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*Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides*

*Rig Veda*

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YE-128/2016





## 'Women Led' Development

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”...no other statement could have described the abilities of women more aptly. There is not much that women have not achieved – either in the traditional or in more modern roles. As mothers, they have been bearing the responsibility of carrying, giving birth and rearing the future citizens of the world with elan ever since time immemorial. As daughters, sisters, and wives they have supported to man in various ways. In the more modern roles they have been educators, managers, political leaders, et al. They have even dared to break the gender barriers of late, and become mountaineers, pilots, also seen in the armed forces in combat roles.

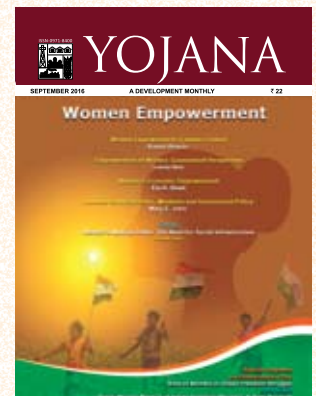
However, this wasn't always so for women. In ancient times woman was considered nothing without a man – she could only be a daughter, wife or mother. She could not take the leadership – always existing under the domination of the 'man' in her life – a father, son or husband. She was not allowed decision making roles. This perception existed in even the western societies where women's suffrage was granted very late. In India also, almost a century long struggle has brought women the property rights, voting rights, equality in civil rights before the law in matters of marriage and employment. After independence of India, the constitution makers and the national leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. Several measures were taken by the successive Governments to assign equal status to women in the economic, political and social fields. More avenues were opened to them to show their talents and have a sense of participation in national activities. The passage of several Acts by the Parliament and introduction of various Schemes by the central well as state governments during the last few decades have done much for women's emancipation both legally, politically and socially.

Education has empowered woman to a large extent and where women are educated, empowerment has happened the fastest. It has enabled women to take decisions about marriage, parenthood and careers. Education has also created awareness about opportunities outside of marriage, giving her financial independence and reducing her dependence on 'the man in her life' be it father or husband. She now no longer needs to tolerate domestic violence or mental abuse at home. It has also enabled her to make her choice regarding pregnancy and the right of abortion of an unwanted child.

Health is another area where the woman suffers. Most women have neither the time nor the mind set or facilities to go in for health care. Rural women, specially, have no access to even such a basic health care facility as a toilet in their homes. Women's health is, therefore, a priority for government policies, with governments initiating programmes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and 'Janani Shushu Suraksha Karyakaram etc.

Social stigma related to single women whether widows, divorcees or unmarried women have also been one of factors for the lowly status of women in India. A single woman is always regarded as an object of ridicule, or as a social outcaste. All this however is now seeing a change though slow. Today's woman has truly come a long way from the ancient times. She has broken the glass ceiling in many areas. Some of the most powerful people today are women – to name a few, Arunadhathi Bhattacharya, Indira Nooyi, Kiran Mazumdar Shawa and Chanda Kochhar. Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh were commissioned in the Indian Air Force recently and for the first time in the history of Independent India, an all-women contingent from the three forces — Army, Air Force and Navy — marched down the majestic Rajpath during the Republic Day, 2015. That is what woman power can achieve. These women symbolize Prime Ministers vision to think beyond “women development,” and move towards “women-led development.”

With women population being around 50 per cent of the total population of the world, they have every right to be treated equally with men in every sphere of life. The inclusion of “Women Empowerment’ as one of the prime goals in the eight Millennium Development Goals underscores the relevance of this fact. Swami Vivekananda's quote that, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing” beautifully sums up the essence of power of women in leading not just their families but also the nation and the world. □







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# Women's Empowerment in the Indian Context

*Kamla Bhasin*



*The methodology of women's education has to be participatory and non-hierarchical. Women must be involved in setting their own agenda and priorities, their own pace of learning. The educational process should make them feel good about themselves, build their confidence and self-respect, unleash their creativity, make them feel energetic and joyous; in one word - Empower them*

**M**ost countries today consider gender equality and women's empowerment to be essential for the development and well-being of families, communities and nations. No nation, society, and family can flourish and be happy if fifty per cent of its population, i.e. women and girls, are not respected, free and happy.

Not just in India, but in most countries of the world, women have been discriminated against, excluded from decision making at all levels, marginalised and disempowered. This is so because of the prevalence of patriarchy, a social system in which men are considered to be superior to women and in which, men have more control over resources, decision making and ideology. In patriarchy, violence against women is a part of the system. Women are controlled through violence or the threat of violence. According to the UN, one out of every three women experiences violence. This means over one billion women and girls experience violence. This is the biggest war going on in the world and what is most painful is that most of it takes place within the family.

## **Women: Bottom of All Hierarchies**

It is indeed difficult to generalise about women in India because of the vast differences between them. They belong to different classes, castes, religions, communities. Yet, one can say that most women suffer from patriarchal structures and ideologies; they experience gender inequalities and subordination. Women lag behind their men in all indicators of social and human development. India has the most adverse sex-ratios for women in the world. Life expectancy for women is lower than that of men, women's health, nutritional and educational levels are significantly lower than that of men. Women are concentrated in low skilled and low paid jobs, they get lower wages and lower income than men and they hardly own and/or control property and means of production. The number of female headed households has been increasing and they are amongst the poorest in our countries. The participation of women in political and social decision-making is abysmally low. Women's participation in the Parliament has never been higher than 10 per cent. They are excluded from rural authority. They have little say in the formulation of social, economic,

The author has been actively engaged with issues related to development, gender, education and media since 1970. Currently, she works with Sangat – A Feminist Network as Adviser as well as JAGORI, a Women's Resource and Training Centre and Jagori Rural Charitable Trust as an active member. She is the South Asia Coordinator of One Billion Rising, a global campaign to end violence against women and girls. Prior to this, she worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for 27 years. She has written extensively on gender, women's empowerment, participatory and sustainable development, participatory training, media and communication.



legal, political rules which govern their lives and keep them subjugated.

Not in all, but in large parts of India, girls live with disadvantages, burdens and fears. They carry the burden of neglect, of discrimination, the burden of household work, the burden of looking after siblings, the burden of work outside the home. Girls live with fears - fear of being aborted, fear of being poisoned, fear of being neglected and allowed to die, fear of not getting adequate affection, care, nourishment, medical attention, education. Our daughters also live with the fear of sexual abuse ranging from playful manhandling to rape. Even after the passing of stricter and better laws, the number of brutal gang rapes has been increasing. After marriage, they face the fear of loneliness, maladjustment, mental and physical torture.

As a result of the pressure created by the women's movement and actions by governments and civil society organizations, there have indeed been some positive changes for women, for example - there is growing gender awareness as a result of which, women's subordination is recognised and the need to challenge it is accepted by all; violence against women is recognised and condemned; women's participation in all decision making bodies is seen as important. There have been improvements in some legal provisions, in educational and job opportunities for women, policy statements have become more gender sensitive. There is some increase in the number of women participating in government and non-government development agencies and programmes and women's participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions has increased. Our governments have set-up women's bureaus, commissions, departments and/or ministries to look into gender issues. However, we still have a long way to go to achieve gender equality.

### **Empowerment: Dynamic and Political Process**

In order to move towards gender equality, we have to empower that

gender which is disempowered, i.e., women and girls. One needs to understand POWER in order to empower anyone. Power is the capacity or ability to take actions freely and independently, it is the capacity to control or influence others. Power means autonomy, freedom, making your own choices, having a voice.

In human societies, power is derived from control over resources and ideology. People who control resources and ideology (people's thinking, belief systems etc.) become the decision makers and controllers of families, communities and countries.

Women's empowerment, therefore, would require changing patriarchal thinking and structures, giving women control over resources (natural, human,

**Women's empowerment is not and cannot be separate from the empowerment of nature, empowerment of all the marginalised people and countries. Women's struggles and movements therefore, need to be closely linked to peace movements, ecology movements, workers' and peasants' movements, human rights movements and movements for democratisation and decentralisation of society.**

intellectual, financial, inner resources), bringing them into decision making roles etc.

According to me, empowerment of women will improve our lives only if our notion of power is different from the present notion of power.

Empowerment for us cannot mean power over others, power to control more than our share; it should mean power to be, power to control one's own greed, avarice, violence; power to nurture, heal, care for others; power to fight for justice, ethics, morality;

power to achieve inner growth leading to wisdom and compassion.

Women's empowerment is a process, which is both on-going and dynamic and which enhances women's ability to change those structures and ideologies which keep them subordinate. This process enables them to gain more access to and control over resources and decision-making; gain more control over their own lives, gain more autonomy. It is a process which enables women to have self-respect and dignity, which improves their self image and social image.

The process of empowerment is a political process, because it aims at changing existing power relationships between women and men.

The goal of women's empowerment cannot and should not just be to change hierarchical gender relations, but to change all hierarchical relations in society i.e., class, caste, race, ethnic, and North-South relations. Because gender relations do not operate in a vacuum, because they are related to and influenced by all other economic, social and political systems, one cannot change gender hierarchies without changing other systems and hierarchies.

Women's empowerment is not and cannot be separate from the empowerment of nature, empowerment of all the marginalised people and countries. Women's struggles and movements therefore, need to be closely linked to peace movements, ecology movements, workers' and peasants' movements, human rights movements and movements for democratisation and decentralisation of society. These different movements are different aspects of the same struggle, different segments of the same dream; therefore, there need to be strong connections and alliances between them.

I believe that while talking of empowerment of women, we must also talk about empowerment of feminist thinking and ideology, empowerment of principles like



equality, justice, democracy and sustainability. This means, we do not support all women irrespective of what they stand for. We do not empower women dictators, women patriarchs, women who promote caste and patriarchy, just because they are women. We recognize that women can also be patriarchal and dominating and that some men can be and are our partners in fighting patriarchy and other hierarchical systems. Our struggle is for certain principles and for a society where all men and women have equal opportunities to live, to grow, to participate.

Not just women, but women's perspectives need to be empowered because women are not just a separate sector. Women's concerns, perspectives and visions are necessary on every issue - be it militarisation, human rights or sustainable development. Every issue is a woman's issue.

Empowerment of women has to be done at all levels and in all sections if it is to become strong and wide spread and make a difference. Effective networking is required between grass-root level women activists, intermediary level activists, women in the government, media women, women politicians, women academics, women artists, women entrepreneurs, etc. We need networking between those working at the micro level, and those working at the macro level. We also need support from sympathetic men at all levels.

Empowerment of women is not a one way process - in which some activists can go and empower others. It is a two way process in which we empower and get empowered. This is an ongoing journey for all of us. No one can become empowered for good and then become an expert in empowering others.

Women's empowerment has to be multidimensional and integrative. This process may include some or all of the following:

- Making women's contribution to society visible; i.e. showing

that women, in addition to being deliverers of children and home-makers, are farmers, labourers, artisans, professionals, etc. They have always been involved in production, and their contribution to GDP has always been major. They are producers of life itself, managers of natural resources etc.

- Making women and society recognize the knowledge, capabilities and skills that women have had and still have, particularly in areas of agriculture, health, handicrafts, etc.
- Creating a social environment which gives women self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Empowerment of women has to be done at all levels and in all sections if it is to become strong and wide spread and make a difference. Effective networking is required between grass-root level women activists, intermediary level activists, women in the government, media women, women politicians, women academics, women artists, women entrepreneurs, etc. We need networking between those working at the micro level, and those working at the macro level. We also need support from sympathetic men at all levels.**

- Providing opportunities for girls and women to realise their full potential and to have choices and not to be pushed into only a few traditional roles and occupations. Giving them an education which empowers rather than domesticates.
- Enabling women to take decisions about their own lives; whether, when and whom to marry, whether and when to have children, whether and what to study. Also, to take decisions about family matters,

community and national affairs. Enhancing women's political participation at all levels.

- Facilitating awareness amongst women and men about girls and women's genuine needs, their status within and outside the family, their rights and responsibilities.
- Making facilities and resources available to women to meet their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and their special needs in health and security.
- Helping women gain access to and control over means of production, property and other resources and control over income.

### Issues Needing Special Attention and Efforts

It is important to point out some areas which are crucial for women's empowerment, but which have not been given adequate attention in the past. These areas need to be looked at very carefully and effective strategies have to be developed to deal with them.

Women's lack of control over property and other productive resources is an important reason for women's inferior status. It is this which makes women feel insecure all the time. In her book "*A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*" Bina Agarwal has very convincingly argued that gender gap in the ownership and control over property is the single most important factor affecting women's economic well being, social status and empowerment. This issue needs to be addressed urgently at all levels.

Lack of access to gainful employment is another important issue. While much stress is laid on who brings in the cash, women are denied opportunities of learning and developing skills to bring in cash, and to be gainfully employed. Women's household work is not valued and if they do not bring in cash they are devalued, considered a burden, a liability. Research done by Professor



Amartya Sen and Professor Jean Dreze has come to the conclusion that greater involvement with outside work and paid employment does tend to go with less anti-female bias in intra family distribution. Therefore, they suggest that female participation in “gainful” economic activity is a material factor in combating the special deprivation of women in many parts of the world. In India, we have talked a lot about income generation activities for women, but most of these have failed to help women. They have increased women’s work load without enhancing their income much. This issue needs a careful consideration.

Sharing of household and child rearing work is another area which needs to be looked into because that is where maximum subordination of women is located. Women slog all the time, have no leisure, no opportunity to study, to grow. This is a big hurdle in the path of women’s equality and empowerment. Women’s drudgery can only be reduced if others in the family share their work. Boys and men should share mothering, caring, nurturing activities to provide time to women to rest, to have time for themselves, to develop other interests.

Control over women’s sexuality is another area which needs to be studied, understood and addressed. Early marriages, purdah, restrictions on women’s mobility, which are all ways of controlling women’s sexuality, have drastic implications for the freedom and autonomy of girls and women.

The other important area to be addressed is that of ideology which justifies and perpetuates patriarchal structures, practices and behaviour patterns. Media are a powerful creator of ideology and we all know how sexist and anti-women most media have been and are. Considerable amount of work has been done to change media images of women but unfortunately things have only become worse.

Religion is also a creator of patriarchal ideology. Religious texts and mythologies, religious and cultural customs which preach and justify male superiority also need to be challenged much more than we have done in the past. This is indeed an area which we should tread cautiously. It is an area which will not change overnight but if we keep silent about it, it will never change. Religions which justify caste, class, gender hierarchies cannot be accepted uncritically in the present day and time. Religious laws and practices which go against our Constitution, which deny women their fundamental

**We need education which will help women not only to read and understand the word but to read, understand and control our world; which will help women not only to master the three Rs but to be masters of their own lives and makers of their destinies.**

rights need to be challenged. What and how we do this very sensitive task needs to be discussed and planned carefully to avoid hurting sentiments and back lash.

### **Education for Women’s Empowerment**

Education of women is indeed the most important component and intervention for women’s empowerment, provided both the contents and methodology of this education are pro-women.

