CHAPTER NO – II

STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA.

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CHAPTER – II

STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

This chapter describes the status of women in our country. Women as part of society, are inextricably connected with economic activities. Women are being as a source of income in an expanding market economy. While working at domestic front, she is indirectly contributing to social and economic development of the nation as a whole. Women are the builders and moulders of the destiny of nation.

This chapter also focuses attention on an overview of historical status of women in India, i.e. status of high, middle and lower class as well as metro Politan City women, urban and rural women and their demographical status, UN reports on women in India. The constitution of India guarantees for Indian women adoption of technology women oriented programmes and women empowerment.

The details are arranged under eleven sub headings.

INTRODUCTION:

A women has to play a vital role in her life and society. In fact, she plays many a role in single life. She is mother, sister, wife and daughter, all rolled in one. A single woman plays these four roles in her life. First she is daughter and sister and in that capacity. She serves her father and brothers. In the second phase, she acts as wife, which is perhaps the most important role that she plays. In this capacity she serves her husband and in laws. In
due course, she becomes a mother and brings up her children. A woman normally commands three generations in her life. She is creator and protector of a family. She give birth to a generation develops it and thus society is formal.

In fact, society is a product of women, but, in spite of the importance attached to her personality a women is least respected in the true sense of the term. Over thousands of years, she has not been able to be free from shackles and chains binding her and confining her to a limited space to move and act. Interestingly, as far as a are concerned they have always been there in existence in some from or the other for the protection of women. All religions give appropriate right to women, the scriptures have norms for the protection of their rights and personal liberty. But in fact the unfortunate lot, known as women folk enjoys no rights and liberty at all over the ages they have been forced to live under the dominance of men. No doubt, women have been in prominence in all eras, but this could at best be termed as exceptions. In an overall manner, the women are ‘have nots’ and a bad lot is tagged with them. A bitter fact in our lives.

However, one point, on which all leaders, politicians, thinkers and scholars agree on is that no society however well organized it can ever be well oiled and set in motion properly, unless a justified status is granted to women. But that’s all no one seems to believe in it practically. Although, the demand for women’s lib or the movement for the protection of their rights is not new. It has been of there for years now. Yet, women’s battle for justice got fresh momentum after the Independence of the country and it has been in action in one form or the other.

The struggle for securing a respectable status for women in the Indian polity and in society has been on for the last 55 years and efforts have been made
inside and outside legislative bodies, all over the country. The national parliament, being the natural leader, following a long spell of fights and struggles-internal and external-and under the immense pressure of women's lib activity at the international level, various governments began to act and the result was the creation of national commission for women, beside enactment of number of laws, protecting women and granting them reservation in different elected bodies, in order to provide them with a share in power at various levels.

The liberation of womanhood is nothing unnatural or anything, which should be termed as taxing on the males. The right to a personhood is basic human right every individual is bestowed upon by humanity and no one can dery it.

Further, one has to believe that the progress of any nation is inevitably linked with social status of women in that particular country. But things do not move through paper only. For concrete results, we have to assert and act, with our full might and that's what's needed most. Empowerment of women can be granted through laws, but for its practical implementation social response is required, which can come from within only.

**HISTORICAL VIEW ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA:**

To know the present one has to look into the past in order to have a better understanding of present social structure and position of women in society. It is imperative to know the operation of various historical, cultural and economic factors moulding the society.

We find that Indian society compared to other societies has a very long. The development of status of women in Indian society can be studied under the following period.

1. Women in Indus valley (3500 B.C.)
2. Women in Vedic period (2500 B.C to 1500 B.C.)
3. Women in post Vedic period (1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.)
4. Women in Buddhist society (567 B.C, to 840 B.C.)
5. Women in early smiriti period (500 B.C. to 500 A.D)
6. Women in post smiriti period (500 A.D. to 1200 A.D.)
7. Women in Mughal India (1200 A.D. to 1800 A.D.)
8. Women in British period (1800 A.D. to 1947 A.D)

WOMEN IN INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (3500 B.C.)
To-day Indian woman is a part of thousand years old culture. The real history of women began then we found the pictures of Mohan-jo-daro and Harrapa civilization. In the pictures of Mohan-jo-daro we see their daily life and social activities. At that time Indian sub-continent was supposedly matriarchal. Through these pictures we found that they were peaceful people who lived around 3500 B.C. worship of mother Goddess was very important. But history is written record of past. All recorded history is post Aryan and the script prevailing in the Indus valley civilization still remains undeciphered.¹

WOMEN IN VEDIC PERIOD (2500 B.C. TO 1500 B.C.)
No doubt, Vedic society was patriarchate one. Father dominated the family matters but the position of women was not neglected in the society. The society favoured the birth of son but the birth of daughter could not be a cause of an anxiety at that time. Hymn XXI of the Rig-Veda extols the virtues of women as even greater that those of men. The Aryan sought cooperation of their women in almost every walk of life. Women enjoyed a high position in household affairs. Vedic society was highly civilized
women used to visit fairs and festivals and could fight wars, take part in meetings, tournaments and in philosophical discussion.

