CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION:

Human rights are the rights which are believed to belong to entire human race. It means it belongs to all and not to one specific group. Human rights are the fundamental rights and are available simply by the fact of being human. Thus they are different from privilege, which can be taken away at someone’s whim. The international law gives freedom to womenfolk to enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedom as enjoyed by other individuals. But due to mass violation of human rights in general and women’s rights in particular, women are not able to enjoy their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights or face multiple obstacles in enjoying these rights. To eradicate violence against them, to make their voice heard in decision making process, to ameliorate their overall position and enable them to enjoy their rights, especially their rights to life, liberty, equality and dignity, is the need of an hour. The history has witnessed women struggling in every era and every part of the world for their rights. The umbrella of human rights is massive and various nations face different challenges in promoting and implementing human rights. Violence against women is widespread in all the corners of world and such violence is a human right violation that manifests itself in number of ways.

The ideology of Karel Vasak’s three generation of human rights as discussed above was influenced by three watchwords of French revolution i.e. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He proposed the theory in 1979 distinguishing the human rights in three categories i.e. first, second and third generation but now the human race is facing new challenges and thus new human rights keep on adding and we have four generations of human rights. The first generation of human rights consists of civil and political rights. Of course the same rights were also witnessed in earlier documents like Magna Carta 1215, French Revolution 1789, etc but the question arises that whether women are enjoying civil and political rights? Political rights include right to vote and right against torture and slavery. New Zealand was the first country to allow women to vote in 1893, whereas Saudi Arabia granted the same right to women in 2011. The data indicates large discrepancy. As per the data given by UN, 80% of the Nigerian women who came to Italy in the first half of 2016 will be trafficked into...
prostitution. The global data for slavery is even more shocking. Every year more than 7 lakh women and children are forced into sex slavery. Thus it seems that women have not acquired their first generation rights. When we talk about second generation rights i.e. economic, social and cultural rights, it includes right to work, education, etc. As per the World Bank report of 2012, a study of 173 countries reveal that, 155 countries have at least one legal difference restricting women’s economic opportunities. Out of these, 100 countries have the laws which restrict the types of jobs which women can do. 17% of the world’s population is still not literate and out of them two-third are women. Thus it seems that women have not realized second generation rights. First and second generation rights are individual rights whereas third and fourth generation rights are collective rights. Here it seems that even sincere governments worldwide are ignoring womenfolk when it comes to realization of human rights in truest sense.

If we go back to the world history of human rights we come to know that the movements all over the world for realization of human rights and all documents pronouncing and reiterating the said concept are the off-spring of peoples’ struggle for civilized life. Thus we can say that the term ‘human rights’ is a by-product of blood, toil, tears, struggle and sweat of mankind. For developing the ideology of human rights the credit can be given to ancient Greek civilization and Romans. Of course the concept was not named as human rights. Greeks believed humanity to be the divine gift of universal having the roots in divine laws. Without being named as human rights, the concept had started gaining shape when Greek philosophers made an attempt to form written edicts. The ancient society then started following edicts instead of blindly following the commands of monarchs. Romans considered natural law to be the base for maintaining peace and happiness in the society. Judaism considered human being as an image of God and Christianity considered human being as a unique creation of God. Thus major religions of the world had weaved human rights within them without naming them.

The thirteen to eighteen century laid a strong foundation for human rights when the documents like the Magna Carta 1215, Petition of rights 1628, English Bill of Rights 1689, the United States Declaration of Independence 1776 and Declaration

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of Rights of Man and Citizen 1789 were framed. Some documents gave freedom to people from arbitrary actions of kings where as others gave freedom to people from subjugation and unjust laws prevailing in their countries. The twentieth century witnessed two World Wars i.e. World War I and World War II, which had unprecedented scale of destruction and mass human rights violation. The forced labour policy of Germans in their occupied territory was considered to be the darkest chapter in the history of world war I, as the policy resulted into forced labour of 1,00,000 people. The incarceration of thousands of people without any judicial proceedings and compelling old age people, homosexuals, patients and children to die, considering them unproductive was a blatant violation of human rights during World War II. The position of women was pathetic during this phase. The soldiers of war had raped almost 2 million women ranging from 8 to 80 years. Some women were frequently raped and some were even used as ‘comfort women’ (sexual objects) and were forced to work as prostitutes in military brothels. People in twentieth century were tired of armed conflicts, destruction of properties and blood bath of sadistic sexuality and were forced to think about permanent solution to promote international peace, security and cooperation for promoting human rights and fostering economic development. This resulted into creation of an international organization known as United Nations. During World War II, British economist and social reformer, William Beveridge, gave a report officially entitled ‘Social Insurance and Allied Services’, in which he suggested that to make a welfare state, government should fight against five evils: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. The post war reforms for welfare state were credited to his report. The welfare state is a concept in which government plays a key role in protection and promotion of social and economic well being of its citizens. But it seems that most of the sincere governments, worldwide, instead of protecting human rights, promoting social justice and guaranteeing people’s welfare, have abdicated from their responsibilities. In words of Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser on gender issues at G8 international conference on violence against women,

“Without appropriate national laws and their effective enforcement, the effect of international agreements and international law will be

3 William Beveridge: (1879-1963) was a British economist and a social reformer. He was best known for his 1942 report ‘Social Insurance and Allied Services’, served as a basis for post world war II welfare state.
muted and of little relevance. It is translation of international commitments into legal mechanisms and their implementation that will move us from words to action. The arm of international law is too short to ensure this at national level. “

If we talk about our nation, the Directive Principles of State Policy, enshrined in Part IV of the Indian Constitution reflects that India is a welfare state. The directive principles affirms that: the State must strive to promote the welfare of the people (Art. 38), must direct its policy towards securing: men and women equally have the right to adequate means of livelihood [Art. 39 (a)], material resources of the community be so distributed to serve the common good [39 (b)], equal pay for equal work for both men and women [39 (c)], etc. If India is welfare state then why attitude of government towards women is frustrating? Why are crimes against women increasing? Why is literacy rate of women in India low? Why is sex ratio skewed in India? National Crime Report Bureau (NCRB) statistics reveal that crimes against women have increased by 7.1% nationwide since 2010. There is an increase of 9%, 10.5% and 4.6% in rape cases, kidnapping cases of women and dowry deaths, respectively in the year 2014 as compared to the year 2013 as per the reports of NCRB. Literacy rate of females in India is 65.46% as against 82.14% of males as per Census 2011. Due to violent treatments meted out to girl child at the time of birth decrease the female birth ratio in India. Thus sex ratio in India is 940 females per 1000 males. 36% of Indian women are chronically under-nourished from their childhood itself. As per one of the articles of newspaper, the Indian government has allocated Rs 1000 crores every year towards the Nirbhaya Fund- for schemes to ensure safety and security of women since the year 2013. But since last three years, the fund has remained unspent due to failure of government to design the schemes useful for women.