### **The Kind of Education We Need**

We have to strengthen and multiply those ongoing efforts to educate women, to acquire information and knowledge which help them challenge patriarchal knowledge, norms, values, behaviour patterns. We need education which will help women not only to read and understand the word but to read, understand and control our world; which will help women not only to

master the three Rs., but to be masters of their own lives and makers of their destinies. We need education which will help women acquire the necessary analytical skills to understand the fast changing realities of life; which will give them the confidence and strength to refuse to submit to conditions of indignity and inhumanity. If we are involved with women’s literacy then literacy classes for women should become nuclei for consciousness raising. They should help women form strong groups so that they can gain more and more control over their lives, help them break their silence, make them visible. These classes should create an atmosphere which allows women more freedom, which gives them more opportunities to realise their full human potential. Education for women’s empowerment will have to be an ongoing process of collective action and reflection. Our educational efforts should be built on women’s existing knowledge and skills; they should affirm women, bring out the best in each one of them.

The methodology of women’s education has to be participatory and non-hierarchical. Women must be involved in setting their own agenda and priorities, their own pace of learning. The educational process should make them feel good about themselves, build their confidence and self-respect, unleash their creativity, make them feel energetic and joyous; in one word - EMPOWER them.

We need education which will not only help in the search and acquisition of new skills and knowledge, but also help the participants acquire and strengthen values like justice, equality, honesty, truthfulness and solidarity amongst oppressed groups. It should also create or release energies in women to act with conviction and courage in their various struggles at different levels.


We need education which will not lead to more competition and ambition, but which will create trust and solidarity amongst women. It



should help them form associations and networks at different levels.

It should help women develop an analytical and questioning mind and a scientific approach to understand the realities around them. It should help them see the connections between micro and macro realities, between micro realities and macro policies, between the local and the global.

Just to reiterate, women's empowerment must accompany the empowerment of human values. Only then there will be more equality, justice and peace around us.

Women's empowerment will take place at a rapid pace only when men understand that it will be good for men also and it will be good for families and nations. Let us remember that. 

(E-mail: [kamla@sangatsouthasia.org](mailto:kamla@sangatsouthasia.org)  
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### **Beneficiaries of Supplementary Nutrition Programme under ICDS Increase**

The number of beneficiaries [children (6 months to 6 years) and pregnant and lactating mothers] for supplementary nutrition under ICDS scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development have increased from 956.12 lakh to 1030.14 lakh and Number of beneficiaries [children (3-6 years) for pre-school education increased from 353.29 lakh to 354.05 lakh during the last four years. Similarly, Anganwadi Centres have also increased from 1338732 to 1349091 during the same period.

Government of India approved the Restructuring and Strengthening of ICDS Scheme recently. The goals and target of restructured and strengthened ICDS are (i) to prevent and reduce young child under nutrition by 10 per cent points in 0-3 years and enhance early development and learning outcomes in all children below six years of age (ii) improved care and nutrition of girls and women and to reduce anaemia prevalence in young children, girls and women by 1/5th and (iii) achieve time bound goals and outcomes with results based monitoring of indicators at different levels.

Care & Nutrition counselling [including (i) Infant & Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Promotion and Counselling, (ii) Maternal Care and Counselling, (iii) Care, Nutrition, Health & Hygiene Education and (iv) Community based care and management of underweight children] and Health Services [including (i) Immunization and micronutrient supplementation, (ii) Health Check-up and (iii) Referral Services] for children in the age group of 0-6 years and Pregnant and Lactating mothers, have now been included in the core package of ICDS services.

Integrated Child Development Services [ICDS] Scheme is a centrally sponsored Scheme being implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations.

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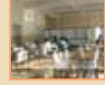
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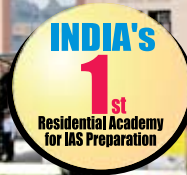
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|---|---|--|---|
| <b>PREMIUM BATCH</b><br>Pre-cum-mains<br><b>26th August</b><br>at<br><b>5:30 pm</b>                               | <b>PREMIUM BATCH</b><br>Pre-cum-mains<br><b>26th August</b><br>at<br><b>5:30 pm</b> | <b>FOUNDATION</b><br><b>19th August</b> at <b>5:30 pm</b>  | <b>PREMIUM BATCH</b><br>Pre-cum-mains<br><b>9th September</b><br>at<br><b>6:00 pm</b> |
| <b>POLITICAL SCIENCE</b><br>(Optional)<br><b>17th August</b><br>at<br><b>2:30 pm</b>                              | <b>WEEKEND BATCH</b><br><b>27th August</b><br>at<br><b>11:00 am</b>                 | <b>PREMIUM BATCH</b><br>Pre-cum-mains<br><b>REGULAR BATCH</b><br><b>8th August</b> at <b>7:00 am</b> |   |
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| <b>Optional Subjects</b><br>• Sociology • History<br>• Geography • Social Work<br><b>11th Week of August 2016</b> |   | <b>Optional Subjects</b><br>• Sociology • History<br>• Geography<br><b>11th Week of August 2016</b>  |   |

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YE-125/2016



# Empowerment of Women: Government Perspective

*Leena Nair*



*With the SDGs in place, it would be critical in realizing the objectives of a truly inclusive, equitable, people-centered and transformative post-2015 development agenda with a gender perspective. This would be only possible through combined efforts and contribution of all relevant stakeholders, including the civil society and the private sector*

**T**he principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principles.

The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures in favour of women. In keeping with this principle of equality and inclusive growth, every effort is made to empower the women and nurture children, which together constitutes over 70 per cent of the total population of our country. Various legislations have been enacted and amended, and plans, policies and programmes formulated towards producing tangible outcomes that positively impact the lives of women.

As women's empowerment is a complex issue with a myriad of indicators, the present paper focuses on key interventions of the Government that have been undertaken with the aim of women's economic as well as social transformation. Empowerment, as an enabling process will only be achieved when an improvement in the condition of women in terms of health, education, safety and security including financial security is achieved.

#### **Health:**

Providing quality and affordable healthcare to the large Indian

population, particularly the poor and underprivileged, is a formidable task for the Indian Government. Since 2005, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), now renamed as the National Health Mission has led to improvement in health care service delivery through better infrastructure, drugs, and equipment and availability of human resources in health facilities at different levels in rural areas.

Health being the pre requisite for improvement of survival indicators, priority continues to be laid on increasing access to health services. Maternal under-nutrition is a major challenge in India with more than one third (35.6 per cent) having low Body Mass Index (BMI). Similarly, malnutrition continues to adversely affect majority of women in India with the result, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic<sup>1</sup>. To address the issue of maternal and child malnutrition, the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme** has been universalized and strengthened. ICDS, one of the world's largest and most unique outreach programme for early childhood care and development covers all the districts and blocks in the country through 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres and symbolizes India's commitment to addressing the nutritional need of 1.9

The author is an IAS Officer of 1982 batch from Tamil Nadu Cadre, currently serving as the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, dealing with various legislations, schemes and programmes for improving the lives of women & children, including their nutrition, health, safety and security. She is also a Hubert Humphrey fellow (1999-2000).

crore expectant and nursing mothers and 8.4 crore children under the age of six.<sup>2</sup> **Village Health and Nutrition Days** are conducted in rural areas as an outreach activity, for provision of maternal and child health services.

To accelerate the pace of reduction **Maternal Mortality Ratio**<sup>3</sup> (MMR) in several interventions have been made by the Government. Some of the key steps include the promotion of institutional deliveries through the **Janani Suraksha Yojana**, absolutely free and no expense delivery, including caesarean section under the **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK)** for all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions, **Mother and Child Protection Card** to monitor service delivery for mothers and children, **Mother and Child Tracking System** to ensure antenatal, intra-natal and postnatal care along-with immunization services and **Maternal Death Reviews (MDR)** to take corrective action at appropriate levels and improve the quality of obstetric care.<sup>4</sup> The implementation of all such efforts has made an appreciable progress and the Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 212 to 178 per 100,000 live births during 2007-09 and 2010-12 as per the latest report of the Registrar General of India, Sample Registration System (RGI-SRS).

According to the latest NFHS-4 (2015-16) data released for the 13 states,<sup>5</sup> it has been established that the provision of better care facilities for women during pregnancy and childbirth has contributed to the reduction of maternal deaths and improved child survival in India. More and more women now give birth in health care facilities and rates have more than doubled in some States in the last decade. The draft **National Health Policy 2015** also addresses women's health needs in terms of meeting the specific needs of reproductive and child health. It mentions the need to increase the targets of male sterilization and contraception utilization.

## Education:

Education is the most important measure of women's status and the benefits of education cannot be emphasized enough. To provide quality education and develop appropriate skills, many programmes are being implemented by the Government both in elementary and secondary education and higher and technical education. The **Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009** was enacted in April 2010 to make free and compulsory elementary education a right for all children and a flagship programme, **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** was rolled to universalize access to education at primary and upper primary levels. As a result, enrolment of girls in schools, both in rural and urban areas across the country, has shown a steady increase over the years and dropout rates have come down. At the national level, the Gender Parity Index is 1.0 at the primary level and

...the provision of better care facilities for women during pregnancy and childbirth has contributed to the reduction of maternal deaths and improved child survival in India. More and more women now give birth in health care facilities and rates have more than doubled in some States in the last decade.

0.95 at the upper primary level as per DISE 2012-13. While the SSA has helped in universalization of primary education, a lot more needs to be done to provide quality education.<sup>6</sup> A nationwide sub-programme to the SSA called **Padhe Bharat, Badhe Bharat**<sup>7</sup> has been launched to ensure that learning levels of class I and II students in reading, writing language comprehension and mathematics is at par with the world. The campaign aims to ensure that every school provides teaching-learning for 200 school working days, with 800 instructional hours. **Vidyanjali (School Volunteer**

**Programme)** is another initiative under SSA to enhance community and private sector involvement in Government run elementary schools across the country. This programme has been envisaged to bring together people willing to volunteer their services at schools which really need them.

Consequent to the developments of SSA, there has been an increasing demand for secondary education in the country. To enhance access to secondary education for all children in the age group of 14-18 years and to improve its quality, the **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)** is under implementation since 2009 onwards. The efforts are visible in the increased female literacy rate from 65.38 to 74.04 during 2001 and 2011. The CBSE has also come out with a special scheme called **Udaan** for girl students. It is a mentoring and scholarship scheme which aims at addressing the lower enrolment ratio of girl students in engineering colleges and also aims to enrich and enhance teaching and learning of mathematics and science at senior secondary school level by providing free online resources for all.<sup>8</sup>

While the **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)** is being implemented for the holistic development of higher education, Government has also launched a new web-based portal named as Vidya Lakshmi ([www.vidyalakshmi.co.in](http://www.vidyalakshmi.co.in)) under **Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram** to provide educational loans for the students seeking Higher Education. Vidya Lakshmi is a first of its kind portal providing single window for students to access information and make application for educational loans provided by banks as also government scholarships.

Though women in India have been holding influential positions across sectors and achieving new heights in higher education, gender bias still exists. To make young boys and girls gender sensitive and create positive



social norms that value the girls and their rights, provision has been made to engage **Gender Champions** in colleges across the country. The University Grants Commission has issued notification in this regard to vice-chancellors of all universities and colleges and issued the guidelines for its implementation.

### **Safety and Security:**

Ensuring gender equality, and combating discrimination and violence against women are integral to our national pursuit of forging inclusive society and development. The Government is determined to end violence of all kinds against women and girls and has framed enabling legislations. Supporting women victims and ensuring that the police and other agencies have the right tools in place to protect the victims of violence is at the heart of Government's approach. On rape and sexual violence, the Government is making every effort to ensure that the voices of the women affected by violence are heard and that they can access justice.

Some of the recent enabling legislations to address gender based violence to provide safe environment for women to work and live and fulfill their potential are, for example, The **Criminal Law (Amendment), Act 2013** which has been enacted to make the punishment more stringent for offences like rape and has broadened the definition of sexual assault and harassment. New offences like acid attack, sexual harassment, voyeurism and stalking, disrobing a woman, have been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code. The Act has also made provisions for greater accountability of public officials including the health care providers for immediate relief to the woman affected by violence. The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** aims to provide a safe and secured environment for women to work. These legislations are supplemented by other existing laws like **The Protection of Women from Domestic**

**Violence Act, 2005**; for protection of the rights of women who are the victims of violence of any kind within the family; **the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, for prohibition of solemnisation of child marriages; **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012** to protect children from offences of sexual assault; **The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PC & PNDT), 1994** for prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception. **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** provides for proper care, protection and treatment to the child by catering to their development needs, and by adopting a child friendly approach. **The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016**, passed in the Rajya Sabha which increased the maternity leave for working women from 12 to 26 weeks will definitely promote female workforce participation in India.

**There has been an increasing emphasis on gender sensitivity of police force through training programmes, performance appraisal, women police stations to tackle crime against women. Not only that, in order to have a gender responsive police service, and expand community outreach to integrate gender issues into policies, protocols and operational procedures a new scheme on a pilot basis has been initiated.**

For ensuring women's safety pertaining to the strategic areas of prevention, protection and rehabilitation, Government has established a **Nirbhaya Fund** under which, the key programmatic interventions have been made and so far, 15 proposals amounting to around Rs. 2000 crores have been recommended under the Nirbhaya Fund. These include the **One Stop Centres** for facilitating/providing medical aid, police assistance, legal counselling/court case management, psycho-

social counselling and temporary shelter to women affected by violence, **Women Helpline** for providing 24 hour emergency and non-emergency response, Investigative Units for Crime against Women (IUCAW) in all police districts of the country, installation of CCTV surveillance cameras in coaches to strengthen security on trains, **National Emergency Response System**, creation of Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF), Cyber Crime Prevention against Women & Children (CCPWC) and so on.

The multi-sectoral **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** initiative also aims to to secure a bright future and welfare of the girl child in India and address the declining child sex ratio and related issues of disempowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum. The BBBP programme has resulted in dozens of local level innovative initiatives to promote the girl child. Due to the encouraging results and transformative potential of the programme, it has been extended to another 61 districts with low CSR from the initial 100 districts. Other programmes to support and provide relief to women affected with violence are the Victim Compensation Scheme, Swadhar and Short Stay Home Schemes for relief and rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances including the victims of rape.

To increase the visibility of women in the police force, 33 per cent reservation has been made for women in the police force, in UTs and some States. There has been an increasing emphasis on gender sensitivity of police force through training programmes, performance appraisal, women police stations to tackle crime against women. Not only that, in order to have a gender responsive police service, and expand community outreach to integrate gender issues into policies, protocols and operational procedures, a new scheme on a pilot basis has been initiated. Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) are in the process of being recruited at the state and UT level for creating a link between women and

police, especially at the grassroots. The broad mandate of MPVs is to report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment etc in the neighbourhood to the police.

### Financial Security:

Despite these challenges, millions and millions of women in India are breaking old barriers and charting their own destiny. The flagship programmes like **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)** while providing livelihood security to thousands of rural women have also provided them with economic security, empowered them and created rural assets simultaneously. Another example of mainstreaming women in the economy is the **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)**, which is working exclusively for poor women, providing them with regular funds and facilitating market linkages. To promote such women entrepreneurs and Self Help Groups, **Mahila E-Haat** has been launched as a start up initiative by the RMK for meeting the aspirations and needs of women entrepreneurs. This web based marketing, initiative under Digital India, will facilitate the access of women to the global market and promote the development of relations between the business community and women entrepreneurs. Financial Inclusion is one of the top most priorities of the government. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** has given confidence to lakhs of women in opening their first bank account and a breakthrough to overcome the vicious cycle of poverty and debt. According to the Third Annual Survey by the Gates Foundation 47 per cent women now have a PMJDY bank account”.<sup>9</sup> Further, to promote skills and employability of women, the sectors which employ a large number of women have been identified under the National Skill Development Policy and **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** launched to help them securing a decent employment to move out of poverty. With a mission

to secure the financial future of the girl child, a small savings scheme **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana** has also been launched under the Beti Padhao Beti Bachao initiative. 87 lakh accounts have been opened upto June 2016 under SSY across the country.