Marriage institution was also liberal for women. In Rig-Veda Sanhita there is no mention of early marriage. For widows remarriage was permitted. Girl could remain unmarried if she so wished. Sati was not in vogue at all. Education was easily accessible to women. It was an accepted norm during that period. Female child was educated like the boys and had to pass through a period of Brahmcharya. A daughter enjoyed as much freedom as a son. In religious matters too. Women enjoyed equality with men.

The main disability from which women suffered in this period was proprietary rights. Women had only control over ‘Shridhan’ and her personal property. An issueless widow had a share in her deceased husband’s property. But a married women had no share in the property of her father or husband. Except few disabilities, Aryan community as a whole showed proper concern and equal status and respect to women. And they were given full freedom for their intellectual and moral development. They also participated in social and political spheres.

**WOMEN IN POST VEDIC PERIOD (1500 B.C. TO 500 B.C.)**

In the later part of Vedic period, a decline their status had started. Discrimination had started in education. But men and women were admitted to take part in philosophical gatherings. Gargi and matreyi were very famous philosophers of that period. And women used to study scriptures and were respected better than Greek sisters. Average women had less freedom in religious rights and privileges. Marriage pattern and property right continued to be the same as they were in Vedic period. Despite this women’s positions was satisfactory in this phase of history.
WOMEN IN BUDDHIST SOCIETY (567 B.C TO 480 B.C.)

Buddhism was formed to protest against steadily rigidifying Brahmanism. Increase of rituals in post-Vedic period provided excessive and indomitable power to Brahmins, that's why Jainism and Buddhism are supposed to believer in self-culture and self-restraint. If these two qualities are achieved then one can have access to 'Nirvana' whether a man or women. Buddhism believed in social and religious equality. Though women could achieve high status but she is however inferior to male the women were assigned and honoured place in society and were admitted in Buddhist order. Buddhism allowed women the freedom to educational opportunities and self-development.

The marriageable age of girls was between sixteen and twenty. In certain conditions divorces was permitted. The presence of widow was not regarded as inauspicious. Buddhism aroused the felling of self-respect and self-confidence. In Buddhist literature women do not seem to be suffering from social condemnation, however she was still in male control and dominance. The Buddhist proved was short lived.

WOMEN IN EARLY SMRITI PERIOD (500 B.C. TO 500 A.D)

This is the age of sutras, Epics and early smriti period. In this phase of history however we cannot actually find a whole process of change since 'Manu Samhita' and Mahabharta came in to existence. However one person did not write it at one time. They were actually works of a School and Spread over centuries.

The birth of a daughter, which was not a cause of anxiety in previous period of history, now became a source of worry for the fathers. Deterioration of women started with the advent of Manusmruti. Codes of Manu prohibited
women's equality with men. Manu codes provide subordinate status to women and shudras in their basic framework. Even Bhagavad Gita most religions and scared book placed women vaishas and shudras in the lower category and described their birth sinful.

Not only this, now the practice of upnayana ceased for women. Education was effected adversely. Manu's code lowered down the marriageable age for girls. Women were entitled to hear vedas. Remarriage, widow marriage, inter-caste marriage and even to remain unmarried was disapproved by Manu. He approved pre-puberty marriage for girls. Man could marry second time but women have no right of second marriage. And a wife has to be loyal to her husband even if he was devoid of all virtues. Man was not obliged to be loyal. Not only the horrible practice of Sati was also more eulogized as an ideal. A middle-aged man could marry a girl aged between 8 to 12. No freedom for women in any stage of her life was granted. First, She was under the control of her father then husband and at last under her sons domination. Society is happy to quotes from Manu that she should be under the authority of her father her husband, her son's but none quote the insight of Manu that divine blessing cannot come upon a land. Where women are unhappy.

No scripture described a position of inferiority or bondage for women. All religious teachings should be purified of all that goes against the grain of our humanity and the bottom line of natural justice.

The traditional Indian society was patriarchal in character and hence patriarchal norms and values determined sexuality reproduction and social productions. These were expressed through specific culture metaphors. Overt rules and covert practices restricted women's activities and circumscribed their rights. Through a complex of ritual symbolism,
messages of inferiority of women were clearly communicated any perpetuated. On the other hand ‘Kautilya’ represents progressive view and places the husband and wife almost on equal stand. Buddhism and Jainism also tried to deviate from the pattern.

Only in property rights women were given few concessions, which were really important. According to Manu, women could neither earn nor own property except ‘Stridhan’. But Yajnavalkya gives her wide power over ‘Stridhan’ except when the husband utilizes it in the time of ‘Stridhan’ then she has a right to get a share equal to that of a son. Around 200 A.D. onward, pre-puberly marriages become quite popular and prevalent. This period was recorded as the starting of dark and negligible period of women.