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6 Nirbhaya Fund: The fund created by government in 2013 in memory of Nirbhaya, a Delhi paramedic who was assaulted and brutalized in December 2012 in a moving bus in Delhi.
6.2 EVALUATION OF HYPOTHESIS WITH RESEARCH WORK:

6.2.1 Whether enough attention has been given to women’s rights while framing the international instruments and arranging conferences on human rights and whether women globally are benefited due to such actions?

As discussed earlier, human rights are the rights which are believed to belong to entire human race. It means it belongs to all and not to one specific group. During First World War, womenfolk of warring nations crossed the lines of conventionally demarcated roles allotted to them and entered men’s arena in spite of injustice done with them. The educated women accepted jobs in munitions industries whereas others did low and exhaustive jobs in spite of low wages offered to them as compared to men. During Second World War, almost 2 million women had dreadful experience of rape. Thus when international organization named United Nations was formed, the framers while adopting the Charter were well aware about the contributions and sufferings of women folk and so they used the terms ‘equal rights of men and women’ in the preamble of the Charter. Art. 1 of the Charter affirms ‘fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, sex and religion’. Under Art.8, UN considers both men and women eligible to participate in its organs. Ms Eleanor Roosevelt even appreciated the work of women who contributed during war and insisted that the governments of the world should design the programmes for upliftment of women during the time of peace considering their notable contribution at the time of war. She also insisted that governments should not prevent women from assuming full rights of citizenship.

In spite of formation of UN, women’s rights were constantly violated and sidelined. Thus a Commission was formed by ECOSOC in the year 1946, named Commission on Status of Women (CSW) to explore the issues related to women and make suggestions for improvement in their position in society. In the words of Ms. Bodil Begtrup, it was for the first time that women’s problems would be studied internationally by the said Commission. The Commission observed that women globally were doing conventional roles allotted to them and had no role in decision making process and thus it became instrumental in adopting declarations and

In spite of formation of UN, there was systematic violation of human rights. In order to protect them, many human rights activists, non-governmental organizations including 22 women’s organizations urged UN in the year 1948 to draft a landmark document named Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to give shape to human rights at international level. Initial draft of document had the words ‘Rights of men’, which could not be interpreted to include the ‘Rights of women’. Similar objections were raised by Ms. Bodil Begtrup and Ms. Hansa Mehta to substitute the words ‘human beings’ for ‘men’, ‘human beings’ for ‘brothers’, etc. Ms. Eleanor Roosevelt and other female scholars also objected to gender biased language used in the document like ‘he’, ‘his’, ‘him’, ‘brotherhood’, etc. Many women scholars objected to masculinized perception in the document and later made relentless efforts to reflect gender equality through it. The drafting committee of UDHR thus reacted on the suggestions and added footnote to Art.1 indicating that the word ‘men’ includes all human beings.

Another milestone in the journey of women empowerment by UN was drafting of Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. The said convention aimed at nullifying the distinction, discrimination and restriction made on the basis of sex that has the effect of hindering the women’s enjoyment for rights. The legal, social and economic status of women was taken care of by ensuring equal rights with men to vote, participation in civil society, participation and representation in international organizations, acquire, change or retain their nationality due to change in marital status, right to education, access to bank loans and financial credits, etc.

The two international conferences on human rights i.e. Tehran Conference (1968) and Vienna Conference (1993) aimed to ameliorate the position of women by protecting and promoting women’s rights from inferior status granted to them globally. The conferences resolved to integrate women’s rights in the main stream of UN activities. They even planned to change mechanism of activities of UN by appointing a reporter to report on violence experienced by women globally. The
four major conferences on women i.e. at Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Beijing (1995) and special session of Beijing +5-women 2000 aimed at full participation of women in development and thus it called upon governments to frame strategies in their respective nations and implementing them. The Mexico Conference came out with two positive outcomes: International Research and Training Institute for Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Copenhagen Conference mainly focused on concepts like: lack of awareness among women about opportunities available to them and lack of sufficient involvement of men in improving women’s role in the society. Thus the Conference even put the responsibility on men folk for empowerment of women. The Nairobi Conference insisted various governments to design strategies for more participation of women in industries, communication, science, environment, etc so that they can compete on the world platform. The Beijing Conference echoed an important message to world that, human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights, once and for all. Beijing +5 focused on the barriers existed in implementation of goals set out in Beijing conference.

Thus enough attention was given to women folk at the time of framing international instruments on human rights. Moreover, UN has not sidelined the rights of women in its Charter. On the contrary, UN has drafted a landmark document named CEDAW and has arranged many conferences especially dedicated to women. UN Women has even become partner with various governments and civil society organizations to advocate for ending violence and to increase awareness for its causes. However the efforts of UN seem to be failing. An international magna carta to human rights, UDHR, had patriarchal terminology when initially drafted. So women folk felt sidelined when their rights were neglected. The road map to women’s rights, CEDAW also has a drawback. It makes only recommendations to member nations violating women’s rights, so the said rights become least priority. Of course through reiteration of the words in international conferences that, ‘Women’s rights are human rights’, women’s rights have started getting recognition. But recognition does not mean implementation. Thus historically women have claimed their rights not granted to them. However UN needs to view this problem with unique lens of gender equality. UN can condemn actions of member states publicly in Conferences for not protecting women’s rights in their respective nations, which may be embarrassing and thus resulting into encouragement of states to take positive steps in that direction. But
many times the member nations refuse the existence of lower status of women then in such case recommendations of UN become ineffective and women will not be benefited.

6.2.2 Whether women in India had/have justifiable position in pre-Constitutional and post Constitutional era and whether there are enough laws in India for protecting the rights of women?