### Conclusion:


These are, no doubt, significant steps forward in such a large, plural, democracy. However, the patriarchal mindset which results in denial of

**Government acknowledges the emerging issues such as making cyber spaces safe place for women, redistribution of gender roles for reducing unpaid care work, review of personal and customary laws in accordance with the Constitutional provisions, ensuring the rights of women adopting artificial reproductive techniques, recognizing the needs of single women and creating an enabling environment for women to participate in entrepreneurial activities and is committed to address these challenges.**

equal opportunities to women in various spheres such as nutrition, education and employment and also result in violence against women continues to be a challenge. The effort is to work towards consolidation of the processes already initiated. The strategy to empower women is an ongoing effort and has been proposed in the new **National Policy for Women**. Seven priority areas including health, education, economy, governance and decision making, violence against women, enabling environment in terms of housing and infrastructure, safe drinking water and sanitation, mass media and sports, social security and support services etc. and environment and climate change have been outlined in the draft policy. Government acknowledges the emerging issues such as making

cyber spaces safe place for women, redistribution of gender roles for reducing unpaid care work, review of personal and customary laws in accordance with the Constitutional provisions, ensuring the rights of women adopting artificial reproductive techniques, recognizing the needs of single women and creating an enabling environment for women to participate in entrepreneurial activities and is committed to address these challenges. With the SDGs in place, it would be critical in realizing the objectives of a truly inclusive, equitable, people-centered and transformative post-2015 development agenda with a gender perspective. This would be only possible through combined efforts and contribution of all relevant stakeholders, including the civil society and the private sector.

### Readings:

- 1 5NFHS-III (2005-06): “International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Macro International, 2007”, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06: India, Vol I (Mumbai: IIPS)
- 2 <http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/AR2014-15.pdf>, Annexure XII, p.180
- 3 Refers to the number of women who die as a result of complications of pregnancy or childbearing in a given year per 100,000 live births in that year and Maternal Mortality Rate is defined as the number of maternal deaths to women in the ages 15-49 per lakh of women in that age group
- 4 <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=123669>
- 5 <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134608>
- 6 <http://indiabudget.nic.in/es2013-14/echap-13.pdf>
- 7 [http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/Padhe-Bharat-Badhe-Bharat.pdf](http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/Padhe-Bharat-Badhe-Bharat.pdf)
- 8 <http://cbseonline.nic.in/regn/udaan.html>
- 9 <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pmjdy-helped-more-women-financially-empowered-report/1/708404.html> 

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# Women's Economic Empowerment

*Ela R Bhatt*



*...women are the key to rebuilding a community. Focus on women, and you will find allies, who want a stable community. The woman wants roots for her family. In woman, you get a worker, a provider, a caretaker, an educator, a networker. She is a forger of bonds—in her, essentially, you have a creator and a preserver*

I grew up in those years when India was fighting for freedom and becoming an independent nation. As young people, we had pledged to rebuild the nation, to reconstruct our lives so that every Indian is able to enjoy **freedom**. Mahatma Gandhi had shown us the way. He would think of individual cleanliness on the same level as political freedom. To him, cleanliness in lavatories and the village ponds, was as vital as spiritual salvation. We had learnt to see the economy from the perspective of the masses. His thoughts have been the source of guidance for me and for SEWA.

One is simplicity because we recognized that adding complexity is not progress. The second is non-violence. Violence fundamentally is inconsistent with freedom. The third is dignity of labour, sanctity of labour. Labour is the law of Nature, and its violation is the central cause of the present economic muddle. And, the fourth is human values—nothing that compromises a person's humanity is acceptable. **On these four cornerstones of simplicity, non-violence, sanctity of labour and**

**human values – we were guided to build India's economy.**

Because the human being is central in the thinking, we in SEWA gradually understood the view of Development as **holistic and integrated**. By understanding development, we call it constructive work, in all aspects. We co-relate each of our activities with the impact on our own self, on the society and the world and thus become responsible world citizens. Such linkages have been the basis of our SEWA and SEWA movement.

However, closest to my heart is WORK. I would put WORK as central to man's life: 'karma'. It is the work, productive work that leads to Development and Growth. As we have seen while working with poor women, that work is central to their lives. Work gives meaning to their life. Work forges an individual's identity. Work provides livelihoods that produce goods and services, and thus builds a society, a nation. But, poverty breaks down the balance. We see exploitation at every stage: of the individual, of the community and the environment, Nature.

In **poverty**, we assume discrimination at every stage either

The author is a Gandhian, and widely recognized as one of the world's most remarkable pioneers and entrepreneurial forces in grassroots development. She founded the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and SEWA Cooperative Bank. She was a Member of the Rajya Sabha. She founded and served as Chair for Women's World Banking, the International Alliance of Home-based Workers (HomeNet), Street Vendors (StreetNet) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing, Organizing (WIEGO). She has received several national and International awards, including Padma Shree, Padma Bhushan, the Ramon Magsaysay Award and Légion d'honneur by France, Member of the Council of The Elders brought together by Nelson Mandela (2007). She has also authored a number of books.



based on class, caste, colour, religion, land ownership, gender, language. Consequently, we have vulnerability of all kinds: economic, social, mental, spiritual. People lose their faith and they cling to misguided faith. Poverty is violence perpetuated with the consent of the society. Poverty and loss of freedom are not separate. A country can enjoy freedom only to the degree to which its poorest citizen is able to exercise his or her right. This is the conclusion based on my experience with poor, working women.

Therefore, in the leadership of women, we see the breakthrough.

At SEWA, the women we work with would be the most vulnerable, but for the strength of the collective.

We meet on the basis of work and create networks. We build unions to meet our work needs, to stop economic exploitation by traders, contractors, our governments, the global community and the 'system' and 'structures'. In SEWA, we have come together to build a Bank to meet our financial needs – to save, to borrow, to lend, to build assets, to tap resources, to improve the material quality of life. We have come together to build cooperatives to get integrated into the production process of our country. We build a social security network for our maternity needs, health and life insurance. We have been trying to forge bridges to local and global markets through a trade facilitation network of women farmers and craftswomen across the world. We create schools to build our capacities, to manage our affairs and make an impact in the world outside.

SEWA is not a project. It is not an institution. It is not even about economics or money. It is about restoring balance between the haves and have-nots. It is about self-reliance, individually and collectively, financially and taking decisions individually and collectively. That's the path towards empowerment.

At the global level, my sense of Millennium Development Goal has been that it is alien to most communities, not as a vision, but as a way of communicating. The development language I think we need is a different kind of language for development goals to be part of the people. It is the language of power that does not address powerlessness. Poverty is a form of powerlessness. It is a symptom of a people who have no control over decision making or access to resources. The powerlessness of poverty is redeemed by participation or consultation only to a limited extent. It is by actual control over life decisions. Once poverty is seen as a form of powerlessness, we see it as a method by which it can be resolved. Power must return to communities, especially to women, to let them decide about work, livelihood, health, education, urbanization, refugees, peace and the future. The missing term in such manifesto of nations is **community**. Both economics and the economy must be claimed by the people. Otherwise development and livelihood become parallel and contradictory forms of life.

My plea is the following : one, to put poor women in the centre of any economic reform particularly in key basic employment sectors, viz. food, water, clothing, housing, primary healthcare, education and primary banking. Two, to recognize 'work' as central to any reform that addresses poverty. Three, invest adequately in those initiatives by the poor that have potential to grow to a viable scale. Four, develop and spread holistic social security cover for the working poor. We need to realize that economic structure, in each case, is closely connected with the social structure. And, five, build the grassroots self employed women's capacity to enter mainstream markets local and global.

My plea is for a gentler economy, also I mean economy of nurturance. Nurturing of one's self, the community and the Universe.

Who will do it ?

In my experience, women are the key to rebuilding a community. Focus on women, and you will find allies, who want a stable community. The woman wants roots for her family. In woman, you get a worker, a provider, a caretaker, an educator, a networker. She is a forger of bonds—in her, essentially, you have a creator and a preserver. I consider women's participation and representation an integral part of our peace process. Women will bring constructive, creative and sustainable solutions to the table.

Moreover, if women are at the centre, woman's productive work is the thread that weaves a society together. When you have work, you have an incentive to maintain a stable society. You not only think of the future, but you plan for the future. You can build assets that reduce your vulnerability. You can invest in the next generation. Life is no longer just about survival, but about investing in a better future. Work builds peace, because work gives people roots, it builds communities and it gives meaning and dignity to one's life.

As I mentioned before, I would put my utmost emphasis on WORK. By work we do not mean factory jobs; we do not mean sweatshops

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and indecent cheap labour that leaves a person a slave to a manager of industry, and that is yet another kind of exploitation. By work, we mean the production of food and access to water. It means the upgrading of existing and traditional skills that people have possessed for thousands of years-agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, housing, textiles and clothing. This work feeds people and it restores man's relationship with himself, with fellow human beings, with the earth and the environment and with the Great Spirit that created us all.

The challenge before us today is to look for business opportunities in uncharted assets. Let us find ways to make tree plantation more profitable than cutting down forests; and make recycling more profitable than new manufacturing. Let us encourage communal ownership of assets in addition to building private assets. Given a fair chance, the spirit of cooperation is just as likely to lead us to profit as a dose of healthy

competition. With change in our thoughts, we will also need to change our vocabulary. To my mind, SEWA Bank is far more successful in its mission if it reaches thousands of small savings and self-help groups as a district level bank than if it were to become a national bank with large assets.

I do see women making a breakthrough. Women's leadership needs to be trusted, nurtured, since that is the only hope, if an inclusive just society and a sustainable environment are to be created.

Women have been so long used as resource, cheaply available, always available. But, NO. The world has to be made to realise that women are an asset to the world. Women are not permanent shock absorbers in good times and bad. Women must feature not as absorbers, but as partners.

In the women's way, there are goals but also there are values, the process of unfolding and learning from the process. This process itself

is empowering. The feminine has a different sense of time: the work may take whatever time is needed. SEWA has taken 30 years to reach a million people. Woman looks at the whole group or community and tries to include the whole, waiting for those left behind, even if it means delaying the group or the process. The feminine aims at: inclusion instead of domination, at process more than end-goal, group over individual, integration over fragmentation. I say what I have learned from my continued experience with SEWA sisters.

### Why is this relevant today?

The world today needs more feminine leadership, because we face one of the most challenging tasks of transformation of our times. And the feminine is needed not just in the form of more women leaders, but also in the form of men honouring the feminine within them. □

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YE-139/2016

# Women's Multiple Roles: The Need for Social Infrastructure

*Devaki Jain*



*Women community leadership will need to be identified and included in committees that may be formed under various sectors, to ensure that women are included in planning for sectors other than social development, such as infrastructure, use of common lands, natural resources and employment*

**I**n this essay, we argue that policies that are considered social or which are supposed to give social support in terms of health, education and other needs to women need to be seen in the context of what poor women need as the basis for the social policies to have useful outcomes. Thus, the argument here is that amongst the least privileged, most economically deprived far flung backward area, recognition of women as productive, vital agents of family and environment should be a precondition for addressing their 'social' needs.

Recognition of women as agents who bring about change in their own lives and in the lives of others, even more than the men of their families and communities, should be a crucial underpinning for social policy. Social policies often presume that women are in some sense weaker and needier of support, less able to fend for themselves and generally subordinate to men and the outside world. But in reality, especially when we go down the economic scale of families or the households where the poor congregate and poverty predominates - reveals that the situation is otherwise.

Much of the maintenance of such households, whether it is basic needs like water, fuel, food and care is provided by women. Further in most households women attempt to bring in some where with all, whether it is monetary or in kind. In deeply distressed situations like famine, when the drought hits areas that are farmlands, and the households do not have any access to their normal supply of foods - it is women who will dig up roots, pick berries and find ways of feeding the household.

This point about women's critical role in the survival of families, communities and society is a crucial premise on which to build, what can be called, social support policy. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has this to say-

"We need a vision of mankind not as *patients* whose interests have to be looked after, but as *agents* who can do effective things - both individually and jointly. We also have to go beyond the role of human beings specifically as 'consumers' or as 'people with needs', and consider, more broadly, their general role as agents of change who can - given the opportunity - think, assess, evaluate, resolve, inspire, agitate, and through these means, reshape the world"<sup>1</sup>.

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The author is a Padma Bhushan awardee, a Gandhian, feminist, economist and writer on public affairs, with special focus on poverty removal. She was one of the Founders of Development Alternatives for Women for a New Era [DAWN] - a third world network of women social scientists and Institute of Social Studies Trust [ISST] - a research centre. She is currently member of Board of GRI Chennai Council of Management, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru. She has published many books as well as essays on Gender and Development in the contest of India and global spaces.



There are several impediments to women being given the kind of social support or support by social development policies, as required. The first impediment is the way they are perceived. Earlier in the decade of 1970s, household surveys which collect data, and which in turn forms policies, were designed such that women were put in the category of less able, that is, widows, destitute etc. It was considered that they were basically in need of social welfare services. It took many decades of work by members of the women's movement to show that women were critical economic agents in every community and society and therefore cannot be treated only as objects of welfare but needed to be treated as those who are contributing to the economy and therefore apart from recognition of their role, monetary reward as well as economic and social support to make their work yield better returns, was crucial.

Currently, there is a strong well documented demand worldwide that women's role of caring for children and the aged, and house work should be not only recognized but monetized in order to ensure that the time they spend on this, which often is almost all the time, is rewarded monetarily. The fact that they do this kind of work for a large part of the day deprives them of the opportunity to go out and earn a wage as men do, hence the recognition is crucial.

Thus, recognition of women's work or broadening the definition of work in order that the kind of work that women do is understood, counted and valued is one of the first steps that is necessary for women to be enabled to lead lives of good health and well being.

Data collection on both individual as well as households needs to be improved dramatically. Data collection systems have tended to see man as the principal bread winner of every household and women as supplementary bread winners or only dependents. However, studies done both in India and abroad, not only use time, but also the economic contribution of women, even if it is non- monetized, have revealed that

women especially amongst the landless and the poor households contribute as much, if not more, to both economic and social output than men. Hence, improved collection of data is critical for the understanding as well as policy response to women.

Most standard employment questionnaires, and specifically the Indian questionnaire, denote the activity of each member of the households in a format such that domestic activity traps the female and excludes her, even if she is engaged in part time 'productive' work.

Renana Jhabvala in her study also echoes the same-

"Women often remain invisible and unrecognized as workers, both because they are women and because work in the informal economy is often hidden. The work and contributions of women to the economy, as well as in the family and community, are persistently undervalued, particularly when women are home-based workers, paid domestic or care workers, or unpaid contributing workers in family businesses or on family farms. Focusing on their role as workers rather than homemakers or childcare providers serves to underscore the fact that women are economic agents who contribute to their households and the economy and therefore should be considered a target of economic as well as social policies."<sup>2</sup>

During the preparation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2007-2012)<sup>3</sup>, the Planning Commission instituted a group of women economists, Working Group of Feminists Economists (WGFE)<sup>4</sup>, to look at not only the drafting of the 'Women and Development' chapter, which is the conventional procedure but also to look at the main chapters which cover infrastructure, industry, agriculture, etc. When these chapters were scrutinized, one of the suggestions made by the group was that in the 'Infrastructure Development' chapter, which is one of the important ones in terms of budget allocation, there should be something called

the 'Social Infrastructure' or 'Soft Infrastructure'.