WOMEN IN MUGAL PERIOD (12TH CENTURY TO 18TH CENTURY)

The women’s life becomes insecure and worse with Muslim invasion in the country. During the Turks attacks and in Mughal period Hindu society become more rigid towards women and the outsiders attacks was responsible for encouraging and involving bad customs regarding women through which women were degraded. In this period of history, women were forcibly converted into Islam and instability further narrowed down women’s social liberties.

In this environment new evils were formed like that ‘Purdah’ (Seclusion), infanticide, dowry system, devdasi system, illiteracy. Shaven head of widows. And the evils that got stronger were Sati, polygyny, humiliating, widowhood, early marriage, illiteracy and unequal marriages.
WOMEN IN BRITISH PERIOD (1800 A.D TO 1947 A.D.)

In the mid of eighteenth century, Indians came in vital contact with British. At the dawn of British rule, the position of women was in humbling state. Indian woman not only lost her independence but she was not able to think on her own. Also she was drastically tied to the evil customs. At the end of 18th century, no change occurred and women’s position had reached to the maximum degree of deterioration. And the beginning of 19th century it was indeed in most deplorable state of womanhood. The attitude of British government not to interfere with the religious sentiments of local people stopped all social reforms for a century.

19th century was marked by a “Social reform movement”. Rajaram Mohan Roy (1774-1833) was the first Indian who initiated social reform movement first of all his attention was drawn towards ‘sati’. He worked very hard and made people aware of the malpractice’s associated with sati custom through regular speeches and writings with lord William Bentink’s co-operation. ‘Sati, practice was declared illegal in 1829. This was a great achievement for Rajaram Mohan Roy and Indian women. Rajaram Mohan Roy was also against the social evils like early marriage, polygamy and he was supportive towards widow remarriage and women’s property rights. In 1828 he founded Brahmo Samaj for social reform. Revendra Nath and Keshav Chand Sen made Brahmo Samaj more active, Rammohan Roy’s revolution was in progress.

The names of Rajaram Mohan Roy, Ishwarchand Vidhyasagar and Malabari ranked first and foremost in upliftment of women in India. The impact of western ideas was felt much earlier in Bengal than in western India, which was brought under effective British control as late as 1818. Bal Shastri Jambekar, Paramhansa R.G. Bhandarkar were reformers in Bombay.
and Poona. They attacked. Barrahiminical Orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism.

In 1851, Mahatma Jotiba Phule and his wife Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule started girls School at Poona and soon many other Schools came up. Phule was also pioneer of the widow remarriage movement in Maharashtra. Mahatma Phule, born in a low caste Mali family position of non-Brahamins and untouchables in Maharashtra. All his life he carried on a campaign against upper caste domination and Brahminical superemcy.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that the freedom movement, to be successful, had to be movement of the masses. He felt that 'Swaraj' would be meaningless without the reform of the social structure and the upliftment of the socially weaker section, namely the women and the lower social strata to a position of equality with others. While lending his support to cause of improving women's conditions through education and reform of marriage laws, he declared himself to be uncompromising in the matter of women's right.

Massive participation of women in freedom struggle made women noteworthy the eyes of society, they showed that woman are equally important.

**MAIN LEGISLATIVE REFORMS IN BRITISH PERIOD WERE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. 1829 : Ban on Sati.
2. 1856 : Widow remarriage Act.
3. 1873 : Civil Marriage Act.
4. 1874 : The married widow property Act.
5. 1881 : The age of consent Act.
PERIODS OF GREAT SOCIAL REFORMERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Rajaram Mohan Roy : [1774 – 1833]
2. Rvindranath Tagore : [1817 – 1905]
4. Ishwar Chand Vidya Sagar : [1820 – 1891]
5. Madhadev Govind Ranade : [1842 – 1901]
6. Swami Dayanand Saraswati : [1824 – 1883]
7. Swami Vivekanand : [1863 – 1902]
8. Gopalkrishna Gokhale : [1866 – 1915]
9. Balshastri Jambhekar : [1810 – 1846]
10. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule : [1827 – 1890]
11. Ch. Shahu Maharaj : [1874 – 1923]
12. Lokhitwadi : [1823 – 1892]
13. Mahatma Gandhi : [1869 – 1948]
14. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : [1891 – 1956]

WOMEN IN POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA (1947 – 1999)

Another feature of the 20th century is the independence of our country as well as of women. Now the door of education was opened for women. Now women were considered as an asset instead of liability. The women’s question to day is no longer an issue confined to the position within the family or their rights to equality with men different aspect of school life. It is part of the total far broader question regarding the direction of change of that process Govt. made a number of efforts to raise the status of women. Govt.
enacted legislation to improve the condition of women and provide better opportunities for the development. There were many acts passed by government.\textsuperscript{20}

1. 1955 – The Hindu code Bill by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.
2. 1961 – The dowry (Prohibition) Act;
3. 1961 – The maternity benefits Act;
4. 1971 – M.T.P (Legalizing abortion);
5. 1976 – Equal remuneration Act;
6. 1986 – Child labour Act; etc.