In Vedic age, religion had weaved all the activities of the society within it and so the members of the society enjoyed basic human rights such as right to life, liberty, equality and dignity. In spite of class system prevailing in the society, women enjoyed equal status with men. Women contributed in each and every sector of the society, be it a war, religion, marriage, profession, etc. Thus they had free and independent existence and were empowered culturally, socially and religiously, in spite of certain drawbacks of that period. The era was full of examples of heroic women who were warriors, thinkers, spies, etc. The free minded Vedic society which honoured women from their birth, gave them education, equal status, dignified married life, property rights and above all worshipped them as deities can be termed as golden age for women. In comparison of earlier period, the epic period witnessed slight deterioration in position of women as they had to prove their chastity all the time. However, women were able to make remarkable position in the society within the limits set for them. The Smriti period showed the major downfall in the position of women as society misinterpreted the writings of philosophers. The dark period is believed descended for women as they were expected to follow the code of conduct prepared by patriarchal society. The religions like Jainism and Buddhism accepted women as followers and nuns but could not contribute much to ameliorate the position of women. Mughal and Rajput era in India gave respect and luxurious lives to women but could not give them political rights, in spite of their major contribution in sacrificing their lives for achieving political strength. The British era worsen the position of women due to prevalence of orthodox evil customs such as purdah system, sati system, female infanticide, etc which were deeply percolated in the social system. The women notably contributed in freedom struggle by supporting Gandhiji’s ideology of khadi, banning foreign goods, protesting against sale of liquor, etc in spite of being awarded inferior status in patriarchal society. Thus women folk had
witnessed the positions from power structures to secondary status in pre-constitutional era.

During the British rule in India, there was systematic violation of human rights and the framers of the Constitution were aware about the ill-treatment and cruelty suffered by women through ages and so they tried to strengthen their position. Some of the members of Constituent Assembly of India were females, who were either scholars or social reformers and who had witnessed women folk struggling for their rights in pre-constitutional era. Thus certain provisions of positive discrimination were enacted in the Constitution of India to remove disparities, dissimilarities and discrimination against women and to give them equal status with men. The four major pillars of Constitution are ‘Justice’, ‘Liberty’, ‘Equality’ and ‘Fraternity’. Thus the concept of equality is enshrined by the founding fathers in Preamble and Fundamental rights. Thus Constitution of India attempts to remove gender inequality by banning any discrimination based on sex. In this direction the Central government insists state and local governments to promote equality by taking measures in favour of women like equal pay, free legal aid, humane working conditions, maternity relief, right to work and education and raising the standard of living, etc. Many sections in Indian Penal Code are enacted especially to give protection to women against crimes practiced against them. Some of them are: S. 313 Causing miscarriage without women’s consent, S. 325 Grievous hurt-wife beating, S. 366 Kidnapping, abduction or inducing women to compel her marriage, S. 376 Rape, S. 376 (2) (h) Rape on a woman knowing her to be pregnant, etc. The law framers were even aware about the oppression suffered by women in male dominated society and so certain enactments are especially dedicated to women. They have so far enacted 8 women specific legislations and more than 40 women related legislations. The statistics and figures about women in India are shocking: The sex ratio is 933 females against 1000 males. Literacy rate of females is 65.46% as against 82.14% of males in the year 2011. If we talk about basic rights i.e. right to life, its violation takes place as: As per NCRB crime report 36,735 rape cases occurred in India in 2014, making 100 rapes per day and one rape in every 14 minutes. There were 8455 dowry death cases in 2014 making 23 dowry deaths per day. There were total 3,25,329 IPC crimes against women in India in 2014 resulting into 891 crimes per day. The data regarding violation of right to liberty: the study of seven states of India conducted by International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) revealed that one out of every
six men did not allow their wives to wear the clothes of their choice, did not expect their partners to use contraceptives without their permission. The violation of right to equality as: the study of seven states of India by ICRW reveals that 75% husbands have greater say than wives in decisions affecting them. The right to dignity is violated as: the undignified practice still continues in India for cleaning dry latrines by Dalit women. 1.3 million Dalits are employed in this practice, in which majority are women.

6.2.3 Whether Judiciary as an institution and other stakeholders like Panchayati Raj Institutions, police, non-governmental organizations and various commissions been able to protect basic human rights such as right to life, liberty, equality and dignity in context to women?

Judiciary as a stakeholder of women’s rights should be independent and impartial, only then it can dispense justice without fear and favour. The landmark judgments of Supreme Court and High Courts of various states have reaffirmed the faith of people in Indian judiciary. The innovative ideas which judges have applied from time to time while dealing with feminist matters prove that judges have been the forerunners in eliminating gender inequality in the society. The courts have always tried to interpret laws by applying the principles of equity, justice and good conscience. The cases like Delhi Domestic Working Women Forum v. Union of India & Others, Sheela Barse v. State of Maharashtra, Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum, etc shows the courts’ efforts to protect women’s right to life; the cases like Maneka Gandhi V. Union of India, Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh, etc shows courts’ efforts to protect women’s right to liberty; the cases like C. B. Muthamma v. Union of India, Air India v. Nargesh Meerza, etc shows courts’ efforts to protect women’s right to equality and the cases like Neera Mathur v. LIC of India, Rupan Deol Bajaj v. K.P.S Gill, etc shows courts’ efforts to protect women’s right to dignity. Thus judiciary has worked as a harbinger and custodian in protecting women’s rights. However, at times it seems that Supreme Court had acted as a pet of legal system and thus it failed to respect women’s rights in few cases. In Mathura case (Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra) the Supreme Court acquitted the police constables on the grounds that no alarm was raised by the victim hence it was not declared as rape.
Thus we can say that constitutional goal of ‘social-economic justice’ has become a mirage.

Political empowerment of Indian women through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) was a good start through reservation in 1993. Besides granting political stand, the other aim was to free women from age old social barriers imposed on them in male chauvinist world. The reservation showed its impact in 2008, where the participation of women in all three tiers of Panchayat became 36% in India. But this empowerment seems to be on paper as their dominating husbands become de-facto sarpanchs. The other barriers such as parda, class conflicts, dominance of elites in rural areas, etc do not allow women to become decision makers in real sense, leaving them as passive spectators. Thus it seems that PRI, even after two decades of reservation for women, has not proved to be an effective stakeholder in upholding women’s rights.