Soft Infrastructure would mean support services which are considered enabling for women in the poorest amongst the poorest, to participate in the community and the economy. For example, one idea was to have a building complex where support systems like water source, crèche, balvadi, toilets as well as bathing places, even a kitchen and a clothes washing place are all in one complex. This complex is built with all the existing funds that we have for providing these services. This can be put under Infrastructure as it would require investment in building, electricity and other such services which are often given to large office buildings and complexes which are

#### **PM Calls for Women - Led Development - National Conference of Women Legislators**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the importance of women-led development and said a nation was always empowered by its women, while giving the valedictory address at the National Conference of Women Legislators recently. "Women are better in adopting technologies than men. They are specially gifted by the god in this aspect," he said.

He called for thinking beyond "women development," and move towards "women-led development". "A country is always empowered by its women. It is she who in different roles — as a mother, a sister and a wife — nurtures citizens and these empowered citizens then play a role in building up an empowered society and country," said the Prime Minister

Multi-tasking, which is considered to be a very important element of modern-day management, comes naturally to women, he opined. "In the managerial world multi-tasking is a speciality and our women are the best in handling numerous tasks at a given time," he added.

meant for the middle and upper classes in cities.

Thus, a woman from the weaker sections in the society and trapped in poverty, instead of leaving household work to her eldest daughter as it is often done in these households of having to walk miles to bring fuel and water, has access to it as a community building service. She can leave her child in the crèche, bake her chapattis in the common fuel source, wash her clothes and then go to work.

One of the most startling statistics that was brought to the attention of the policy makers in the 1970s was to show the convergence between female mortality and female work participation rates. Women in the age group 20-35 had the maximum participation rate in the age specific table of participation. However, it was in this very age group that we noticed the highest mortality rates amongst women. This was particularly so in the poorest areas of India where there is a density of the population of the poor- what used to be called the BIMARU states- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh<sup>5</sup>. Such data shows the link between women's compulsion or pressure to earn a living for their household which makes them participate and the toll which it has on their health as the other services also have to be performed by them. Hence, this argument that social welfare and social policy services need to be linked deeply into women's economic roles especially when we address the poorest sections of the population.

However, these measures can be taken to be effective only when special attention is given to women and disadvantaged groups so as to enable them to take a lead in planning. For example, in surveys involved in the planning process, it needs to be ensured that woman's views are especially sought, including through focus group discussions. Women community leadership will need to be identified and included in committees that may be formed under various sectors, to ensure that women are included in planning for sectors other than social

development, such as infrastructure, use of common lands, natural resources and employment.

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- BIMARU is an acronym formed from the first letters of the names of the states. It was coined by Ashish Bose in the mid-1980s. BIMARU has a resemblance to a Hindi word "Bimar" which means sick. □

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YE-136/2016

## Adverse Child Sex Ratio: A 'Mindset' Issue

Mary E John



*...campaigns and especially the policies of the state have to recognise the consequences of their actions if they wish to make more headway in addressing the spread of sex selection. Creating awareness should, in the first place, go beyond changing mindsets to changing the conditions in our society that are creating such mindsets. At the most fundamental level, this means a mode of development that makes it less necessary for parents to think so differently about their sons and daughters – such as employment prospects for both women and men*

**I**n India, the issue of the adverse sex ratio has been a part of our history since at least the colonial period. It re-emerged as a major problem in the 1970s. Whether it be British officials in the nineteenth century trying to figure out why Rajputs and Jats killed their baby daughters, or demographers in post-colonial India wondering why the total number of women is declining relative to men even after independence, there has been no shortage of puzzles and differences in approaching this issue. After the 1980s, a shocking new dimension came into light, when it was discovered that in major cities like Delhi, Amritsar and Mumbai, new technologies meant to investigate foetal development could become a means to detect the sex of the foetus followed by abortion if found that the foetus is a girl.

Because of the misuse of this technology by medical practitioners to aid gender-biased sex selection, India has criminalised the practice through the enactment of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostics Techniques (PC-PNDT) Act. There has been a significant and long drawn out campaign to stop the practice of sex selection by catching erring doctors and radiologists. It has been a hard won campaign which faced an up hill task in curbing the practice due to the common

prevalence of a power nexus between major clinics, medical practitioners, and state level monitoring bodies. Great zeal was required, visible only among very few dedicated government servants and district collectors (in Faridabad, in Hyderabad, to give a few examples) or by conducting innovative sting operations by NGOs and media persons (in Rajasthan and in Beed district of Maharashtra) to expose medical practitioners in the act of communicating the sex of the foetus, and so criminalising their practice. Some voices warned that such advocacy could also turn into an unintentional campaign against abortions per se. Abortion (which has never been a fully fledged right for women in India, but rather tagged onto our family planning programmes) was in danger of becoming much harder to access for women who genuinely needed it.

### Rethinking Mindsets:

Among the most common beliefs why people are said to be going for sex selection is the idea of a 'mindset'. How often does one hear that people's mindset is the root cause of the problem and that what is therefore needed is a change of 'mindset'? What exactly does the term mean? According to the dictionary, the word 'mindset' refers to "the established set of attitudes held by someone" and the example the dictionary helpfully provides is

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“the region seems stuck in a medieval mindset”. I think both the definition and the example convey very well how this notion is being used in the context of understanding and opposing the practice of sex selection. We believe that families guilty of this practice are suffering from having fixed views about sons and daughters and how to value them. Their views are ‘stuck’ because it stems from age-old traditions that devalue daughters. This also means that when we say people should change their mindset, we want them to become less traditional and more modern in their views.

Based on our research on the adverse child sex ratio, I believe that this is a very inadequate understanding of the problem. When we think in this way, we assume that the thoughts of such people are not in sync with the times they are living in. But let us look more carefully at what families today think when they decide about having a son or not having a daughter. Families are planning their future based not just on age-old ideas, but on their expectations about what kind of resources they will be able to muster in order to realise their hopes. So, yes, we are dealing with people’s attitudes and views, but these are views that have been shaped in the contemporary social and economic context within which we live. In other words, families in the present times are struggling between the idea of having children and being able to find the means to support them. This is a very dynamic and complex relationship in which families are pervasively and deeply influenced by their modern surroundings. (For a detailed study, see John et al 2008; UN Women 2015)

This also means that we have to ask questions like: Apart from the availability of new technologies from the 1980s, what other developments of the last few decades may have played a role in influencing decision-making? What kinds of families are particularly susceptible?

First of all, it may be noted that the period of the plunging child sex ratio also coincides with the huge spurt in

economic growth that India witnessed since the 1990s. Though enormous economic expansion and transformation followed, the fact remains that the benefits of such growth have been very unequal and is not creating enough new jobs to replace older ones. In all this, women have been the biggest sufferers. Families not in dire poverty, striving to improve their economic situation by having fewer children in whom they can ‘invest’, are the most susceptible to practicing sex selection. Though many of them say that they would like to have one boy and one girl, what this actually translates into is having ‘at least one son and at the most one daughter’. Moreover, such families are quite ‘modern’ in wanting their children to have sufficient care and nutrition, good education, and to successfully settle down in adulthood—a reliable job for the boy and a stable married life for the girl. But this is easier said than done and has been creating an enormous sense of burden and anxiety, especially when it comes to bringing up a daughter in an economic and cultural milieu filled with so much uncertainty. So, to cut a long story short, families are displaying evidence of having a ‘mindset’ that is very much in sync with the time they are in when they ‘choose’ not to have a daughter.

### **Critical Role of Government Schemes:**

In this situation, the government must use the means at its disposal, such as schemes at the state and central level to send out the right signals to families. As discussed above, it is families who are beyond the pale of poverty and yet must struggle to match their resources with plans for their children, who are most susceptible to go in for sex selection to ensure that they get as close as possible to the ‘perfect’ family – one boy, one girl. After the Census of 2001 showed widespread drops in 0-6 year child sex ratios in several states, a number of schemes were floated, especially at the state level, or existing schemes were modified to address the low value given to the ‘girl child’. Many of these schemes,

such as *Apni Beti Apni Dhan* had been created to address early marriage, to encourage families below the

### **"Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" Programme**

The National Programme "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao." was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 22nd January, 2015 at Panipat, Haryana. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister had said he "comes as a bhikshuk to beg for the lives of daughters". Stating that we have no right to call ourselves 21st century citizens as long as we have an 18th century mindset, the Prime Minister had called for an end to the discrimination between sons and daughters, saying this was the key to ending female foeticide.

The Prime Minister had declared that each one had a collective responsibility towards ending the practice of female foeticide. We would not only be harming the current generation, but also inviting a "terrible crisis" for the future generations, he warned.

In a hard-hitting message to doctors who contributed to female foeticide, the Prime Minister had reminded them that their medical education had been for the purpose of saving lives, and not killing daughters.

The Prime Minister quoted the eminent Urdu scholar from Panipat, Altaf Hussain Haali "O Sisters, mothers, daughters - you are the ornaments of the world, you are the life of nations, the dignity of civilizations." He also quoted from other ancient scriptures to highlight the importance given to the girl child.

He also recalled the astronaut Kalpana Chawla, as an example of how girls could excel and make a name for themselves. He said girls were today doing well in sports, in education and health sectors, and had a very significant contribution, even in agriculture.

poverty line to keep their girls in school and not marry them before the age of 18 years. These took the form of conditional cash transfer schemes in a number of states such as Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh. As the name suggests, schemes like Ladli, Dhanalakshmi and so on were adopted to encourage families to have a daughter, and offered payments to be put in a bank account in her name at various stages from birth, immunisation, and stages of schooling and where a lumpsum would finally be available for the girl once she reached 18 and had not married yet. The idea behind these schemes was to compensate, as it were, in financial terms, for the 'burden' of an unwanted girl, but these schemes were also saddled with many conditionalities which hampered their functioning. There have been various studies of these schemes (ICRW 2014; Sekher 2012) – some have shown that there was a marginal improvement in school retention among beneficiary families compared to eligible children who had not been entered into this scheme. Others pointed out that the many conditionalities were a major obstacle; especially its targetting of BPL families meant that it did not reach many families above poverty who were far more likely to resort to sex selection. Still others criticised these schemes for reinforcing public perceptions that a daughter is nothing but a burden on the family.

Two years ago, a new scheme was launched by the central government Beti Bachao Beti Padhao with much fanfare, with an overall budget of 100 crores. In states like Haryana, which has had a long standing low child sex ratio in several districts, this scheme is very visible in the form of huge hoardings across towns and on main highways, on the backs of buses, and in frequent pronouncements by state functionaries. However well intentioned, this scheme represents a set back from the conditional cash transfer schemes, with all their limitations. This is because all the money is being utilised as a communication campaign, as though the problem were simply and primarily one of the wrong 'mindset' of the people who are engaging in sex determination testing or not educating their daughters sufficiently. But, as argued earlier in this essay, people are not suffering from traditional mindsets in the first place. What makes the situation worse is that major government schemes such as the flagship Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) for pre school children, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which has been the

### Healthcare for Women: Caring for Those Who Nurture

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*I want to thank God, my family, friends and family guidance provided by Prof. Alok S. Jha and Prof. Dr. Sushil K. I received very valuable insight to improve my GS answer writing and essay from great old time when they were part of expert brain team which started just as some last month in 2015. The site's cultural and history classes were interesting for my preparation which lead to my repeated success especially in their exam. Thank you Sir.*

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backbone for implementing the Right to Education (RTE) have then in these last two years, witnessed major cuts in budget allocations. These are the very schemes that are crucial for ensuring basic nutrition and early child care, as well as universal schooling, and therefore critical for improving the lives of all children, girls included.

More generally, campaigns and especially the policies of the state have to recognise the consequences of their actions if they wish to make more headway in addressing the spread of sex selection. Creating awareness should, in the first place, go beyond changing mindsets to changing the conditions in our society

that are creating such mindsets. At the most fundamental level, this means a mode of development that makes it less necessary for parents to think so differently about their sons and daughters – such as employment prospects for both women and men. It also calls for addressing the escalating fears among parents about the sexual safety of their daughters. The youth of today need to have good reasons to believe that they can build a brighter future for themselves even outside of family support.

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(E-mail: [maryejohn1@gmail.com](mailto:maryejohn1@gmail.com))

## SwadharGreh Scheme

Swadhar Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. The scheme provides primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls who are in need. The beneficiaries include widows deserted by their families and relatives, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, women victims of terrorist /extremist violence and similarly placed women in difficult circumstances, who do not have any family support and without any economic means of survival.

The Short Stay Home Scheme for women and girls was introduced in 1969. Under this scheme, residential temporary accommodation and maintenance and rehabilitative services are provided to women and girls rendered homeless due to family discord, crime, violence, mental stress and social ostracism. The scheme is being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board.

The two schemes have been merged as SwadharGreh with an objective to set up SwadharGreh in each district with a capacity of 30 women. The capacity can be extended from 50 to 100 on the basis of need based assessment. The financial norms of the SwadharGreh have also been enhanced w.e.f 1.1.2016. The SwadharGreh depending on the location / classification of the city for the purpose, shall be eligible for a grant of rupees 14.54 lakhs to Rs 18.38 lakhs per annum. This SwadharGreh can be implemented by State Govt/Central or state autonomous bodies/Municipal bodies/ Cantonment Boards/ Panchayati Raj institutions and cooperative institutions/ public trusts/ civil society organizations. As a special case, this Ministry is also constructing a SwadharGreh Home for 1000 widows at Vrindavan. The construction has begun and will be completed soon.

## Amendments to the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

Amendments to the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 have been approved by the Cabinet by introducing the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016 in Parliament.

The maternity benefit Act 1961 protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity and entitles her of a 'maternity benefit' - i.e. full paid absence from work - to take care for her child. The act is applicable to all establishments employing 10 or more persons. The amendments will help 1.8 million (approx.) women workforce in organised sector.

The amendments to Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 are as follows:

- Increase Maternity Benefit from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for two surviving children and 12 weeks for more than two children.
- 12 weeks Maternity Benefit to a 'Commissioning mother' and 'Adopting mother'.
- Facilitate 'Work from home'.
- Mandatory provision of Creche in respect of establishment having 50 or more employees.





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# Women in Indian Freedom Struggle

*Jyoti Atwal*



*...the image and magnitude of participation of the Indian women within the national movement was drawn from the multilayered nations of Mother India and Victorian morality. The women who led the nationalist campaigns were mostly upper middle class. Yet in the recent years, Dalit and tribal women have been claiming participation in the nation's history. Many such histories are waiting to be written*

The course of the Indian National Movement is marked by multifaceted and complex stages. The question of social reform remained alive in the nationalist debates in the public sphere from late 19<sup>th</sup> century till 1947. Women's consciousness around social and the national questions grew simultaneously. The demand for legal reforms and inclusion of Indians into the imperial legislative councils constituted the early phases of the Indian National Movement. Both Indian men and women were leading the social reform movements since the 1880s. In various women's autobiographies and writings from all over India, particularly Maharashtra and Bengal, the slogan that 'Personal is Political' was being raised. The fact of women entering the male dominated arena of social reform was tantamount to making a break with the past (Kosambi, 2007).