After independence governments are regularly forming policies and plans. In this period women organizations emerged to represent the needs of women. Women started participating in various fields such as industry, Higher education, self-employment, communication, transport, medical, engineering, technology, aviation, fashion technology and in many other fields.

In the mid of 20\textsuperscript{th} century changes in the country proved fruitful for Indian women it uplifted. It improved their status to a large extent.

\textbf{CONSTITUTION OF INDIA GUARANTEES FOR WOMEN:}

The India Independence Act, 1947 declared that British paramountcy over the Indian states was to lapse on August 15, 1947. After independence the constitution of India was framed by constituent assembly set-up under the cabinet mission plan of 1946. A draft of the constitution was prepared under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar. After the draft was discussed by the people, the press, the provincial assemblies and the constituent Assembly in the light of suggestions received, the same was finally adopted on Nov, 26, 1949 and was signed by the president of Assembly Rajendra Prasad. Though
the major part of the constitution came into force on January 26, 1950, the provisions relating to citizenship, elections etc.\textsuperscript{21}

There is no doubt that constitution contemplates a social revolution, brought about through the use of law as an instrument of directed social change. The attainment of equality of status for women was one of the specific objectives, which is implicit in the preamble, fundamental rights and directive. Principals of state policy. Following points are indicates the constitution of India guarantees for women.\textsuperscript{22}

1. Equality before law for women (Article 14)
2. The state not to discriminate against any citizen on ground only on religion, race, cast, sex, place of birth or any 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 matter relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (Article 16).
5. The state to direct its policy forward 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 (a).
6. To promote Justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and 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 human conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 32).
8. The states to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and protect them from social injustice and all forms of the exploitation (Article 46).

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

10. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounces 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 SC/ST) of the total number of seats to 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 Panchayat at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4)).

13. Not less one third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the SC/ST) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to allotted by rotation to different constituencies in municipality (Article 243 T (3))

14. Reservation of offices of chairpersons’ municipalities for the SC/ST and women in such manner as the legislature of state may by law provide (Article 243 T (4)).
WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: STATUS OF WOMEN IN POLITICS:

1. RAJYA SABHA:

Democratic and secular India endeavours to provide the necessary conditions for greater participation of women in all spheres of life. Equality of opportunity is guaranteed, and discrimination on the ground of sex, language, region, class or creed is prohibited. Yet in reality, women's participation in decision making at all levels national to local is low.23

There is now an acceptance that women participation in decision-making in large enough number at every level is needed. The election manifestoes of the political parties accept that women constitute a backward segment of the society to whom special privileges have to be granted to bring them at par with men. The constitution of India came into effect on 26th Jan. 1950. In India first general election held in 1952. Women's membership in the Rajya Sabha is very low as against the male membership. Even the Rajya Sabha, Where there is indirect election and nomination there has been low representation of women which is given below table.

TABLE - 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>No. of women</th>
<th>% of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **LOK SABHA:**

Before the first general election there were only seven women members in the house and there were 225 men. The following table shows the number of women members of elected to Lok Sabha. The number of women member of Lok Sabha were 14 in 1952, which has increased up to 49 in 1999.

**TABLE -2.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>No. of women Members</th>
<th>% of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1952-57</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1957-62</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>1962-67</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1967-71</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1971-77</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1977-80</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1980-84*</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1984-89</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1989-91**</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1991**</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9.02</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source – Election commission of India,

* Elections were not held in 12 constituencies in Assam and Meghalaya.
**Elections were not held in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. Figures include women elected from Punjab during the by elections in 1992.**

**UNITED NATION'S REPORT ON WOMEN IN INDIA:**

After the human development report, the progress of the world's women report and the UNDP document, which lauded India for significant improvement in the human development index, the UN fund for development of women score card has given India credit for efforts at gender equality but underlined that the country still had a long way to go. "The advances toward gender equality have been uneven and there is still a long way to go to make the promises made at Beijing a reality." Was verdict of the report summarized by UNIFEM regional programme director Chandni Joshi.

The report notes that India has improved its score in education, employment and per-capita income of women but has not been improved women's representation in parliament, removed their unequal wages or lessened their debt burden these in fact have deteriorated, the report says.24 Stressing the need to give women a place in decision making structures, the report says greater equality in the number of women holding political office is important as it gives women a greater say in determining laws and policies which regulate women’s progress. While governments have endorsed 30 percent representation to women in political position, the report say, only few countries- Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway, Iceland the Netherlands and South Africa- have met this target. In India, there are only a dismal 8.9 percent women members of Parliament (MPs).

The report says that the share of women in paid employment in India has improved though it is still a mere 15 percent. However women's share of
national income has not improved because women tend to be paid less than men. In fact, the report says the women’s average wages are less than men’s in all 63 countries for which data was available.25

According to Diane Elson,26 the reports author, the data does not take into account the women working in the informal sector. She says the number of employed women might have risen the quality of their work is not taken into account. “Women from less well of families are often pressured to take poor quality, low paying jobs in industry and services to make up for falling family income rather than through their own choice.” The report adds.