Police, the frontline of criminal justice system and a responsible stake holder, can be made accountable for following Constitutional norms so that the faith of public is retained in a democratic society. But in many cases they are not found to be accountable for following the standards especially set for women related issues. Police atrocities are ordinary features of Indian scenario and women being the vulnerable class easily become victim of police cruelty. In many cases police have acted as hungry wolves in disguise of saviors. The unsympathetic treatment with women and custodial rapes by police in cases like Shiv kumar Gupta v. State of Uttar Pradesh and Ramkumar v. Himachal Pradesh and torture by police to women through Special Task Force (STF) constituted to encounter Verappan and AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) in North Indian states supports the point. The cases of custodial rapes (rapes committed in custody of police, hospital and judicial custody) in the year 2014 were 197. For not acting as a custodian of women’s rights, the role of Gujarat police was also criticized during riots of 2002. It seems that most women, instead of considering police as the saviors, are more afraid of them and procedures conducted at police stations and so they hesitate in lodging the complaint. Thus as a stakeholder they are not sensitized to handle women issues, instead they have been misusing their authority and position in majority of the cases.

Non-governmental organizations at national and international level have been providing a support system for strengthening the civil society in general and marginalized communities in particular. The NGOs like Vishakha in Rajasthan, Delhi
Domestic Workers forum- Chetanalaya, New Delhi, and many more strive to stop violence and discrimination against women. Vishakha and other women’s groups had notably contributed by filing Public Interest Litigation against State of Rajasthan for enforing the fundamental rights of working women in case of gang rape of social worker. Delhi Domestic Workers forum had notably contributed in case of rape of tribal women in train. However, the actions of NGOs are also criticized by Supreme Court in few cases, when they become puppet in the hands of foreign agencies funding them for running their desired agenda without understanding the problems at grass root level.

Various Commissions such as National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Gujarat State Human Rights Commission, National Commission for women (NCW) and Gujarat State Commission for Women (GSCW) have played significant role in protecting women’s rights. The Commissions, at national and state levels have been performing their role complementary to Supreme Courts and High Courts of India. The combined efforts of these Commissions in protecting and promoting human rights in general and women’s rights in particular have assured progress of the country and better standard of life for its citizens. As responsible stakeholders, the Commissions have made an effort to go beyond civil rights of citizens and have expanded their activities in the arena of social and economic rights. These Commissions have been receiving large number of complaints for violation of women’s rights since its constitution and has acted suo-moto in many cases to provide speedy justice to the victims.

6.2.4 Whether social position of women is ameliorated under administrative categories of caste and women based labour categories in the state of Gujarat?

The treatments meted to women decide their sociological and psychological wellbeing in the family. While one studies the rights of women as human rights, it cannot be done by detaching them from the society. The society plays a vital role in not only protecting the rights of women but also in deciding whether women can have those rights? Gujarat is considered as the most industrialized state in India, yet it is well-known for preserving its rich culture and tradition of ancient past. In spite of advancement in the State, certain evils are practiced in many castes which make the
status of women low. The evil of dowry is prevalent in many castes. Of course in some of them it is considered as stridhan. The customs like male equigeniture (property is equally divided between male members and the eldest male will become the head of family after the death of father), Saata system (girl in exchange of girl), Junior Sororate (husband marrying wife’s sister), Palla (bride price), etc are deeply percolated in the social structure, which seems to engulf the basic being of woman. The most horrifying custom prevalent in some castes is ‘Daakin pratha’ (witch craft). In order to avoid interaction with old woman, villagers brand such lady as witch, harass her by hitting her with stones and sometimes kill her. Many castes have huge gender gap prevailing due to female foeticide practiced in past. Such castes even have crisis of brides due to conservative approach of prohibiting inter-caste marriages. In recent times the same castes are ready to hunt for brides from mediocre families of other states to combat crisis. Monogamy is mostly found but polygamy is found in some castes, which allows man to remarry in case of barren wife. Custom of child marriage is found in many castes in spite of being prohibited by law. The position of women of Dalit caste is worst as they become victim of many atrocities which still continues at an alarming rate. Even for their negligible mistakes, they are paraded naked in the village. They suffer from triple marginalization: as a Dalit, as a poor and as a woman. The skewed sex ratio in Gujarat also depicts the grave violation of women’s right to life. However, the recent trend seems to be changing. Those castes which never allowed their women to work, now allow, due to increase in literacy rate. Some castes have stopped giving dowry and performing expensive weddings, instead they promote charity and mass marriages.

In labour based categories in Gujarat, the role of women seems to be changing. Instead of just playing the traditional role of home maker, women have now stepped out of the house for earning for several reasons. Women in Gujarat work in diamond polishing units, agate bead polishing units, textile industries, in salt pans, as manual scavengers, as surrogate in rent-a-womb industry, etc. The exploitation continues in certain employment either by the way of wages, working hours or sexual harassment. Many women become victim of physical atrocities such as: the toes and fingers of salt workers become stiff and cannot be burnt even at the time of cremation; hence those body organs are buried in salt to get decomposed. Some women become victim of social atrocities i.e. people socially boycott manual scavengers and use disgraceful word like ‘Bhangi’ for them. Women also become victim of occupational
diseases like: agate polishers are prone to silicosis and manual scavengers are prone to Tuberculosis. Some women are exploited economically for e.g. some surrogate mothers are not paid the amount promised before pregnancy. Some women are sexually exploited for e.g. women in textile industry. As per India Labour and Employment Report 2014, Gujarat is No.1 state in economic freedom index but it ranks 12th out of 21 states chosen for analysis of Employment Situation Index. The Female Labour Participation Rate (LFPR) of Gujarat in the year 2011-12 was 32.1 %, as against all-India average of 33.1%. However government, NGOs, self-help groups, trade unions and associations of respective occupations are making positive efforts to improve the condition of women workers. In this direction, Surat Diamond Association (SDA), District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) have taken joint initiative to run self-help groups for training and empowering women diamond workers in which more than 1 lakh women are beneficiaries. In salt pan occupation, for improving the standard of life of women salt workers, the NGO named SEWA (Self-Employed Women’s Association) has started a pilot project of providing solar panels for pumping underground water and escaping poverty of more than 17000 workers. To change the ill fate of manual scavengers, government has taken initiative to construct bio-toilets in trains under ‘Swachh Rail, Swachh Bharat’ mission. In order to create employment in textile industries for women in rural areas, government has introduced Gujarat Textile Policy in 2012 consisting of five F’s: Farm, fibre, fabric, fashion and foreign. To save agate workers from deadly disease of silicosis, National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) has developed a vacuum machine to suck harmful dust. In order to stop exploitation of surrogates, a Bill banning commercial surrogacy is introduced in Loksabha and will have the effect once passed by both the houses of Parliament.