The Gandhian movement for Indian freedom in the 1920s incorporated women in large numbers. Gandhi had skillfully managed to evolve his discourse on the position of women both *within* and *outside* the domain of home. The freedom movement had acquired a social base by the late 1920s. Issues such as child marriage and widow remarriage were

simultaneously being addressed by Gandhi and local reformers. It seemed as if the 'modern' of the 'would be' Indian nation had already germinated in the nationalist imagination. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century educational reforms and social changes produced a new variety of reading and writing public, where the women's proportion was scanty. Education and political awareness through newspapers influenced the educated. 19<sup>th</sup> century women's own organisations mushroomed all over India. In 1908, Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain, an educationalist and story writer from Bengal wrote *Sultana's Dream*. This short story introduced the reader to the idea of women's own governance system. In Bengal, more radical groups of women appeared. Sarala Debi Chaudhurani (Rabindranath Tagore's niece), organised *Bharat Stree Mahamandal* in 1910. She combined Hindu revivalism with political protest. She modified the Hindu festival of *ashtmi* as *birashtmi* so as to celebrate the victorious heroes from the past.

Around the turn of the century, Bombay emerged as the centre of all political activities of the Indian National Congress. Bengal mostly had secret societies. Women got support from their families to carry on the *Swadeshi* campaign. This mostly included boycott of foreign cloth

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and picketing of liquor shops. A nationalistic cult around *Bharat Mata* (mother India) began emerging in Bengal. In 1882, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-1894) wrote *Anandamath*, describing the Indian revolutionaries who laid down their lives for the Motherland. His popular hymn '*Bande Mataram*' became the song of the anti-colonial Indians and associations for all times to come.

In the second phase of women's participation, idea of Home Rule and constitutionalism became dominant. Some Western women played a significant role in it. An half Irish and half English Annie Besant (1847-1933) became the first woman President of the Indian National Congress in 1917. A theosophist and a socialist, Besant was a trained campaigner from London. She launched the campaign for Home Rule based on the Irish model. Her associate Margaret Cousins (1878-1954), an Irish suffragette drafted the Indian women's voting rights bill and launched the Women's Indian Association. Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) emerged as a prominent nationalist around 1917. She was the second woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress in 1925. Naidu joined the Indian national movement during the protest against the partition of Bengal in 1905. During 1915-1918, she travelled to different regions in India delivering lectures on women's empowerment and nationalism. She was also closely associated with the formation of Women's Indian Association and accompanied the women's voting rights delegation to London.

In the third phase, the end of World War I and the Jallian Wala Bagh massacre of 1919 changed the mood of the nation and united the people across India on the question of independence. In the beginning of 1919, the British had passed the Rowlatt Act. against public gatherings/protest and suspended civil liberties. On 13<sup>th</sup> April, when Gandhi gave a call for peaceful resistance or *Satyagraha*, and Non Cooperation, the people at Amritsar (Punjab) joined in large numbers for a peaceful demonstration.

These peaceful protestors, numbering over a thousand were shot at and massacred. This instance of colonial violence paved the way for the next stage of Non Cooperation movement in the years 1920-22. The programme was focused on boycotting law courts and schools, which went ahead of the agenda of the *Swadeshi*. Independent bodies of women such as the *Rashtriya Stree Sanghas* were fused with the District Congress Committees. The Non Cooperation movement spread beyond Bengal and incorporated women from all over India. The Movement also became symbolic of Hindu Muslim unity. At Ahmedabad, Bi Amma, the mother of Ali brothers addressed 6000 women to join the men in picketing. Gandhi also appealed to

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the women from secluded/marginalised sections of the society. In Andhra Pradesh, a vibrant Durgabai collected over a thousand *devdasis* (traditionally considered temple prostitutes) to hear Gandhi's speech. The team collected Rs 20,000 by donations in the form of jewellery. Next, a vast section of the Hindu widows appealed to him. They were the category of women who did not require any training in *satyagraha* and represented the ideal freedom fighters for Gandhi. They were the most suitable participants. A widow's personal renunciation could be transformed into a political ideology. Although Gandhi could

not turn substantial widows into participants, he upheld the idea of widowhood. It is this politicized and idealized Hindu widowhood which was used by Gandhi to motivate public consciousness towards a pacific but consistent struggle. It was, therefore, inevitable that in post-colonial India, a struggling widowed mother became an embodiment of its anti-colonial past and prosperous future nation (Atwal,2016).

Gandhi celebrated the renunciatory spirit of these widows as he had transformed his own sexuality to spiritual power in the years following his vow to celibacy.

The next stage of the national movement saw mounted levels of scale and space of the women's participation. In this politically volatile ambience of post 1920s, a book called *Mother India* was published by Katherine Mayo, an American who had visited India for two years. She had penned down a scathing critique of the Hindu men and slave like condition of women within the family. The book was set to become what has been termed as a future 'global public event' (Mrinalini Sinha,2006). What was most crucial about these events was that since the nineteenth century, the space of the 'Hindu family' had been opened to public scrutiny. Nationalist campaigns led by nationalists and reformers were compelled to focus on families and making the domestic space non-violent. Strong disapproving responses came from across the country on the book. It bound Indian men and women together to national honour. Another major development of the 1930s was the launch of the Civil Disobedience Movement. This was primarily a response to taxes on locally produced salt. It involved a 24 day long march starting along the river Sabarmati. The women volunteers were now being physically trained to lead marches, boycotts and *prabhat pheries* (early morning patriotic singing).

Women formed patriotic groups within their associations. These were called *Desh Sevika Sanghs*. Women courted arrests and led peaceful



marches of passive resistance, but some individual women joined radical groups and/or assisted the revolutionaries in carrying on assassinations of individual British officers.

Some of the most noted women who filled up the jail in 1930s were Sarojini Naidu, Muthulaxmi Reddy, Margaret Cousins and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya.

‘From liberal homes and conservative families, urban centres and rural districts, women – single and married, young and old- came forward and joined the struggle against colonial rule’ (Forbes, 2005).

In the event of men’s arrest, the women’s associations took on the task of carrying on civil disobedience and organising meetings. In addition to this, they carried on with the Gandhian constructive programme of spinning cloth and offering passive resistance by way of fasting. There are several accounts and memoirs of women which relate to 1930s. Some of them were called *sevikas* or scouts. For instance, around the 1930s, the Congress in Lucknow had been declared illegal by the government. In her memoir, Shivrani Devi, the famous Hindi novelist Premchand’s wife, writes that as women sat inside the police lorry, they hailed Mahatma Gandhi and ‘*bharat mata ki jai*’ (hail mother India). There were seven of them, one inspector, and seven constables. All women kept singing the national song. When the inspector got down, they saw tears in the eyes of the constables sitting next to them. Prior to Shivrani’s arrest, the inspector had arrested about 50 women and had not taken them to jail; they were dropped at a strange place away from the city. At a public meeting of the *Mahila Ashram* with a gathering of over 12,000 people, Shivrani had delivered a very fiery speech, knowing well that she could be arrested. In November 1931 again, Shivrani was arrested along with seven women for picketing foreign cloth (Atwal 2007). She had participated in the non cooperation movement as well.

Once the women’s nationalist consciousness was awakened in varying degrees, they began exploring different methodologies of achieving political freedom.

Another important patriotic body- the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association saw contribution by Durgavati Devi or Durga Bhabhi (1907 – 1999). She and her husband, Bhagwati Charan Vohra were members of the HSRA. She accompanied Bhagat Singh on the train journey in which he made his escape in disguise after the Saunders killing.

Another instance of revolutionary participation comes from the Chittagong armoury raid case of 1930s. Kalpana Dutt (1913-1995) joined the Indian Republican Army, Chattagram branch, which was the armed resistance group led by Surya Sen in May 1931. She joined Pritilata

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Waddedar in 1931 in attacking the European Club in Chittagong. A week before the attack, she was arrested while carrying out reconnaissance of the area. She went underground after her release on bail. On 17 February 1933, the police encircled their hiding place and Surya Sen was arrested but Kalpana was able to escape. In the second supplementary trial of the Chittagong armoury raid case, Kalpana was sentenced to transportation for life. She was released in 1939.

In 1930s Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1903 – 1988) emerged as the major leader of the Gandhian movement, particularly the Salt Satyagraha. Later in independent India, she became increasingly interested in promoting Indian handicrafts, handlooms, and theatre. Kamaladevi never became a key player in Congress decisions as she was caught up by the “triangular relationship” between Gandhi, Nehru, and the Socialists. The Government of India conferred on her the Padma Bhushan in 1955 and later the second highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan in 1987, which are among the highest civilian awards of the Republic of India. She also received the Ramon Magsaysay Award (1966) for Community Leadership. She was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship, Ratna Sadsya, the highest award of Sangeet Natak Akademi, India’s National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, given for lifetime achievement in 1974.

Sarojini Naidu on the other hand, was given more political space. In 1925, Naidu presided over the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Kanpur. In 1929, she presided over the East African Indian Congress in South Africa. She was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal by the British government for her work during the plague epidemic in India.

In 1930 during the salt *satyagraha*, she was one of the women protesters at the Dharsana salt works, Gujarat. Satyagrahis were beaten by soldiers under British command at Dharsana. In 1931, she participated in the Round Table Conference with Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya. She played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with Gandhi and other leaders. Again in 1942, she was arrested during the “Quit India” movement. Later Naidu became the first lady governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh from 1947 to 1949.

Another national leader, Aruna Asaf Ali (1909 – 1996), earned a very respectable position within the Congress and outside it. She is widely

remembered for hoisting the Indian National Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan in Bombay during the Quit India Movement, 1942. She was appointed as Delhi's first mayor in 1958. She was posthumously decorated with India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, in 1997. She had become an active member of the Congress Party after marrying Asaf Ali and participated in public processions during the Salt Satyagraha. She was arrested on the charge that she was a vagrant and hence not released in 1931 under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which stipulated release of all political prisoners. Other women co-prisoners refused to leave the premises unless she was also released and gave in only after Mohandas K. Gandhi intervened. A public agitation secured her release. In 1932, she was held prisoner at the Tihar Jail where she protested against the indifferent treatment of political prisoners by launching a

hunger strike. Her efforts resulted in an improvement of conditions in the Tihar Jail but she was moved to Ambala and was subjected to solitary confinement. She was politically not very active after her release. On 8 August 1942, the All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India resolution at the Bombay session.

To sum up, the image and magnitude of participation of the Indian women within the national movement was drawn from the multilayered nations of Mother India and Victorian morality. The women who led the nationalist campaigns were mostly upper middle class. Yet in the recent years, Dalit and tribal women have been claiming participation in the nation's history. Many such histories are waiting to be written.

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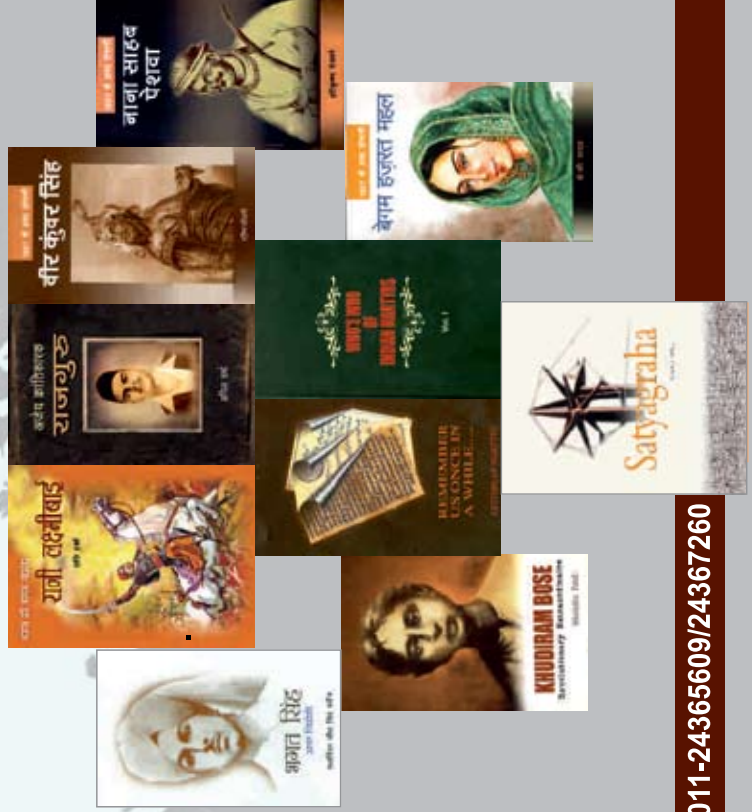
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### Some Women Martyrs of Indian Freedom Struggle: A Brief Account

#### ARUNA ASAF ALI

She was born in 1909 in to a Bengali family. She took her first step into freedom struggle through Salt Satyagrah in 1930. She was arrested by the Chief Commissioner after some months post Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Again in 1941, she was arrested for Individual Satyagrah. After all the major leaders were arrested on August 8, she was the first person to hoist the tricolor at Gowalia Tank Maidan on 9<sup>th</sup> August. 1942. On 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, all her property and belongings were confiscated and she was asked to surrender in order to get it back. When she refused, all her belongings were sold off. She, along with Dr Ram Manohar Lohiya brought out '*Inqalab Patra*', that created mass awareness, after which, many government servants and thousands of students quit their colleges, to join and lead the freedom movement. She was also called 'Rani Jhansi of 1942'. She became the first Lady Mayor of Delhi Municipal Corporation. She also brought out journals called Link and Patriot, which earned her great recognition for her work. She was also given a number of national and international awards.



#### SUCHETA KRIPLANI

She was born in 1908 in Ambala. After her primary education in Lahore, she got her M.A. degree from Delhi University. Right from her childhood, she had dreamt of living in an independent India. In 1932, she entered public services and in 1939, she joined Politics. Impressed by her work for public to serve her nation, she was elected by Gandhi ji in 1940 for Individual Satyagrah, for which she even got arrested. In 1942-43, she went underground and continued her work and became the founder of All India Mahila Congress which served as a platform for her to spread inspirational messages to women to fight for their country. For this important work, she also founded an 'Under Ground Volunteer Force' in 1942 that trained women in drills, operating arms, first aid and self defense techniques. She was arrested after two years in 1944. After coming out of jail in 1945, she devoted most of her time in social services. She also provided refuge to women who were kidnapped at the time of Communal Riots in East Bengal in 1946 and Punjab riots in 1947. She was the Chief Minister of U.P. from March 1963 to March 1967, and the first women Chief Minister of Independent India.



#### KALPANA DUTTA

She was a student of higher education in Bengal who hated English rule and their language. She even wanted to change the pledge at her school from 'to be loyal to God and King' to 'to be loyal to God and Country'. After completing her education, she took admission in Calcutta University where she learnt to use different kinds of weapons. In 1929, she came in touch with the revolutionaries, but it was only after 1932 that she decided to be a part of their team and fight for freedom with her active participation. She usually dressed herself in man's clothes, She was innovated in secretly conducted raids on the government buildings. Suspecting that she was a member of their group, the police started to keep an eye on her in order to arrest her but failed to gather any evidence against her. When Pahartali Club was raided,



## Special Segment on Independence Day

the police was convinced that she was a part of revolutionary's team. She was booked under Section 109, but due to lack of evidence, she was granted bail after which she went absconding. However, she was caught after three months and booked under *Chittagong Armory Raid case and was sentenced to life imprisonment. After she was freed from the jail in 1942, she joined the Communist Party and married Communist leader P.C.Joshi in 1943.*

### RANI GAIDINLIU

She is known as 'Lakshmi Bai of Nagaland'. At a tender age of 13, she had decided to fight against the British rule. She joined the struggle for freedom after her cousin was hanged to death by the British. She was only 16 years old at that time and fought with the help of only four armed Naga soldiers against the British. She was well versed with tactics of Guerilla War and Arm Operations. Being a very aggressive Naga leader against the British she was caught in 1932. After that, she was sentenced to life imprisonment. She was 30 years when she got out of the jail after India's Independence. She had been called 'Rani' by Pandit Nehru for her bravery and was awarded Padmabhushan for her role in freedom struggle.