Among obstacles to women enjoying the gains of greater share in the job market: Violence against women, the burden of HIV/AIDS and the unequal sharing of unpaid caring work. Data shows that in India, 40 percent women have experienced violence by an intimate partner.

**STATUS OF WOMEN IN METRO CITY, URBAN AND RURAL AREA.**

1. **METRO CITY:**27

Educated, talented career oriented. Yet valuerable. This in essence, seems to be the situations of the modern women in metros. Despite her independence, she does seem to be a victim of eveteasing, sexual harassment and lewd behavior both at work.

The liberated Indian women live mostly in big cities. Be it the civil services, medicine, politics or any other field women have made their mark in every field. This is also one of the emerging facts that women is not respected in big cities.

Metro cities are actually cruel places where the battle for survival is fierce. Norms like, humanity, courtesy, Concern for the under privileged respect for
elders, women are forgotten. Situation can improve only with education and an economic opportunity for women. Gender bias is very deep rooted, a woman is still perceived as a body rather than a person. So, to change this phenomenon men and women should follow a strict code of conduct.

2. URBAN AREA: Pauperization of farming families in the rural areas and their journey to the urban areas in search of employment opportunities is one among the important reasons for swelling of families in the urban areas. Million people are living in slums. Most of women even today live in abysmal and slushy surroundings in highly congested areas as against the resource rich who enjoy lavish life style in the same city. Also the lives of resourceless poor are characterized by severe deprivation, malnutrition, lack of shelter, lack of access to resources, vulnerability to diseases and lack of education towards upward mobility.

Women of urban areas are far away from the evil effects of metros, women are living a quiet life here and urban women are not much liberated as of metros. Percentage of working women here is low as compared to metro areas. Women of urban areas are not conscious about their career. Few females who belong to educated mass are coming forward to explore economic opportunities.

3. RURAL AREA: It is an agreed fact that position of women all over the world has been low, of course, India is no exception. Government is to trying hard uplift women’s position but even then position of rural women continues to be low.

It is embarrassing in the extreme that the haive religiosity of rural people continues to be exploited by the heartless of the orthodoxy. When we are preparing ourselves to enter 21st century on Nov. 11, 1999, women harmed
‘Charan Shah’ committed Sati in Satpura village in U.P. Glorification of sati crime under the sati, (Prevention) Act-1988. Child marriages are still prevalent in rural areas. Specially in Rajasthan. Early marriage means marriage before the age of eighteen. She is given no time for the development of her personality once she gets married no freedom remains. She gets a subordinate position. Looking at the position of women’s education in rural areas, the efforts for the progress seem to be fruitless.

The overall violation was more in the affluent families who though pretended to be progressive when expressing opinions, were conservative in action. Their affluence had rather helped them in performing early marriage is still a valid. It begets prestige to the family in the community. They do not wait for completion of the education of a girl even upto primary level if they have arranged her marriage. In their perception education has no purpose in women’s life. It comes very low in their priority.

Rural women have not witnessed any radical change in their life styles over the years. They live in the condition, which is exploitative and traditional. Now—a—days. Rural men migrate to the cities, leaving the women behind to carry the burden of agriculture and other task.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN HIGH, MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASS:

1. HIGH CLASS WOMEN: 

Women from higher class are liberated women. In developed areas, females of higher classes are enjoying higher status, freedom and middle class women get higher education. In this class women are found to be ambitions and in order to gain- social prestige and recognition, they work.

Some upper-class women work to maintain high standard of living, life. Some work to get extra pay-packed.

2. MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN: 

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Middle class women are more conscious about work compared to higher-class women. Present demand, makes women conscious and concerned with personal advancement. Middle class women try to imitate the living standard of high-class society. That’s why the standard of living is rising day by day and the cost of maintenance too, is also rapidly increasing.

Some middle class women go out to work because of family conflicts, and some are doing it to meet the daily needs of their families. In middle class economic need is the fundamental reason for female employment. Majority of women in this segment keep themselves busy in teaching profession.

3. LOWER CLASS WOMEN: 
Lower class women are struggling hard. Doing long hours of work, getting low wages. Employment options available to the lower class women are severely limited and as the opportunities for skill acquisition and job mobility are limited, work for them becomes an endless drudgery, humiliation and misfortune in the sense that they have to do it with too little or no male earning.

DEMOGRAPHICAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA:
India is the second most populous country in the world. The population of India on the 1st march 2001 was 1027 Million (102.7 crors) and it has reached 1028 million (102.8 crors) on May, 5 2004 with 53.2 crore males and 49.6 crore female The annual growth rate was 1.94. This includes the population of Jammu and Kashmir where the 1991 census could not be conducted while the enumeration was done in 2001. In the last decade (1991-2001) the population of India increased by 18 Million.
TABLE 2.3

POPULATION GROWTH IN INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Decadal Growth</th>
<th>Decadal Growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>361,088,090</td>
<td>42,427,510</td>
<td>13.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>439,234,771</td>
<td>78,146,681</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>548,159,652</td>
<td>108,924,881</td>
<td>24.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>843,387,888</td>
<td>163,058,791</td>
<td>23.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1,028,001,152</td>
<td>180,627,359</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- In the last decade (1991 – 2001) the population of India increased by 181 million.
- In the percentage term, the decadal growth rate was 21.3 percentage compared to 23.9 percent during the previous decade (1981-91). The decline in the decadal growth rate was 2.5 points during 1991 – 2001 decade.
- The population of India on the 1st March 2001 was 1027 million (102.7 crores) and it has reached 1028 million (102.8 crores) on May 10, 2005 with 53.2 crore males and 49.6 crores female and an annual growth rate was 1.94. This includes population of Jammu and Kashmir. Where the 1991 population could not be conducted while enumeration was done in 2001. 