Women, in spite of supporting men in earning livelihood and helping family in maintaining its cultural identity at local level, are not able to enjoy their basic rights. Thus it seems that the position of women in Gujarat under administrative categories of caste and labour based categories is not ameliorated.

Whether the status of women has improved, in spite of international conventions concerning women, series of women specific legislative enactments and amendments at national level and women specific legislative enactment at state level?

Conventions, treaties, covenants, statutes, pact or charter are different terms used for written documents at international level. But they have significance only when they are ratified by states. The ratification means the state indicates to be bound by the treaty. The United States and Palau have signed but not ratified the landmark document CEDAW, whereas the Holy See, Iran, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga are not even signatories to CEDAW, in spite the document being considered as the highest standard for women’s rights. Many nations have not implemented certain provisions of CEDAW on cultural and religious grounds. Many countries have raised objections for Art.2 of CEDAW which creates contractual obligation on member nations to take measures for gender equality. On this issue Ms. Salma Khan, head of CEDAW Committee commented that, “When you enter a reservation on Art.2, you are nullifying the whole concept and sense of convention.”

In October 2000, the Security Council of UN had adopted a resolution on women and peace and security, through which it insisted all states to increase the participation of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace building and post conflict reconstruction. It was very shocking that only 22 nations out of 192 have adopted it in national action plans. When conventions are made at international level in favour of women, it does not mean that women globally will be provided rights, but it creates a platform for women to acquire those rights. Thus it becomes the duty of various governments to see that conventions are ratified and implemented for women. Thus patriarchal culture worldwide, rigid gender roles, discriminatory laws and practice, lack of access to education, health care, economic and other resources are the obstacles to women empowerment.

Coming to the national level, there is large number of legislations especially for women. So far there are 8 women specific legislations and more than 40 women related legislations in India. But majority of the legislations are mute and attitude of

10 Ibid
government towards violation of women’s rights seem to be frustrating. Majority of laws enacted in India do not benefit womenfolk. In spite of having Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, there were 1,22,877 cases of domestic violence in year 2014. In spite of having Dowry Prohibition Act, there were 8,455 cases in year 2014. In spite of fixing minimum age for marriage of girl at 18 years, 61% of women get married before the age of 16. \(^{11}\) In spite of having Equal Remuneration Act, gender pay gap in year 2013 was 24.81%. As per the report of World Economic Forum, a woman is paid one-third in comparison to man for the same job, in corporate sector in India. \(^{12}\) As per the report presented by Thomson Reuters Foundation, a legal new service, India is fourth most dangerous country for women. India was also noted to be worst country among the G20 countries. However, immediately after independence i.e. in the year 1951 the female literacy rate was 8.86% which has increased to 65.46% in 2011, resulting into 8 times increase in female literacy in 6 decades. There are no cases of sati during 2010-2014. Indecent representation of women cases have also reduced to 87% from 2013 to 2014. Thus very few legislations have proved to be beneficial to women at national level.

Coming at the level of Gujarat, there was a shocking rise of 30% of crimes against women in the year 2013 as compared to preceding year. Out of the total cases reported, 732 cases were of rape, resulting into 2 rapes per day. Since the launch of women’s helpline named ‘Abhyam’ in 2014, it has received 71000 calls, out of which 30% were related to Domestic Violence (DV). Gujarat ranks 7\(^{th}\) in DV cases in the country with the shocking rank of 25\(^{th}\) among 28 states in conviction. Gujarat also ranks 7\(^{th}\) in the state for women related offences in 2013. The gender difference in literacy is 16.1% in the year 2011. However Gujarat ranks 4\(^{th}\) in safety of women as per NCRB report of 2012. The state has 25 Mahila police stations and 8 Mahila police cells for women in need. Up to the year 2012-13, 506 ambulances are operational for emergency services and 24,240 deliveries have been conducted so far in ‘108 ambulances’. \(^{13}\) Of course physical and sexual violence of girls and women is rampant in Gujarat, but government is also taking positive steps for ameliorating the position of women in the state.

\(^{11}\) www.medindia.net/health_statistics/general/marriageage.asp  
\(^{12}\) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_pay_gap_in_India  
\(^{13}\) http://www.wcd.gujarat.gov.in/autonomous_body.html
6.2.6 Whether women in the society are aware of their rights and if yes, will they be able to come out of the clutches of old customs and traditions for acquiring their rights?

Awareness means concerned about and well-informed interest in a particular situation or development. In the words of Aristotle,

“The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival.”

Here awareness means the knowledge among women either general or specific, of legal rights available to them. Thus, awareness can be of two types: (a) General or hazy awareness: In this awareness women are devoid of knowledge of legal rights available to them i.e. women simply know and have heard that rights are there and (b) Specific or complete awareness: Here women know and enumerate either partially or fully, the major provisions of legal rights available to them. One may begin with the assumption that women do not know what their legal rights are-aside from the common ones like franchise, citizenship, etc. As they are ignorant they do not supposedly exercise the legal measures. Those who are aware, lack willingness and earnestness to exercise their rights.14

When government makes efforts to enact the laws to protect women from violence, exploitation practiced against them and injustice leading to their oppression and suppression, it also needs that on other end women should generate awareness of their rights and legal remedies. But women are not aware of many laws enacted in their favour. For e.g. According to Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 S. 3 (2), if pregnancy exceeds 12 weeks but does not exceed 20 weeks can be terminated by not less than 2 registered medical practitioners, if it can cause injury to physical or mental health of woman or if child suffers from physical or mental abnormality. S. 5 even allow terminating pregnancy beyond 20 weeks if it is necessary to save the life of pregnant woman. Many women are not aware that pregnancy due to rape is covered under mental injury of woman and thus can be terminated. Supreme Court in recent case of Ms. X… v. U.O.I allowed abortion for 24 week foetus on the ground of abnormality of foetus. In another case a minor girl of 14 years who was victim of rape, was allowed to terminate her pregnancy even after 20 weeks limit had passed

considering it as a special case. In all cases termination of pregnancy cannot be done without the consent of women. Many women are not aware of the provisions of various laws made for their safety. For e.g. According to S.46 of CrPC, when woman is to be arrested or taken into custody by police, then it can be done by female police officer. Moreover, woman cannot be arrested after sunset and before sunrise, except under exceptional circumstances. The unawareness to such provisions leads to custodial rapes. Under S.160 of CrPC, police cannot compel a woman for presenting herself in police station for interrogation, instead police can interrogate woman at her residence in presence of woman constable. Art. 141 of Constitution gives equal pay for equal work and inspite of having Equal Remuneration Act; seldom have we found equality in pay scales of men and women. The gender wage gap in year 2013 was 24.81%. Awareness of rights also seems to be low during the collection of empirical data by the researcher. Out of data collected from 160 respondents, 94 respondents (59%) were unaware about any NGO working in their area for protection of women’s rights.