### PRITILATA WADDEDAR

She was born in May 1911 in Chittagong. She was a bright student and after completing her schooling, she did her B.A. with distinction from Calcutta University. After this, she was trained at Leela Nag's Dipali Sangh and Kalyan Das's Student Union after which, she joined leader Suryasen's Revolutionary party. He was a member of the group that raided the Chittagong Armory. After confrontation with the police, she had escaped along with her fellow members. To take revenge for the death of their members who were shot dead, she along with leader Suryasen hatched a conspiracy to attack a night club frequented by the British and Europeans. On September 24, 1932, Pritilata Waddedar, along with other members attacked the club and shot dead indiscriminately with pistols and bombs. When British tried to counter attack, one gun shot hit her and she got injured. She knew that she would succumb to her injury, so she rather preferred to kill herself by consuming a packet of Potassium Cyanide from her pocket as per their plan than succumbing to the gun shot by the British.



*(Translated from: Bharat Ki Veerangnayein and Krantikari Mahilayein, Publications Division)*

*(Compiled by Vatica Chandra, Sub Editor)  
(E-mail: vchandra.iis2014@gmail.com)*

## I&B Minister launches Special Web Page on Festival of Independence

A special webpage on Festival of Independence, 2016 was launched by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The webpage, developed by Press Information Bureau that can be accessed from PIB's home page, pib.nic.in is designed as a platform to showcase all the events related to the Festival being celebrated throughout the country.

The webpage showcases hundreds of archival photographs, audio and video clips, write-ups and features on leaders and events related to the freedom struggle. The Social Media section of the Webpage will show live feeds from Twitter and Facebook. The Tweets from the PIB twitter handle having the hashtags #70YearsOfIndependence and #Aazadi70Saaland Facebook posts on the PIB's Home Page will be updated on the webpage in real-time.

Several organizations have contributed to the rich content being showcased on the webpage. These include All India Radio, Doordarshan, Photo Division, Films Division, Directorate of Public Relations of Ministry of Defence and Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity.





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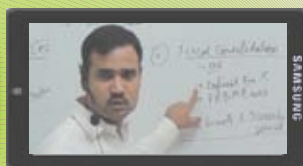
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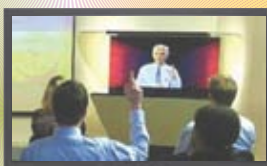
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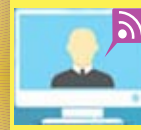


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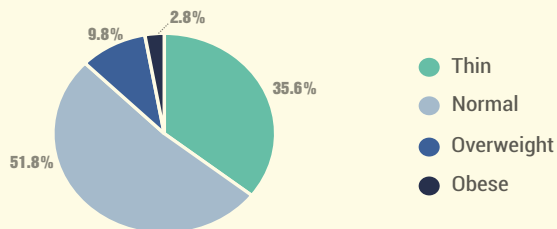
# INDIA HEALTH REPORT: NUTRITION 2015

## C. NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Maternal health and nutrition, as well as adolescent nutrition, have important consequences for intergenerational transmission of undernutrition. Data on Body Mass Index (BMI), anemia prevalence and height among women of reproductive age are presented in this section, as are data on adolescent BMI and anemia.

### C.1. WOMEN 15-49 YEARS OLD<sup>16</sup>

BMI<sup>c</sup> levels of women aged 15-49 years



**55.3%**

Women aged 15-49 years are anemic

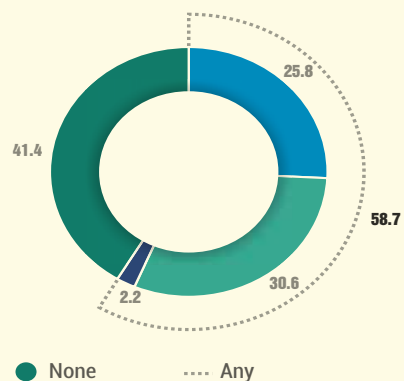
**1.8%**

Women aged 15-49 years are severely anemic

<sup>c</sup>Body Mass Index (BMI) is defined as the weight in kilograms by the square of the height in metres (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). It is a simple index of weight-for-height which is commonly used to classify underweight, overweight and obesity in adults. Range: BMI < 18.5 = total thin, BMI 18.5-24.9 = normal, BMI 25.0-29.9 = Overweight, BMI > 30.0 = Obese [per WHO Standards]

### C.2. PREGNANT WOMEN<sup>16</sup>

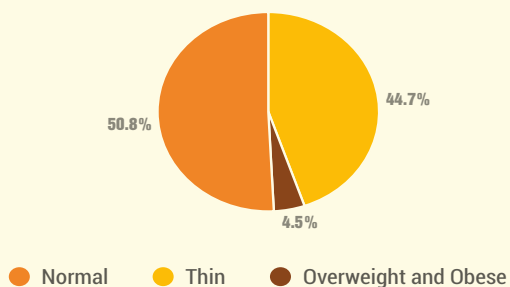
Anemia prevalence in pregnant women aged 15-49 years



● Mild ● Moderate ● Severe ● None --- Any

### C.3. ADOLESCENT GIRLS

BMI levels of adolescent girls aged 15-18 years<sup>17</sup>



**55.8%**

Adolescent girls aged 15-19 years are anemic<sup>16</sup>

**1.7%**

Adolescent girls aged 15-19 years are severely anemic<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Source : NFHS-3, 2006

<sup>17</sup> Source : RSoC, 2014

# From Sati to Mary Kom : A Fight for Right in Progress

*Geeta Luthra*



*Women Empowerment is a constant battle and it is not a battle which can progress without co-operation from the society as a whole. What is required is not only a change in the mind-set. Women represent half the world's population, and gender inequality exists in every nation. Though alternative media can act as a platform or bridge to surpass the barrier of essential communication and information: education is a fundamental and pre-requisite of all human beings. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform way below their true potential*

**A**s said by Margeret Thatcher:- “If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done ask a woman.”

A woman today expects herself—and rightly so—to be treated as an individual, a living human being, entitled to the same dignity and status as her male counterparts.

Although every charter of Human Rights states that men and women are born equal and the same has been quoted in Article 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution, the same is far from true. The deep-rooted belief that women deserve to be treated lesser than their male counterparts largely contributes to the rampant, continuous and unyielding violence against women extending to unfair or lack of access to education, health, employment, property and influence.

Dependency promotes compromise and is the main cause for a victim's inability to raise her voice against violence, disrespect and oppression.

The question of women empowerment can be answered in two words: Financial Independence.

The biggest tool and the final end to achieve Women Empowerment is to ensure financial independence for all women, both in cities and villages. Financial independence is further dependant largely on, firstly, education of the girl child and secondly, on providing equal opportunities at the workplace. The Government has been making a conscious effort to slowly realize the first leg of the War towards Women Empowerment by progressive legislative policies.

Judicial intervention coupled with legislative efforts is also a work in progress towards providing equal and comprehensive workplace opportunities and environment. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 and The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013 are some of the

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legislations enforced with the aim to empower women.

These proactive steps towards progressive legislative action have ensured that at least women have a fair chance to attempt becoming a part of the working population of this society, a chance towards being independent. It is not necessarily attaining equality from this deep-rooted bias of male domination prevalent in the society, but at least it gives them the means to distance themselves from the violence that stems from the sense of inequality.

“Crime is the outcome of a diseased mind and jails must have an environment of hospital for treatment and cure- An eye for an eye would turn the whole world blind” - Mahatma Gandhi.

The offence of rape is a sexual violation of a woman’s dignity and body and is yet another manifestation of man’s attempt to abuse his position of dominance. It is in this context that the Indian Parliament has enacted far reaching amendments in this field.

Envisaged by the crime against women in India the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed in 2013. It is an Indian legislation passed by the Lok Sabha on 19 March 2013, and by the Rajya Sabha on 21 March 2013, which provides for amendment of Indian Penal Code 1860, Indian Evidence Act 1872, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 on laws relating to sexual offences.

In 1983, an amendment was made and S. 376(2) i.e. Custodial rape, S. 376(A) i.e. marital rape and S. 376(B to D) i.e. Sexual Intercourse not amounting to rape were added to the Indian Penal Code.

### Judicial Intervention

There was a time when the Indian judiciary failed to see eye to eye with the facts of an open and shut case of rape:- In Mohd. Habib Vs State, 1989 CriLJ 137, the Delhi High Court

allowed a rapist to go scot-free merely because there were no marks of injury on his penis- which the High Court presumed was an indication of no resistance. The most important facts such as the age of the victim (being seven years) and that she had suffered a ruptured hymen and the bite marks on her body were not considered by the High Court. Even the eye- witnesses, who witnessed this ghastly act, could not sway the High Court’s judgment, so deep-rooted was the legal position treating a victim as an accomplice.

Another ghastly yet classic judicial pronouncement often quoted with dismay, mirroring the prejudiced mindset of the society when it came to rape cases and other crimes against women is the case of *State Of Rajasthan And Ors. versus Smt. Bhanwari Devi* wherein a judge remarked that the victim could not have been raped since she was a dalit while the accused hailed from an upper caste- who would not stoop to sexual relations with a dalit.

**The critical factor in sexual harassment is the un-welcomeness of the behavior. Thereby making the impact of such actions on the recipient more relevant rather than intent of the perpetrator- which is to be considered.**

From a time as dark as the Bhanwari Devi Case, with the changing times and development largely due to western influence and development, the Indian judiciary slowly moved towards a more pragmatic era in a series of judgments including *Bharwada Bhoginbhai Hirjibhai Vs State of Gujarat AIR 1983 SC 753* wherein an attempt was made to categorize and define crimes against women.

In another striking act of judicial activism, the Supreme Court decided the case of *Vishaka and others Vs State Of Rajasthan(JT 1997 (7) SC 384)*. The judgment was delivered

by J.S.Verma. CJ, on behalf of Sujata Manohar and B.N. Kirpal, JJ., in a writ petition entitled ‘Vishaka’ filed by a Non Governmental organization working for gender equality by way of Public Interest Litigation seeking enforcement of fundamental rights of working women under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. It was in 1997 in *Vishaka Vs. State of Rajasthan and others (JT 1997 (7) SC 384)*, that for the first time sexual harassment had been explicitly- legally defined as an unwelcome sexual gesture or behavior whether directly or indirectly as:-

1. Sexually colored remarks;
2. Physical contact and advances;
3. Showing pornography;
4. A demand or request for sexual favors;
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal/non-verbal conduct being sexual in nature.

It was in this landmark case that the sexual harassment was identified as a separate illegal behavior. The critical factor in sexual harassment is the un-welcomeness of the behavior. Thereby making the impact of such actions on the recipient more relevant rather than intent of the perpetrator- which is to be considered.

But, women were not yet empowered.

It took a *Nirbhaya (State Vs Ram Singh and Ors, 2013)* to break our false pretences of being a society moving towards a time where women were not mere objects existing for male gratification. Nirbhaya shook our sense of existence. A crime so cruel, for a reason which was nothing less than a slap on every citizen that believed in equality for their mothers, their wife, their sisters and their daughters. The perpetrators of this crime believed the victim is asking to be raped if she is outside her house after 9 pm. Nirbhaya was not just a crime of passion, it was a crime against both men and women who believed in change, it was an iron-rod that hit the



Government spiraling its machinery into realizing the lacunae that existed in laws protecting women and their rights.

This case resulted in a significant impact on the manner in which investigations were conducted by the Police. The police, for the very first time, used scientific means of investigation like DNA sampling, odontology test, Palm prints, which resulted in an investigation that was more advanced and comprehensive thereby more conclusive.

Section 166A was added that provided for:

- 1) DNA evidence being used to identify the sex offenders and to bring home the conviction;
- 2) The bus, in which the offence had taken place, had been washed after the incident to wipe out evidence that could nail the accused. However, police tore the flooring of the bus to find samples of blood, semen, hair, etc that helped massively during the trial.

Besides DNA samples-generally used as evidence in rape cases-the police got the “*odontology test*” of the accused. An odontology test is a study of the structure, development, and abnormalities of the teeth. The test was done to match the bite marks on the victim’s face with that of the accused’s teeth and the dimensions were compared to ascertain the perpetrators.

- 3) Palm prints of the accused were also taken amongst other scientific tools that were employed in the investigation. Fortunately, the CCTV cameras of the hotels facing the road also captured clips of the bus while crossing the stretch of the road where the bus moved where there was hardly any physical movement at that time of the night.

In order to address the practice of sex selection, the Indian government

introduced the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act in 1994 later amended to Pre-Conception Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition Of Sex Selection) Amendment Act, 2003 which limits the use of prenatal diagnosis to a list of selected congenital conditions and prohibits using these techniques for sex determination of the foetus. These regulations, however, have not been strictly enforced. The basic purpose of the Act is three-fold, with a focus on averting further decline in the sex ratio:

- Regulation of Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques only for legitimate uses as prescribed under the Act.
- Complete ban on misuse of pre-conception diagnostic techniques(PCDT) and pre-natal diagnostic techniques (PNDT) for sex selection / determination.

Absolute prohibition of selection of sex of the foetus, both before and after conception, except for detecting sex-linked diseases.

Taking cognizance of the link between pre-natal sex determination tests and the declining sex ratio among children, the Supreme Court, in 2002, came down heavily on the Central and State governments for having failed to implement the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.

### **Justice Verma Committee Report and Its Impact:**

Here is a list of the 10 key recommendations put forward by the Justice Verma Committee in its 630-page report:

#### **1. Make voyeurism, stalking and intentional touching an offence**

Make voyeurism an offence punishable by a maximum jail term of three years - Make stalking an offence punishable by a maximum jail term of three years - Intentional touching, using obscene language or gestures should be treated as a sexual assault offence.

## **2. Amend Rape Laws**

Rape of a minor should carry a minimum jail term of 10 years - Gang rape should be defined in the Indian Penal Code and be punishable by at least 20 years imprisonment - Death caused by rape should carry a minimum penalty of 20 years in jail - Make marital rape a criminal offence.

## **3. Review Security Laws in Conflict Zones**

Due to the number of reports of alleged sexual offences committed by the armed forces in India’s conflict areas such as Kashmir and the North East, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) - a controversial law that gives sweeping powers to and often confers immunity on security forces - must be reviewed - Security forces must be brought under the purview of ordinary criminal law rather than under army law - Special commissioners for women’s security must be deployed in all areas of conflict. Such commissioners will have powers to monitor and take action in all cases of sexual violence against women by armed personnel - Introduce “Breach of command responsibility” - making a senior officer of security forces or police liable to a jail term of at least seven years if his/her subordinate commits rape.