LITERACY RATE IN INDIA:

In India only 64.8 % of the population has been found literate in the census 2001. However some progress might have been made over the year, as the percentage of literacy in 1961, was only 28.03 %. The literacy rate 64.8 percent and the male literacy was 75.2 percent and the female literacy rate was 53.6 percent. Compared to 1991 the overall literacy rate increased by
13.2 percent points, (52.2 in 1991 to 64.8 in 2001). The increase in the male and female literacy rate was 11.7 and 14.9 percentage points respectively. The gap between male and female literacy rates has decreased from 28.8 percentage point in 1991 to 21.7 in 2001. For the first time since Independence there has been an absolute decline in the number of illiterate persons. The number of illiterates declined by 32 Million during the last decade. Among males the number declined by 21.5 million. The literacy rate was highest in Kerala 90.9 percent and lowest in Bihar 47.5 percent. Following table and diagram shows the literacy rate in India.

**TABLE-2.4**

**LITERACY RATE IN INDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>% of gap in Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SEX RATIO:

Following table and diagram indicates the sex ratio in India.

TABLE-2.5

SEX RATIO IN INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female per 1000 males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Census of India 2001
The sex ratio in India has always been in favour of males. In 1991 it was 927 females for 1000 males. The sex ratio in the country varies from 894 in urban areas to 939 in rural areas. The lower sex ratio in urban areas is largely attributed to migration of males to urban centers for education and employment. The main reasons for the sex imbalance seem to be relatively low status of women and preference for a son.

1. The sex ratio (females per 1000 males) is 937 in 2001 compared to 927 in 1991 or an increase by 6 points during the last decade.
2. Kerala has the highest sex ratio (1058) and Haryana the lowest (861).\(^{36}\)
3. Socio-economic backwardness, illiteracy, preference for a son, and low status of women are basic reasons for low sex ratio in India.
DEATH RATE IN INDIA:

Following table describe age composition of India.

TABLE-2.6

AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATE IN INDIA BY SEX (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Age specific death rate</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>15-34</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The death rate for children below 5 years for India according to SRS in 1992 was 26.4 while death rates for the age groups 50+ are 33.4. The death rates for females below 5 years are 5-14,15-34 groups are more than males.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN OCCUPATION:

Following data shows the women participation in occupation Female marginal workers has increased in the year of 1991 recorded as 244.34 lacs in 1981 as compared to only 177.85 lacs female marginal workers in 1981. Female non-workers are large in numbers in comparison to males. In 1971 there were 1837.39 lacs female non-workers, which increased in the year 1991 that is to 2210.25 lacs.

The figure shows that female participation in occupation is remarkably low as compared to males. Full participation of female is very necessary for rapid economic development.
In 1971, 37.03 lacs female main workers has been on the economic front and increased in year of 1991 upto 87.78 lacs female. Female marginal workers registered as 7.67 lacs in 1981 and has increased in the year of 1991 upto 10.59 lacs.

With the increase of population female non-worker are also increasing every census year. In 1971, there were only 465.61 lacs female non-workers while in 1991 they were 924.97 lacs.

WOMEN ORIENTED PROGRAM IN INDIA:
As a consequence a number of programs were launched from the fourth five-year plan onwards with a focus on rural population. These programs have as their target groups of small and marginal farmers, agriculture labourer, SC and ST workers and women. Some programs were intended to create rural infrastructure and generate employment broadly, the programs could be divided into two categories the self-employment and wage employment programs. Under the self-employment category the policy was to endow the poor with productive assets and impart skill and training to operate them. Under the wage employment category the strategy was to develop rural infrastructure and generate minimum needs the self-employment programs were.

