in a prescribed format and computerized it. Basing on the database, the training are planned in the above sector and got good results.

**Jobs and Trainings**

The people of Warangal District will be able to look forward to exciting opportunities in Agriculture, Industry and Service Sector. Rural areas people will earn profitable livelihoods from a revitalized agriculture sector, find jobs on poultry forms, food processing or fishing units or be able to setup their own small scale enterprises. In cities they will be able to work in exports firms, garments, manufacturing, construction and real estate companies, travel agencies, tourism officers and software development firms among many others. In both village and cities they will be able to set up retail shops, restaurants and other such services.

**Dairy Development**

Bulk Milk Cooling Units in the following mandal headquarters have been established with joint venture of Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Corporartion and SERP Hyderabad having capacity of 3000 Lts. The BMCUSs are not functioning
at present and it is planned to open within a short time. However the Milk Procurement activity is going on in mandals with initial procurement of 750 liters per day these BMCUS 750 liters per day these BMCUs are being maintained by Mandal Samakhyas.

BMCUs established mandals of the district are Thorrur, Dharmasagar and Eturnagaram.

**Action Plan on Gender**

Gender Strategy in Indira Kranthi Pathakam Project focuses on an integrated plan of action trust that will be on universalisation of social action to improve safe and secure environment which are the key elements in development and sustainability.

**Strategies**

- Introduction of social agenda at all SHGs level and formation of Social Action Committees at Village Organizations, Mandal Samakhyas and Zilla Samakkhyas

- Setting up of family counseling centres at every mandal and helpline at every Zilla Samakhyas level to tackle with domestic violence and sexual harassment at work place

- Development Gender CRPs are Para-Legal workers to deal with violence on women and girls

- Set up of Girls groups’ convergence with women and child welfare department

1. **Food Security**

Food security is the major vulnerability of the poor. Due to droughts, funds, lack of employment work opportunities in dryland areas, difficulties in accessing sufficient quantities and in the lean periods of agriculture season, many among the rural poor have barely a square meal a day. Since public distribution system accounts for only one-third of the family requirement the poor depend on open market to fill the massive two-thirds gap. Food security credit is a direct intervention
to tackle this hunger gap in rural communities. VOs procure essential commodities in bulk from open market, and supply as credit as per the member’s indent at a lower price than the village retail outlets. The amount is repaid by members to SHG and VO in convenient installments, based on the pattern of their earnings, thus enabling food security to the SHG families. The food security intervention has rice and other commodities of daily usage, like pulses, edible oil, chilies, tamarind, salt, etc. Under these programmes 15.88 lakh families were benefited. On other hand it has become model for “Harvesting women’s collective strength for poverty alleviation”.

2. **Farm Managers**

   Women are the key figures in small holdings which provide livelihood to the majority of the rural people with rapidly declining environmental conditions and the consequent male migrations, women in female headed households are emerging as the managers of the much degraded farm lands.

3. **Farm Labourers**

   Women are heavily engaged as agricultural workers. About 80 percent of all economically active women in Warangal are engaged in agriculture. They work longer and harder than men. They also work on more tasks than men. Usually the low income, low skilled and low productivity jobs are female specific. Generally labour-intensive, back-breaking and time consuming activities are the domain of the weaker sex.

4. **Post-Harvest Processing**

   Women are typically involved in post-harvest processing of food and non-food products. Their contribution is substantial even where they are mostly confined to the homestead. They are also active in barter, exchange and trade of agricultural produce and processed products.

5. **Livestock**

   In animal husbandry women have multiple roles. An estimated 50 thousand women, as against 75 thousand men, are engaged in the Warangal dairy sector. Their activities vary widely ranging from care of animals, grazing fodder collection,
cleaning of animal sheds to processing of milk and livestock products.

6. Fisheries

In Warangal, women’s participation in fisheries varies across the Mandals. About 10000 women as against 28000 men are involved in fisheries.

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