## **4. Monitor Illegal, Patriarchal village councils**

Put in place measures to monitor illegal village councils known as “Khap Panchayats” that sanction so-called “honour killings” and impose oppressive diktats such as banning girls and women from using mobile phones, wearing western clothes or venturing out unaccompanied

## **5. Review Medical Examination of Rape Victims**

Put in place medico-legal guidelines on how to perform a medical examination of a victim of sexual assault - Scrap the so-called “two-finger” test - an outdated practice that examines the laxity of the vagina

to determine whether the victim is “habituated to sex”

## 6. Police Reforms

Institute a Police Complaints Authority at district level to look into complaints against police officers who do not register complaints of gender crimes. Police who fail to register complaints or abort an investigation should be punished. This will provide more police accountability, said the commission - All police stations should have CCTV to ensure proper procedures are being followed in handling, recording and filing complaints - Provide appropriate technical equipment and training to police to ensure the highest standards of investigation of forensic evidence for sexual assault crimes - Separate police investigating gender crimes from law and order police to ensure speedier investigation, better expertise and improved rapport with the public - Increase the number of female police on patrol and on duty in police stations so that women feel comfortable filing sexual assault complaints

## 7. Electoral Reforms

Lawmakers who have been charged in a court of law with serious offences such as sexual offences or dowry crimes should be disqualified from contesting elections - Sitting parliamentarians with criminal cases against them, including those of rape and other types of sexual assault, should voluntarily vacate their seats - There should be a code of conduct for political parties, instituting transparency in receiving donations and declaring whether parties had sanctioned people to run for elections who have criminal records

## 8. Gender Sensitisation through Education

The formal curriculum in Indian schools must be drastically revamped and sex education must be made an integral part of the curriculum.

## 9. Bill of Rights

India should institute a “Bill of Rights” for women, along the lines of

similar bills in South Africa and New Zealand.

The bill would set out the rights guaranteed to women, which would include the right to life, security, bodily integrity, democratic and civil rights and equality.

## 10. Human Trafficking

Define the offence of trafficking in the Indian Penal Code - Trafficking should be punishable with a jail term of no less than seven years and may extend to life imprisonment - Employing a trafficked person, for example as a domestic servant, should carry a jail term of no less than three years.

### Marital Rape

Rape is crime against society and independent of the relation that exists between the criminal and the victim. Society cannot justify a crime if the same is done behind closed doors between a wife and a husband. A crime

**Rape is crime against society and independent of the relation that exists between the criminal and the victim. Society cannot justify a crime if the same is done behind closed doors between a wife and a husband. A crime is a crime and if the wife chooses to bear the shame and pain under duress and pressure of her family, it does not remove the criminality of the act.**

is a crime and if the wife chooses to bear the shame and pain under streets and pressure of her family, it does not remove the criminality of the act.

Women Empowerment is easier said than done. Mere realization or mere acceptance of forcing oneself for physical gratification onto the other spouse is a not a criminal offence in India though there has been much debate on the issue. However, the same is civil misdemeanor under the Protection of Women in Domestic Violence Act to curb the inhuman

atrocities faced by women. This progressive step under the protection of Women under Domestic Violence Act helps you create awareness and may also curb this malpractice and provide women with a physical sense of comfort and confidence that the wife is not just a tool to satisfy the physical needs/ physical aspects of married life, by force and threat, there shall always be a consent, willingness to consummate from both the spouses. It tells the wife that she has a choice. Marital Rape refers to unwanted intercourse by a man with his wife obtained by force, threat of force, or physical violence, or when she is unable to give consent. Marital rape could be by the use of force only, a battering rape or a sadistic/obsessive rape. It is a non-consensual act of violent perversion by a husband against the wife where she is physically and sexually abused. In the present day, studies indicate that between 10 per cent to 14 per cent of married women are raped by their husbands; the incidents of marital rape soars to 1/3rd to 1/2 among clinical samples of battered women. Sexual assault by one’s spouse accounts for approximately 25 per cent of rapes committed. Women who became prime targets for marital rape are those who attempt to flee.

### Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act:

*“Controllers, abusers and manipulative people don’t question themselves. They don’t ask themselves if the problem is them. They always say the problem is someone else.”*

It is easier to fight with an unknown enemy, than fighting with a known friend. The struggle a woman faces at her matrimonial house is not unknown. It is not just mental trauma that a woman goes through, but physical and emotional trauma as well. The struggle of Kiranjit Ahluwalia(1989)in the case of Regina V/s. Kiranjit Ahluwalia(1993) 96 Cr. Appl R. 133 who burnt her husband to death in response to ten years of physical, psychological and sexual

abuse, fictionalized in the movie “Provoked” has raised awareness of domestic violence and changed the definition of the word provocation in cases of battered women. The most significant change brought about by the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act was that it provided even women who were in a so called live-in relationship to be entitled to maintenance, compensation, protection, right of residence and other rights similar to a married woman.

The Act came into force in October, 2006. It was being carved of common law principles and there was no statutory protection to keep ethos of India in mind. This legislation was carved out of common law principles. Prior to its enactment, there was no statutory protection providing protection to women in the matrimonial home. The act is a single window act to empower women who may be in terms of physical, verbal, sexual or economic abuse. The enactment also protects women who are living in a relationship even though they are not married, to their live in partner. In two judgements Indra Sarma vs V.K.V. Sarma on 26 November, 2013 2013 STPL(Web) 944 SC, and D. Velusamy v. D. Patchaiammal (2010) 10 SCC 469.

This concept has been explained and the protection has been given to women who are living in a relationship akin to marriage as distinguished from a concubine.

The definition of matrimonial home was too loosely defined in the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in Sec 17 of Domestic Violence Act where even a temporary residence/visit could have been interpreted to include matrimonial home. The concept has been narrowed down and Delhi High Court in three landmark judgments of which I was the Counsel namely *Shumita Didi Sandhu (2007) 96 DRJ 697*, *Evenet V. Kavita Choudhary (2012) 130 DRJ 83 (Del)* and *Barun Nahar Vs. Parul Nahar 2013 (2) AD (Delhi) 517*.

*“People were created to be loved. Things were created to be used. The reason why the world is in chaos is because things are being loved and people are being used.”*

### **Trafficking in Women and Girl Child**

Women these days are being bought and being sold, like household commodities. There is no limit to satisfy a man’s physical need. India is also a destination for women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Nepali children are also trafficked to India for forced labor in circus shows. Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation. Indian migrants who migrate willingly every year to the Middle East and Europe for work as domestic servants and low-skilled laborers may also end up part of the human-trafficking industry.

**The law does not refer to the practice of selling one’s own sexual service as “prostitution”. So the act, as of now, does not criminalize prostitution per se, but it intends to punish acts by third parties facilitating prostitution like brothel keeping, living off earnings and procuring.**

Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labor. Trafficking in human beings has been prevalent in India for a long time in the form of prostitution and selling and purchasing of human beings.

Almost 80 per cent of all worldwide trafficking is for sexual exploitation, with an estimated 1.2 million children being bought and sold into sexual slavery every year, and India is the poisonous hub, for Asia and, some say, the world.

The law does not refer to the practice of selling one’s own sexual service as “prostitution”. So the

act, as of now, does not criminalize prostitution per se, but it intends to punish acts by third parties facilitating prostitution like brothel keeping, living off earnings and procuring.

The government has taken active steps for amendment of laws to curb this growing menace. Section 370 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been substituted with new more stringent provisions being:-, 370 and 370A post the recent amendment in the Criminal Law in 2013, which deals with trafficking of person for exploitation. If a person (a) recruits, (b) transports, (c) harbors, (d) transfers, or (e) receives, a person, by using threats, or force, or coercion, or abduction, or fraud, or deception, or by abuse of power, or inducement for exploitation including prostitution, slavery, forced organ removal, etc. will be punished with imprisonment ranging from at least 7 years to imprisonment for the remainder of that person’s natural life depending on the number or category of persons trafficked. Employment of a trafficked person will attract penal provision as well.

### **Amendments in Succession Laws**

Prior to Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, according to Section 6 of the HSA, in an HUF, the share in the coparcenary property of a Hindu male dying intestate used to devolve upon his sons (also known as coparceners) only and not upon his daughters. On 9 September 2005, Section 6 of the HSA was amended by the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 which removed this discrimination by giving equal rights to daughters in the Hindu Mitakshara coparcenary property as that to a son. Pursuant to the said amendment, a daughter of a coparcener (i.e., her father) shall, by birth, (i) become a coparcener in the same manner as a son, (ii) be entitled to the coparcenary property in the same manner as a son, (iii) be subject to the same liabilities in respect of the coparcenary property as that of a son, and (iv) be responsible to discharge the debts of her father, grandfather or



great-grand father contracted by them after the commencement of the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, in the same manner as a son.

The status of women is altered radically by Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, whereby daughters whether married or unmarried are coparcener and entitled to a share in the joint family properties. Wife and daughter can also ask for partition of her share. The amendment applies to agricultural property also. Amendment Act applies as from 9-9-2005. However, transactions such as partition which is by a deed of partition duly registered or decree of Court prior to 20-12-2004, will not be affected by the amendment.

### Laws Governing Muslim Women

The case of *Mohd. Ahmed Khan versus Shah Bano Begum and Ors.* (1985 SCR (3) 844) 1985 AIR 945 resulted as a milestone in the Muslim women's search for justice and the beginning of the political battle over personal law. A 60-year-old woman went to court asking maintenance from her husband who had divorced her. The court ruled in her favour. Shah Bano was entitled to maintenance from her ex-husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (with an upper limit of Rs. 500 a month) like any other Indian woman. The judgment was not the first granting a divorced Muslim woman maintenance under Section 125. But a voluble orthodoxy deemed the verdict an attack on Islam.

Citing a slew of rulings in States such as Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, wherein courts have awarded sums as maintenance, and 'reasonable and fair provisions' in the form of a one-time lump sum payment that Muslim women have never received before. The 2001 ruling of the full constitutional bench of the Supreme Court in the *Daniel Latifi* case, in effect, gave Muslim women a right to maintenance even after divorce under section 125Cr.P.C by narrowing and interpreting a

retrograde amendment that sought to restrict the right of Muslim women to maintenance by the enactment of the Muslim women's Right to Maintenance in Divorce Act. Although some of the provisions giving maintenance to women like Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 and Section 125 of Cr.P.C had no provision on interim maintenance, the same has been read into the enactments to give succor to women for grant of interim maintenance pending the final adjudication of the cases.

The several enactments in a country where there are different personal laws of different religions with regards to maintenance, property rights, divorce rights, and marriage custody of children has brought in a growing demand for a uniform civil code. Also

**It is necessary and pertinent that we distance the tag of religion from the rights of women, when it comes to enactment of laws. It is our responsibility as a more developed and progressive society to take up the cause of the oppressed and ensure that Muslim women are not left behind in this fight against bias because of our inability to question religious practices.**

the Supreme Court in *Smt. Sarla Mudgal, President vs Union Of India & Ors on 10 May, 1995*, 1995 AIR 1531, 1995 SCC (3) 635 case also voice this concern. The legal merits for the desirability of a Uniform or Common Civil Code for every Indian, irrespective of his or her religious identity, are unquestionable. In fact, it is one of the directives to government that is enshrined in the Constitution of India (Article 44). And this "directive" does not come in conflict with Article 25 of the Constitution of India that guarantees the freedom of religion, because Clause 2 of this Article separates religion from secular laws that removes some regressive religious

practices. It clearly states that freedom of religion shall not limit the state from making any law "providing for social welfare and reform." And then we have Article 14 of the Constitution, under which every Indian has equal rights; no one under this doctrine of equality can be discriminated in the name of background, caste and creed.

However, the progression of laws in India, as far as empowerment of Muslim Women are concerned, is almost stagnant if we compare it to the global rate that exists. It is necessary and pertinent that we distance the tag of religion from the rights of women, when it comes to enactment of laws. It is our responsibility as a more developed and progressive society to take up the cause of the oppressed and ensure that Muslim women are not left behind in this fight against bias because of our inability to question religious practices.

Uniform civil code is the proposal to replace the personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community in India with a common set governing every citizen. These laws are distinguished from public law and cover marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance.

### Marriage Law's (Amendment) Bill 2010

"*Beti beti hoti hai, bahu kabhi beti nahi ban sakti.*" Marriage is a sacred relation between a husband and wife, and both are equally entitled for the benefits attained thereof. Separation of spouses doesn't leave all the benefits of property to the husband; the wife is equally entitled for her share in the property.

A bill called "Marriage Law's (Amendment) Bill 2010" was passed by the cabinet, which is pending for discussion in Rajya Sabha and some major changes in the women rights are suggested, on how the properties would be divided after divorce. As per "**The Divorce Law, 2012**", *Wife's share in property would be 50 per cent in all her husband's residential*

properties, no matter what and in other properties, her share will be decided as per the court decision.“

One of the major issues with the amendment is as follows:-

This enactment is yet to see the light of day and in fact, an unfortunate feature is, since independence, the representation of women in parliament in terms of percentage had been going down abysmally. A small beacon of light is that in the Panchayat elections, such reservations have been introduced. It is a small yet significant step towards a greater representation of women in decision making positions.

### Recognition of “Irretrievable Breakdown of Marriage”.

In the case of *Chandralekha Trivedi v. S.P. Trivedi (1993) DMC 271 SC, JT 1993 (4) SC 644*, the Supreme Court has not used the term irretrievable breakdown of marriage but has defined that the marriage is ‘dead’. Husband initiated a divorce proceeding on the ground of cruelty and also wife’s intimacy with young boys, after the nine years of marriage. Wife also made similar allegations against the husband. Their only daughter was already married when High Court granted a divorce decree. On appeal, Supreme Court felt that it would be futile to decide the allegations and counter-allegations as the marriage has become dead.

### Section 13 C, D, E of the Marriage Amendment Act 2010 does not violate Article 14, 15 21 and 25 of Indian Constitution.

“The law cannot compel a woman, who is emotionally and mentally unable to cope with a marriage, to remain bound in wedlock to her spouse even when it is established that the marriage is dead. The compulsion upon wife to obtain the consent of the husband to maintain and prosecute a petition of divorce by mutual consent is violative of the principles of gender justice and thereby of the Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution,” It has been observed that the parties who have filed petition for mutual consent suffer in case one of the parties abstains him or herself from court proceedings and keeps the divorce proceedings inconclusive.

### Women’s Reservation Bill [The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008

The 18 year-journey of the Women’s Reservation Bill was marked by high drama and hit roadblocks in each of its outings in Parliament before the historic measure cleared the first legislative hurdle in 2010. Commonly known as the Women’s Reservation Bill, it seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. It also provides that one third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups. Similar Bills have been introduced thrice before in the late 90’s but lapsed with the dissolution of their respective Lok Sabha’s.

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill,

2008 seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament.

- One third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies.
- Reserved seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the state or union territory.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act.