2. Training of rural youth for self employment (TRYSEM)
4. Indira Awas Yojna (I A Y).
5. Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY).
7. Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)
The state policies and programmes reveal that they are framed in terms of specific gender-based organization of daily life. The manner in which programmes for women have been conceived by the state point to the fact that state views men and women in terms of their certain specific role in family and community. Thus, we find that dominant presumption in development programmes for women is that women are first and for most home-makers, and they are only secondary productive workers. One of the important objectives of these programs is to enable women to combine both the functions in an efficient manner. State viewing of women in such sex stereotyped categories has important implication is that domestic talks that women have been and performing are counted as economically productive therefore the need to integrate them into development process so that they come in direct contact with market activities. But this is done without changing their domestic roles. Therefore while women needed to integrate into the development progress and work like men. The concept of domestic works as primary women's work is not challenged women perform beth the tasks of production and reproduction more efficiently or in other words to enable them to do economically productive work.40

WOMEN EMPOERMENT IN INDIA:
The gender empowerment measure was also introduced by the Human Development report 1995. It indicates whether women are able to actively participate in economic and political life. It focuses on participation, measuring gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision making. It thus differs from the gender
development index which as indicator of gender inequality in basic capabilities.41

Human development report 2001 presents gender empowerment measure (GEM) for 64 countries. The top four ranking are occupied by Nordic countries in the order Norway, Sweden and Finland. These countries are not only good at strengthening the basic capabilities of women; they have also opened many opportunities for them to participate in economic and political fields.42

The Human Development report 1996 presented a study of disaggregated GDI for 16 Indian states. This study indicates significant disparities among these states in basic female capabilities. At the top of list was Kerela with a GDI Value of 0.597 whereas Utter Pradesh was at bottom with a GDI value of 0.310 inducting that the GDI value Utter Pradesh is only half that of Kerela43.

An in depth look at the components of the GDI shows some interesting result. Women's share of earned income in Kerela is only 12 percent, while share in Himachal Pradesh is 38 percent and in Maharashtra 30 percent, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujrat and Karnataka their share is more than 25 percent. Yet Kerala rank at the top because the disparity between its female and male adult literacy rate is the lowest among the 16 Indian states44. The female literacy rate in Kerela is 81 percent only 11 percent lower than for males. While in the most of the 16 states the gender disparity in adult literacy is more than 30 percentage points. Thus a higher share in income for women may be necessary but not sufficient condition for gender equality. Equality in other basic capabilities is also needed.

Such states as Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Utter Pradesh have GDI values so low that they can be compared only with those in such
impoverished countries as Haiti, Nepal and Yemen indicating the extremely low level of female human development in large part of India suffer on two counts first, because the society as a whole is impoverished and second because they are women. 45

EMPOWERMENT SCORES:
Women’s empowerment has recently gained considerable importance as an area of policy intervention in most parts of the world. Governments have recognized the benefits of empowerment, which can be achieved through effective participation of women it is a term often used in development works, but rarely defined. In conventional sense, empowerment is bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it. It puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making, and on the ability an income that enable participation in economic decision-making.46

When viewed from the print of ‘Power to and power with’ empowered is concerned with process by which people become aware of their own interest and how those relate to interests of other in order both to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decision. From a feminist perspective, empowerment is more than participation in decision making. It also includes the process that leads people to perceive themselves as able an entitled to make decision. It involves giving scope to full range of human abilities and potential. Empowerment must involve undoing negative social construction, so that people come to see themselves as having the capacity and right to act and influence decision.47

According to moser48 (1989) empowerment is the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the
right to determine choices in life and influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources. In the words of Clutterbuck\textsuperscript{49} and Stuart (1992), we need not empower women but power women. Hashemi (1996) developed five indicators to measure women’s empowerment: Mobility, economic security, ability to make larger purchase, relatively freedom from domination within the family and political campaigning and protests.

Based on review of literature on empowerment discussion with official connected with implementation of women development programs, expert from the following 24 empowerment variable are identified;\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Table-2.7}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Sr. & Empowerment Variable. \\
\hline
1. & Owning animals \\
2. & Receipt Milk Payment. \\
3. & Decision taking on AI. \\
4. & Decision taking on vaccinating animals. \\
5. & Right to use money earned from milk sales. \\
6. & Who decide on sale/ purchase of animal? \\
7. & Do you think that your status (your ideas valued) \\
8. & Do you think that your status has increase in the village due to membership in society? \\
9. & Do you participate regularly in society program. \\
10. & Are you on the managing committee of the society. \\
11. & Do you visit the society regularly. \\
12. & Do you have a saving A/C in the bank. \\
13. & Can you decide the number of children you bear. \\
14. & Will you give equal education to boys and girls. \\
15. & Will you treat boys and girls equally (Food, Clothing, health Care, Affection). \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
16. Does a daughter has right to decide when to marry.
17. Does your daughter has right to many as per choice.
18. Do you think that women should get equal wages for similar work they perform.
19. Do you think that women are competitive enough to manage a cooperative.
20. Do women and men display similar leadership traits.
21. Leadership development programs for women help building confidence.
22. Can you exercise note without consulting husband.
23. Do you need to take permission to attend training program to be conducted outside your village.
24. Do you need to take permission to join local women’s organization (Mahila Mandal)


**INDICATORS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

**Table-2.8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Indicators of Women Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Women’s participation in decision making own health care, buying jewelry and other items going to stay with parent or siblings, use of own earning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Women’s freedom of movement – women who do not need permission to go to the market and visit friends and relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Attitude that reflects acceptance to unequal gender roles between spouses- who agree with at least one reason justifying a husband beating his wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Attitudes that reflect acceptance of unequal gender roles for boys and girls – who say boys and girls should be given the same amount of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Son Preference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Access to education- is the percentage of females-age 6 and above who are literate, age 20 and above who are complete higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Access to media women regularly exposed to radio, television or cinema, theater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Access to employment- the percentage of women-employed, employed in professional managerial occupation and the ratio of who are earning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender equality and empowerment of women is recognized globally as key element to achieve progress in all areas. It is one of the eight millennium development goals to which world leaders agreed at the millennium summit held nations signed in 1945 is the first international agreement that proclaimed gender equality as fundamental right. Ever since there had been many conventions, programs and goals to help human-kind by ‘conferring on them human rights which are “Universal, indivisible interdependent and interrelated”’.