A custom or tradition means accepted way of behaving that is specific to a particular society. Sometimes customs practiced since generations are harmful and violating national and international laws but unless questioned they wear a mask of morality. Even the father of our nation, Gandhiji never hesitated to criticize the evils which had gripped the Indian society. He realized that there were deep-rooted customs hampering the development of women and women’s freedom. And so he commented that, traditions and customs, however ancient, if inconsistent with morality, should be banished from the land. He respected traditions of the society, but not at the cost of individual dignity. He believed that,

“It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide”

Certain customs and traditions have continued to remain as obstacles in the lives of women as they are not able to enjoy their human rights to full extent. Customs like female genital mutilation, breast ironing, infanticide, witch hunting, etc. are barbaric practices against women internationally, whereas customs and evils practiced in Indian society like Sati, dowry, etc put women in disadvantageous position. But when women folk is suppressed, oppressed and victimized in the patriarchal society,

15 www.mkgandhi.org/articles/mahatma-and-women.html
the question arises that will they be able to come out of clutches of old customs and come forward to claim their rights? Since the evolution of civilized society, the gender roles assigned have been so fixed and deeply imbedded in the society, that slightest deviation from them is not acceptable by the society as a whole. While raising the children, the traditional roots and social values put in them expect gender appropriate behaviour. The society has been harsh with women by expecting their performance to be in the periphery of stereotype role of child bearing, child rearing, and many other responsibilities with which they are engulfed, whereas the same society has been so liberal with men by not expecting to remain in the stereotype role assigned to them. The example of Pepsico’s CEO Ms. Indra Nooyi supports the point. Indra Nooyi, during her interview had mentioned that, she, in spite of being on the high post is expected by the family members to give priority to her stereotype role. When we talk about equal right of women in paternal property as per the amendment in Hindu Succession Act, many women are not claiming it, in spite of having the said right for more than a decade. Many women hesitate in claiming the rights and feel that by doing so; it will jeopardize their relations with maternal family. Certain customs discriminating women existing in the society are also weaved in the name of religion. The male preference at the time of child birth and many other rituals are discriminating women. The fear of divorce in the minds of women also nurtures the evil of dowry in the society. Thus sometimes women want to come out of clutches of evil customs and practices but it becomes difficult for them to get rid of them completely. However few women have succeeded in abandoning old rituals and customs discriminating them and even society has accepted it open-mindedly. In recent times, many parents wish their last rites to be performed by their daughters, considering them compatible with sons and not as an excess baggage. But majority of women are not able to abandon such evil customs and practices, which are making their position disadvantageous.

16 Indra Nooyi: is an American , business executive and the current chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Pepsico Company. She has consistently ranked among the world’s 100 most powerful women.
17 Daftur S., “Do Women Really Have it All?” The Hindu. August 31, 2014. Pg.3
6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR PROTECTION OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS:

Womenfolk now have formidable weapons in their hands in the form of international treaties especially CEDAW, many constitutional provisions which have made positive discrimination in their favour and schemes introduced by state governments for protection and empowerment of women. Due to these weapons, the world has started recognizing the rights of women. But recognition does not mean implementation. So the need of an hour is to find the lag between recognition and implementation and the lag between implementation and realization of rights.

6.3.1 Suggestions for Protection of Women’s Rights at International Level:

A. Meaningful implementation of international treaties:

The protection of human rights is a constant struggle at international level. To give shape to human rights globally, international documents should be meaningfully implemented; especially the implementation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as it is a non-binding treaty. ‘Women’s rights are human rights’, has been reiterated in international documents and conferences. So the need of an hour is to direct, organize and enlighten women folk for their rights at international level. Even though United Nations has been making efforts to arrange conferences and adopting treaties for women, due to lack of enforcement machinery the women at grass root level are not benefitted. So the member nations signing international treaties in favour of women should strictly comply with the international laws while enacting and enforcing laws in the country. CEDAW is the convention which is most widely ratified by nations. But majority of the nations have put reservations, declarations and objections for limiting the implementation of its principles. The reservations and objections put by member nations suggest that states do not want to change patriarchal mindset prevailing in their countries. It also suggests that states want their women to be in disadvantageous position. Thus to eliminate discrimination against women, the Committee is established at international level. The said committee must monitor violation of women’s rights taking place in various nations and must insist respective governments to frame policies to combat discrimination. But international law is a ‘horizontal law’ and a ‘weak law’. There is neither supreme authority, nor effective machinery to enforce the rules. Thus UN can only condemn
the actions of those governments that are not protecting women’s rights in their respective nations but cannot take any other steps against them.

B. International women’s organization to act as catalyst of change:

International women’s organizations have always played a vital role in protecting women’s role. For gender equality, these organizations should insist that various governments should adopt international treaties without laying objections and resolutions. They should strive to search the women who have been victimized due to violation of their basic rights and insist that UN Women should deliver grants for multi-dimensional women’s empowerment.

6.3.2 Suggestions for Protection of Women’s Rights at National Level:

A. Effective legislation:

The law framers have often been partial with women folk while enacting laws. History records that women have had to claim the rights denied to them. Laws and policies should be framed to meet international standards. It means laws should be enacted considering the international conventions and treaties signed by the country. While enacting the laws for women, the concept of ‘positive discrimination’ for disadvantageous groups enshrined in the constitution should also be considered. The law framers should also consider emerging challenges such as cyber crimes violating the rights of women. When national policies are framed for women’s development, it should be made transparent and free from the influence of political parties, only then it will reach the real beneficiaries at grass root level. In the words of Madam Fatou Bensoda, chief prosecutor of International Criminal Court,

“Law is a powerful tool to shed light on the crimes, to give voice to victims and punish perpetrators.”