In order to promote development of women and protect their rights, the general assembly of the united Nation (UN) adopted “convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women”. On 18th December 1979 which came to into force on 3rd Sept. 1981. The convention also took notice of particular problems faced by rural women and their significant role in survival of their families. So all sates, parties to the convention, agreed to take appropriate measures to enable rural women to participate and benefit rural development.

In spite of many conventions and time bound measurable goals world statistics speaks of deplorable state of women that is a cause of concern.  

1. Two thirds of world adult illiterates are women.  
2. 70 % of the world’s poor are women.  
3. There is sharp decline in juvenile sex ratio.
4. Maternal morality rate and infant mortality rates are high.
5. At all levels there is a high gender gap in literacy.
6. Drop-out rates are high among girls, and the incidence of crime against women is on the increase.

Realizing that actual development cannot take root if it bypasses women who represent India, the country directed its efforts towards removing various gender biases to accord women equal status, which is enshrined in the constitution.

The National Nutritional Policy, the national policy on education, and the national policy have significant components for women aimed at their empowerment.

Some of the strategies are:

1. Expending action to legislative reservation of not less than one-third seats for women in parliament and in state legislative assemblies to ensure adequate representation of women in decision-making.
2. Adopting an integrated approach toward empowering women through effective convergence of existing services, resources, infrastructure, and manpower in both women-specific and related sectors.
3. Adopting a special strategy of “Women’s component plan” to ensure that not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits flow to women from other developmental sectors.
4. Organizing women into self-help groups and thus marking the beginning of a major process of empowering women.
5. Equipping women with necessary skills in modern trades, which could make them economically self-reliant.
6. Increasing access to credit through setting up of a “Development bank for women Entrepreneurs” in the small sector.
The year 2001 was observed as women empowerment year by united nation (U.N) The National policy for the empowerment of women was evolved in the same year. The policy recognizes the causes of gender inequality, which are related to social and economic structure. The policy underlines the need for mainstreaming gender perspective in the development process. The objectives of National policy for the empowerment of women include:  

1. Create an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential,  
2. The de jure and be facto enjoyment of all human rights by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil.  
3. Equal access to participation and decision-making in social, political and economic life of the nation.  
4. Equal access to health care, quality, education at all levels, career and vocational, guidance, employment and equal remuneration.  
5. Strengthening of legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.  
6. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.  
7. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.  
8. Elimination of discrimination and forms of violence against women and the girl child.  
9. Building and strengthening partnership with civil society, particularly women’s organizations.
Besides empowerment women to participate in decision-making process the policy also visualized the means of economic and social empowerment of women.

ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY BY WOMEN:

It has been heartening to observe that several innovative experiments have been successful in making to adopt technologies. The East Asian experience has demonstrated that women excel at new technologies, as they are more disciplined, less unionized and can easily master new skills useful in such key industries as computers, electronics and value added fashion garments. The success story of the Bangladesh, its approach which emphasizes the creation of enabling conditions in which every human being many have the opportunity to carve out dignified ways of living for herself/himself has been inspiring illustration for developing countries. Grameen Banks in recent year have not only expanded their credit operations, which are targeted at the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh; it has also rapidly diversified its activities. A Grameen bank today is the focal point of global network of institutions and individuals that provide micro credit to fight poverty. Within Bangladesh, the bank has undertaken major investment initiatives in those sectors where the poor have the comparative advantage in terms of their skills, enterprise and productive capacity. It has recently begun a scheme to provide mobile phones to women in every village. This shows that women can easily adapt themselves to new communication technologies and use them for their family and economic survival.

The self-employed women association (SEWA) has shown the way by the using video technology for articulating grievances of women constitution workers, vegetable sellers and other such. Self employed women who had no forum for collective social action. It has gone a long way in innovating
several self-help programs like opening bank account for illiterate women account holders. These women workers also learnt to operate and handle video camera and other audio-visual equipment.58

SUMMERY:
The role and status of women is a widely discussed and debatable issue in our country. The present position and status of women in general and rural women in particular is satisfactory rather their position in society is in no way better than second class citizen. Theoretical women are considered important and equal partners in the process of development but in practice they are generally ignored. Inspire of so many statutory protections, women still remain under-privileged, under valued and exploited and various kinds of discriminations continue to persist against them.

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