B. Effective implementation of laws:

Laws once enacted and implemented should be monitored on regular basis so that there is a scope of amendments to cover new and emerging challenges faced by women resulting into violation of their basic rights. For e.g. Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 banning commercial surrogacy should be monitored once it becomes a law, so that legislative body can make necessary amendments if society continues to
exploit women. The monitoring body should instruct the government to give clarity regarding the utilization of funds, especially when certain funds are allocated for safety of women. For e.g. After Nirbhaya rape case, government has been allocating 1000 crores every year towards Nirbhaya Fund for safety of women, without framing any scheme for the utilization of funds. Thus implementation of laws is as important as their enactment.

C. Removing structural inequality entrenched in patriarchy:

In the beginning of the civilization, men were hunters of wild animals and gatherers of food. Men protected women, considering them as their property. Thus men started becoming superior by gaining control over properties like land, hut, etc. They claimed themselves to be protectors and saviors of women and consequently gained dominance over them. Right from international level to local level, men have more control over resources and decision making process, and thus making the whole system patriarchal. Patriarchal culture is majorly responsible for violence against women and social discrimination. Patriarchy prevailing in human societies worldwide, does not value domestic services offered by women. Thus suppression of women compels them to believe that care for family, upbringing of children, etc are their duties against economic activities performed by males. In words of Chief Justice A. S. Anand,

“Patriarchal social order is responsible for discrimination and violence against women. Thus social order based on putative qualities of ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’ needs to be changed. Women no less than men require to be treated as a ‘person’ and not ‘statistical abstraction’.”

In this direction, mindset of society regarding demarcation of gender roles should be changed so as to end women’s sufferings which they have experienced under patriarchal regime.

D. Gender sensitization through education:

Education dispels the darkness of ignorance. Education is an important tool to make women aware of their rights therefore government should implement more

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programmes for educating women. If women are educated then they can keep pace with the developments in the society. A study on 200 countries conducted by World Bank reveals that, the nations that have invested largely in female primary education have got higher economic productivity. Thus education is a key factor for social change. Lack of education is also responsible for invisible and silent role of women in public spheres. Hence literacy can be considered as an indicator for women’s status. If women are aware of their rights, automatically the undesirable social factors will be negated. Urban women will be comparatively more aware of their rights due to their education, as compared to rural women. Thus to sensitize the society through education, it is necessary to redesign the curriculum from primary school promoting gender equality. Discrimination in Indian society begins from the day, the child is born. This discrimination is generally exhibited in textbooks from nursery classes. For e.g. In the chapter of ‘My family’, the boy is shown playing with the ball and girl is shown helping the mother in kitchen. The father is shown reading the newspaper. This creates an impact of gender role demarcation on the reader. Thus the education system should be redesigned in such a way that it should be able to create awareness among women about their basic rights, which can lead to their economic and social independence as well as ability to fight against injustice. If women cannot prevent injustice, they can at least reduce its magnitude by making efforts through education. If women are economically independent, they do not have to extend their hands for support.

E. Sensitization of stakeholders:

a) Judiciary:

Judiciary has always been a harbinger of women’s rights. But in few cases it has also acted as a puppet in the hands of petty Indian politics. Judiciary is expected to act as a custodian of fundamental rights guaranteed by constitution and to deliver justice without fear and favour. For quick and impartial judgements, especially in women related cases, judges should be trained properly. The orientation programmes should be organized to train new judges. Unnecessary adjournments should be avoided. Proper training should be given to judges before they hear the cases like rape and domestic violence, as it requires the hearing on daily basis. In case of domestic

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violence, judges should inform the victim about the available remedies like divorce, maintenance, etc. The judges should try to read between the lines to uphold the rights of women. The judges of district courts should be well aware about the customs prevailing in the society especially in matrimonial cases, and their judgments should be fast and fair.

b) Police:

Police, being the frontline of criminal justice system, should be sensitized for dealing with the matters related to women. To regain the lost trust of women folk while dealing with their cases, following should be done:

i. Any woman who has come to police station for lodging her complaint should not be discouraged. Police should not threaten with improbable consequences or abuse her. Separate help desk should be created in each and every police station to deal with women issues.

ii. Police should not ask the questions challenging women’s dignity. In fact they should make victims aware about their rights and remedies available to them.

iii. Considering the increased rate of crimes against women in the country like rape, acid throwing, sexual harassment, etc., police should increase their patrolling. Surprise raids and checks in theatres, malls, parks etc. can prove to be an effective tool to control crimes. Urbanization requires proper allocation of work among existing police stations for patrolling in expanding areas of the city. And this arrangement should continue till the new police stations are set up. Every police station should introduce and implement ‘Interactive Management Accountability Techniques’, (as Compstat Programme21 used by American Police) for combating crimes in general and crimes against women in particular. Periodical meetings should be arranged in police stations to identify crime patterns and to solve them.

iv. Proper orientation and training should be given to police to deal with new crimes like cyber crimes. They should also be trained for new technology which they are required to use at the place of crime. Youngsters should be employed in police so as to keep pace with the technology.

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v. To handle sensitive issues of women, to make them comfortable while lodging
complaints and to protect their privacy, more Mahila Police stations should be
set.

c) Panchayati Raj Institutions:

Though 73rd Constitutional amendment was made to reserve positions for
women in gram panchayats, but its real success was always a doubt. The patriarchal
regime prevailing in the country would not accept leadership role of women in
political institution. The influential males would not let young and less educated
women to set their designs as sarpanchs. For the real success of women in Panchayati
raj institutions, following should be done:

i. The government should introduce developmental incentives and schemes for
awarding those villages which has all women sarpanchs.

ii. The society should try to remove the hurdles of illiteracy and ignorance of
women and rigid social customs coming in their path of empowerment.

iii. The government should keep a check whether quotas and reservations are
effectively implemented and whether women sarpanchs are doing *de jure*
participation or *de facto* participation.

iv. Women sarpanchs should not allow their dominating husbands to take
management of panchayat in their hands, instead should attend panchayat
meetings regularly, visit police stations to help victims lodge their complaints
and thus through active participation should break the boundaries set for them.

d) Commissions:

Various commissions protecting human rights and women’s rights like
National Human rights Commission (NHRC), National Commission for Women
(NCW), State Human Rights commissions (SHRC) and State Commission for
Women have not been able to curb crimes against women in India. Following should
be done to ameliorate the position of women:

i. The commissions should study various treaties adopted and conventions
ratified for protection of women and should insist central and state
governments to implement them.

ii. The commissions should research in the direction of crime patterns and new
challenges faced by women so as to protect them.
iii. The commissions are more informative because they receive complaints on regular basis which provides them with more exposure to reality. So commissions should insist that government should consult them before drafting a bill for enacting a law, as they are well aware of unethical practices prevailing in the society.

iv. The commissions should encourage the functioning of non-governmental organizations that are in direct contact of victims.

v. The authorities of commissions should visit jails and shelter homes to know the conditions of women inmates. They can insist government to set up separate cell for women detainees in jail. They should ensure that international standards on treatment with prisoners are duly complied with.

e) Non-governmental organizations:

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) or public benefit organizations provide a support system for strengthening the civil society in general and marginalized communities in particular. Despite the flood of NGOs in the country, women are not benefitted. Following should be done by NGOs to protect basic rights of women:

i. NGOs are much exposed to reality and so must equip women with tools to keep them safe from acts of sexual violence and educate women in the matters of self defense.

ii. NGOs should strive to make women economically independent. In this direction, they should generate jobs for them and train them for earning livelihood with dignity by utilizing available resources. They should guide in acquiring micro loans for enterprising women in new ventures.

iii. NGOs should make arrangement of funds for imparting value-creating education for girls. By doing so they can utilize their hidden potentials and can become economically independent.

iv. They can also protest and ban the media portraying women as sexual objects.

v. They should become instrumental in insisting government to enact new laws for new challenges faced by women and their effective implementation.
vi. They should organize workshops and seminars for free and independent exchange of ideas and for creating legal awareness among women for their rights.

vii. They can also act as a link between society and various commissions like National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women. Being more exposed to reality, they can provide details like socio-economic background of victims, unethical practices prevailing in society, etc. to Commissions. The Commission in turn can insist that government should enact laws considering such details.

6.3.3 Suggestions for Protection of Women’s Rights at State Level:

The stake holders mentioned above function at both the levels i.e. national and state. So their functions remain the same in the state. For protection and promotion of women’s rights, Gujarat government had introduced many schemes like: Beti Bachao (Save girl child), Gaurav Nari Niti – Women’s Pride and Gender Equality, Balika Samruddhi Yojna – Girl Child Development, Vidhva Sahay and Talim Yojna, Kunverbai Nu Mameru Scheme, Chiranjeevi yojna, Mahila Vrudh Ashram, Nari Adalat, etc. It seems that either government schemes are not functioning properly or there is a leakage in the system, due to which benefits are not reaching the target groups. For e.g. Chiranjeevi yojna was launched in the year 2006 to reduce maternal and infant mortality rate. But the scheme had no significant impact on maternal deaths occurring in the state.\textsuperscript{22} Moreover as per Census 2011, the sex ratio in Gujarat was 918 females per 1000 males and child sex ratio was 886 girls per 1000 boys as against 883 girls per 1000 boys in 2001. With these ratios Gujarat ranks 27\textsuperscript{th} in the country in child sex ratio and it ranks 24\textsuperscript{th} in the country for female to male ratio. There is negligible increase in the child sex ratio, which suggests that grave problem of infant mortality or female foeticide still continues. Moreover due to inefficiency of government authorities in Gujarat, 40\% of households above Poverty Line have BPL card (Below Poverty Line)\textsuperscript{23} and 45\% households below Poverty Line do not have the


\textsuperscript{23} BPL: In Gujarat families with a monthly income of Rs. 324 and below in rural areas and Rs. 501 and less in urban areas are termed as living below poverty line.
Thus schemes designed for women do not reach them effectively. Moreover, if female foeticide continues in Gujarat then sex ratio will be disturbed to a greater extent, which will also lead to more crimes against women. Following should be done for effective implementation of schemes/programmes and protection of women’s basic rights:

i. The State government should allocate sufficient funds for implementation of schemes/programmes designed for upliftment of women.

ii. The stake holders like Panchayati Raj institutions, non-governmental organization, etc should become a link between state government and beneficiaries. Through their active role in the society, they can make government accountable for allocation of funds and also create awareness among women beneficiaries for realization of funds allocated for them under various schemes.

iii. Nari Adalat is an informal justice delivery system, usually hearing of the cases is done under a tree in village. The state government should allocate proper funds to set up offices for their functioning so that timely and affordable justice is delivered.

iv. In spite of guidelines for compulsory registration of ultra sound machines under Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostics Techniques Act, doctors do not get their machines registered and female foeticide continues. To curb this, surprise checking should be made in maternity homes.

v. People should be made aware about adverse effects of skewed sex ratio. This awareness can be generated through print media, hoardings, wall paintings, etc.

vi. For success of Nari Adalat, a toll free help line should be launched. A woman residing in remote area, seeking justice can contact Nari Adalat through such number.

vii. For effective implementation of various schemes of government, first of all government authorities should properly identify and demarcate households living below povertyline and above poverty line. If BPL cards are issued to deserving candidates, then schemes designed for women would reach them effectively.

viii. Women living in slums of Gujarat are deprived of basic facilities like lack of constructed toilets, lack of pure drinking water, etc. Women are vulnerable to

various crimes while defecating in open. Due to lack of facility of pure drinking water, women have to undergo burden of fetching water from distant places. Thus most of the time of women is spent in accessing basic facilities. Moreover, women’s health is adversely affected due to lack of water and hygiene issues. Government should allocate more funds in providing basic facilities for upliftment of women. Government in collaboration with NGOs should organize public health awareness programmes for creating awareness about storage and usage of drinking water, drainage, waste disposal, etc.

The present study discloses that the status of women seems to be regressing even though the entire world is progressing. The researcher finds contrasting trends in the society i.e. on one hand legislative wing of the country is making efforts to enact new laws for emerging challenges and amend the existing ones in case of inadequacies; stakeholders are making efforts to protect women, women are gradually gaining awareness of their rights, and on other hand there is increase in crimes against women. Women, at international, national or local level have been victimized in past or present. Even today, they are victims of suppression, oppression and violence. It is said that water is a compound i.e. 2 atoms of hydrogen and 1 atom of oxygen. To protect women’s basic rights and to ameliorate their position, 2 components i.e. stakeholders and society as a whole will have to make efforts and on other side women folk instead of surrendering to the inferior status granted to them, should gain awareness of their rights and should voice the exploitation exercised against them.