Women Empowerment is a constant battle and it is not a battle which can progress without co-operation from the society as a whole. What is required is not only a change in the mind-set. Women represent half the world’s population, and gender inequality exists in every nation. Though alternative media can act as a platform or bridge to surpass the barrier of essential communication and information: education is a fundamental and pre-requisite of all human beings. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform way below their true potential. □

(E-mail: [geetaluthra@gmail.com](mailto:geetaluthra@gmail.com))

#### Corrigendum

In the article by Dr S. Banerjee (Yojana August 2016) titled 'Perception Management: A Big Challenge in the Growth of Nuclear Power', the text matter on pg 30 under the sub heading 'Fear of Radiation' should read as follows:

Fear of Radiation:

Ionizing radiation is present on this planet and all living beings including human population are constantly being exposed to the background ionizing radiation. Presence of radio nuclides in the earth’s crust and cosmic radiation from space contribute to the background radiation, which varies from place to place and depends on the food and water we consume and the air we breathe. The world wide average background radiation dose is 2400 micro-Sv per year. Some of the high background radiation areas in the world are Yauziang in China (3500-5400 micro-Sv/year, population 100,000), Gurapari in Brazil (3000-35000 micro-Sv/year, population 70, 000), parts of Kolam district in Kerala (1000-45000 micro-Sv/year, population 400,000 ) and Ramsar, Iran (10000-260,000 μSv/year, population 2000). In some places excessive background radiation is due to radioactive radon-222 gas with half life of 3.8 days which forms from the decay of radium-226. In poorly ventilated dwellings in Kerala the background radiation can be as high as 50000 micro-Sv per year).

Also, the caption in Figs 1 & 7 should read as follows:

Fig. 1. Background radiation levels at different IERMON stations. Radiations levels at sites with nuclear facilities and those without any nuclear activities are indicated by green and red bars respectively. Fig. 7. Comparison of installed capacity in MWe (left vertical axis) and electricity produced in million units (right vertical axis) for renewable and nuclear power

The author’s intro should read as follows:

The author is Homi Bhabha Chair Professor at Bhabha Atomic reserch Centre (BARC), Mumbai; Chancellor, Central University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Chancellor, Homi Bhabha National Institute, Mumbai, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Kharagpur.

The errors are regretted.

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## Development Roadmap

### MAA Programme to Promote Breast feeding

MAA (Mothers Absolute Affection), a flagship programme to ensure adequate awareness is generated among masses, especially mothers, on the benefits of breast feeding was launched recently.

“MAA- Mother’s Absolute Affection” is a nationwide programme launched in an attempt to bring undiluted focus on promotion of breast feeding and provision of counselling services for supporting breast feeding through health systems. The programme has been named ‘MAA’ to signify the support a lactating mother requires from family members and at health facilities to breast feed successfully. The chief components of the MAA Programme are community awareness generation, strengthening inter personal communication through ASHA, skilled support for breast feeding at Delivery points in Public health facilities, and Monitoring and Award/recognition.

### Rs 42 cr provided and 18215 benefited under the Ujjawala Scheme during 2013-16

The Ujjawala scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development has specific components for Prevention of Trafficking and for Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-integration and Repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. The Ministry has released a total amount of ₹42 Crores to States/UTs during 2013-16 under the scheme and nearly 18,215 have benefited over the same period. During 2016-17 (upto 30.06.2016), an amount of Rs 143.07 lakh has been released to States/UTs.

The measures taken by the Government under the Ujjawala scheme to create awareness about trafficking of women and children include formation and functioning of Community Vigilance Groups, Social Mobilization & involvement of local communities, generate public discourse through Workshops/Seminars, Awareness through Mass Media And Development and Printing of Awareness Generation material such as Pamphlets, Leaflets and Posters.

### More than Rs. 800 Cr released and nearly 14.3 lakh benefited under IGMSY during the Period 2013-16

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing IGMSY, a centrally sponsored Conditional Maternity Benefit (CMB) scheme, under which, the maternity benefits of Rs.6,000/- per beneficiary is provided in two equal installments to pregnant and lactating mothers of 19 years and above, for first two live births, subject to fulfilment of certain conditions relating to maternal and child health. IGMSY aims to contribute better enabling environment to support the health and nutrition needs of pregnant and lactating women by providing cash incentives in their bank/post office accounts between the second trimester of pregnancy till the child attains the age of six months.

A total amount of Rs. 808 Crores has been released by the Ministry to States/UTs during 2013-16 and around 14,32,411 number of people have benefited under the scheme during the same period. The IGMSY is being implemented in 53 selected districts across the country.

The Ministry has revised the entitlement of the maternity benefit under IGMSY from Rs.4,000/- to Rs.6,000/- per beneficiary with effect from 5th July, 2013 in accordance with the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. The budget provision for the current financial year of 2016-17 is Rs.400 crores.

### Government Schemes for Equal Opportunities and Good Working Conditions for Women

Government has enacted the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for same work or work of similar nature in the matter of employment and also prohibits any discrimination against women in recruitment or any condition of service. The Act is being enforced by the Central and State Governments in their respective spheres to ensure compliance of provisions of the Act. Officers of appropriate Government notified as inspectors make inspections and prosecute those found violating the provision of the Act. The Act extends to the whole of India.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 has been enacted to provide safe working environment at workplace for women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering the scheme of Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for working women away from their place of residence and Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for providing day care facilities to Children of Working Mothers.

Apart from these, provisions of Maternity leave under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, Child Care Leave and Paternity leave have been made for making employment policies more sensitive towards women employees.



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### KHANGCHENDZONGA NATIONAL PARK INDIA'S FIRST 'MIXED' SITE ON UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

**K**hangchendzonga National Park (KNP), Sikkim has been inscribed as India's first "Mixed World Heritage Site" on UNESCO World Heritage List, by fulfilling the nomination criteria under both natural and cultural heritage. The approval was granted at the 40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee .

The KNP exhibits one of the widest altitudinal ranges of any protected area worldwide. The Park has an extraordinary vertical sweep of over 7 kilometres (1,220m to 8,586m) within an area of only 178,400 ha and comprises a unique diversity of lowlands, steep-sided valleys and spectacular snow-clad mountains including the world's third highest peak, Mt. Khangchendzonga. Numerous lakes and glaciers, including the 26 km long Zemu Glacier, dot the barren high altitudes. The KNP lies within the Himalaya global biodiversity hotspot and displays an unsurpassed range of sub-tropical to alpine ecosystems. The Himalayas are narrowest here, resulting in extremely steep terrain, which magnifies the distinction between the various eco-zones. The KNP is located within a mountain range of global biodiversity conservation significance and covers 25 per cent of the State of Sikkim, acknowledged as one of India's most significant biodiversity concentrations. The KNP is home to a significant number of endemic, rare and threatened plant and animal species and has the highest number of plant and mammal species recorded in the Central/High Asian Mountains, except compared to the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas, in China; and also has a high number of bird species.



The cultural significance of KNP is portrayed by three main different facets: firstly, the notion of beyul or hidden sacred land, which extends to all of Sikkim, but has its heart in the territory of Khangchendzonga National Park, is important in Tibetan Buddhism, not only intrinsic to Sikkim, but in the neighbouring countries and beyond – that is to say, KNP is home to a sacred site of one of the world's leading religious traditions; secondly, the multi-layered sacred landscape of Khangchendzonga and the cultural and religious relevance of the hidden land (beyul in Tibetan Buddhism and Mayel Lyang, in Lepcha tradition) is specific to Sikkim and is a unique example of co-existence and exchange between different religious traditions and people; and thirdly, the indigenous religious and cultural practices of the Lepcha with regard to the ecology and the specific properties of local plants, which stand as an outstanding example of traditional knowledge and environmental preservation.

This is also the first nomination dossier in which the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on 'World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region' at Wildlife Institute of India had provided professional inputs. For the first time both IUCN and ICOMOS had given a clear and positive recommendation for inscription of a Natural/ Mixed Site from India.

#### YOJANA WEB- EXCLUSIVES

Yojana publishes articles on various topics in its 'Web-Exclusives' column for the benefit of its readers on the website of Yojana : [www.yojana.gov.in](http://www.yojana.gov.in). Announcements about the articles under the Web-Exclusives section are carried in the Yojana magazine of the month.

We are carrying the following articles under the Web-Exclusives section of Yojana for September 2016.

- E-Governance: A Tool for Curbing Corruption in Higher Education System in India - Dr. Prateek Bhanti
- Political Empowerment of Women And Panchayati Raj - P. Srivatsa

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## Growing Violence Against Women

*Ranjana Kumari*



*Feminism and women empowerment are misunderstood as ‘women’s issues’, when in fact, these are the actually the issues of men. The problem of gender inequality in India is the problem of male culture which affects women and girls*

**A**s this article is being written, we are in the month August 2016. The month of July had been particularly harrowing due to high instances of rapes – ganged up and otherwise. Most of the women’s violations are committed by people known to the victim, barring gang rapes. Although, the media reported crimes with the attempt at being as objective as possible, it has been a frenzy. There has been a pattern in violation of human rights and women’s bodies. Crimes against the Dalits and minorities in the public spaces and crimes against women in general through social media, has been rampant. Some violations go back to a history of several decades and some have arrived recently. Sadly, there are only additions, not mitigations.

Justice delayed is justice denied. The effectiveness of law is missing because of lukewarm law enforcement, dehumanized proceedings of crime against women and desensitized behavior of stakeholders who play a crucial role when victims approach them to seek justice. The police and state level institutions that are

responsible to maintain law and order; Need to be more pro-active. The government, politicians and legal stakeholders also need to prioritize gender issues and crimes committed in its purview. The society and the legal enforcement may have mental block that appears to create a tendency in them to hold a woman responsible for the crime that has happened against her.

In the light of recent crimes against women, Rohtak district in Haryana has had repeated reportage of rape followed by brutal murders. It was the year 2015 when a mentally challenged woman was raped until she fell unconscious.. The rapists told the police, “We did not want to kill her. We just wanted to enjoy. We don’t know what happened to us. We were not in our senses. We were drunk and the madness went on.” This year, last month, Rohtak was again in the news for gang raping a Dalit girl. The rapists had committed the offence a second time to the same victim with the intention of ‘teaching her a lesson’ for not only reporting the first instance of rape to the police, but also refusing an out-of-court settlement for Rs. 50 lakh. The rapists were released on bail after being arrested for the first rape. They tracked down the girl and

The author is Director of Centre for Social Research as well as Chairperson of Women Power Connect. She has served as the Coordinator of the South Asia Network Against Trafficking (SANAT) in Persons and is a member of the Central Advisory Board on “Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Tests Act, 2001”, the Central Advisory Committee for Prevention of Trafficking in Women and Children and the National Mission for Empowerment of Women by the Prime Minister of India. Currently, she is a member of Global Safety Advisory Board of Facebook. She also has a number of publications to her credit.



raped her for the second time. In the same month of July, a 16 year old girl in Faridabad (Delhi), was raped by a man who had eve-teased her often, before abduction and rape. After committing the heinous act, the man photographed the girl and threatened to go viral with it on social media. In July again, Bulandshahr district in Uttar Pradesh reported gang rape of mother and daughter by a pack of 8 dacoits. Days later, Bareilly district in the same state, reported gang-rape of a 19 year old teacher. Apart from the instances of rapes, the activists have also been undertaking cases of violation in the space of social media, a space that has witnessed darker side of human psyche manifested through misogynist trolling.

As per the National Crime Records Bureau for the year 2014, Rajasthan

### Surakshit Nari, Sashakt Nari

**Panic Button and Global Positioning System** in Mobile phones Handset Rules 2016 notified; Easier to send out a distress signal and identify current location.

**181**-is the Universal Women Helpline Number which will be active 24\*7

**Himmat App**- to raise the SOS alert. The victim's /caller's location will be reported in real time at Police Control Room for instant help.

**2 Mahila Battalions** have been included in place of two male Battalions in CRPF sanctioned for 2015-16 and 2016-17 .

**Ladies special trains and Ladies compartments** to be escorted by security squads .

**Security Helpline182 and Twitter** account activated to provide assistance during train travel.

**CCTV Surveillance cameras** in trains to be installed. Amritsar-Delhi-Shaan-e-Punjab Express was the first train to install the surveillance cameras.

**Middle Bay** in trains reserved for women.

**Increased reservation quota** of two lower berths to four per coach in Sleeper Class for women and Senior citizens.

### Sakhi-One Stop Centre scheme

- This scheme will support women affected from violence.
- It will offer Medical aid, Police assistance, Legal Aid, Counselling and shelters.
- 14 centres are already functional and 183 more centres will be set up by 2017.
- These centres will be integrated and connected with 181 and other helplines

### 150 additional One Stop Centres

150 additional locations to cover more districts have been added on 31st May 2016, to the scheme of One Stop Centres to support women affected by violence, implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development . As on 30th June, 2016, 17 One Stop Centres are operational in Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Vijayawada City (Andhra Pradesh), Karnal (Haryana), Bhubaneshwar (Odisha), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Chandigarh, Puducherry, Bambolim (Goa), Udupi (Karnataka), Diu (Daman & Diu), Haridwar (Uttarakhand), Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Papumpare, (Arunachal Pradesh) Uttar Pradesh (Banda), Dimapur (Nagaland), Shillong (Meghalaya), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala).

The details of women assisted so far are as under:-

| Sl. No. | State/UTs      | No of Women assisted          | Report period                  |
|---------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.      | Chhattisgarh   | 317                           | July 2015 - March, 2016        |
| 2.      | Odisha         | 55                            | October, 2015 - December, 2015 |
| 3.      | Goa            | 42                            | February, 2016 - March, 2016   |
| 4.      | Andhra Pradesh | 151                           | January, 2016 - March, 2016    |
| 5.      | Chandigarh     | 16                            | October, 2015- December, 2015  |
| 6.      | Haryana        | 108                           | September, 2015-January, 2016  |
| 7.      | Meghalaya      | No cases have been registered | December, 2015                 |

Under the scheme, it has been envisaged to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid, psycho-social counselling etc. to the women affected by violence including sexual assault. The Budget Estimates (BE) for the scheme of One Stop Centre for the year 2016-17 is Rs. 75 crore.

(31,151) and Uttar Pradesh (38,467) had the highest incidences of reported crimes against women. This was followed by Maharashtra (26,893) and Madhya Pradesh (28,678). The lowest reported crime against women were North Eastern states (Nagaland – 67, Arunachal – 351, Mizoram – 258, Manipur - 337) where the literacy levels are higher and the family structures are matriarchal with regard to gender interactions.

The cultural genesis of crime against women is found in a family's value system. What reflects outside as patriarchy, is nursed within the family's core principles and a lineage of filial violence; especially against women. In families which raise patriarchal and misogynist men; women are taught to be submissive, meek and subservient. Whereas, these men are taught to be aggressive, to display ownership and sense of bullish entitlement towards livelihood choices, general decision-making and creating a stifling pecking order within the family where people are only respected as humans, basis the subjective discretion of the patriarchy which creates the hierarchy. The men in such families are taught that their masculinity is directly proportionate to their display of violence in thoughts and actions. When the father is violent towards the mother, the son will invariably be violent towards his wife. It would take exceptional self-education and initiatives for self-sensitization for the son to not emulate his father. There has been prevalence of a culture where parents boast of treating their daughters as they would treat the sons. This strain of thought has patriarchal roots because it implies that women are supposed to be discriminated against. Not doing so is a privilege that is extended towards women by the family. It annihilates the concept of celebrating the feminine. On the contrary, it breeds the machismo culture in mindsets of both the genders.

The time has long come for us to change the narrative. Feminism and women empowerment are misunderstood as 'women's issues', when in fact, these are the actually the issues of men. The problem of gender inequality in India is the problem of male culture which affects women and girls. The answer to the question, "Why are men so violent?" lies in the irresponsible handling of power equations. Patriarchy entails power over the other gender and society at large, without acting out from the stand point of responsibility and accountability. There is also a brute force in patriarchy that overpowers women and those men with lesser brute force. This brute force muscles its way into an environment where the meeker lot submits. The malaise of crimes against women and the attitude with which we handle the same, lies in decayed power dynamics between the genders. □

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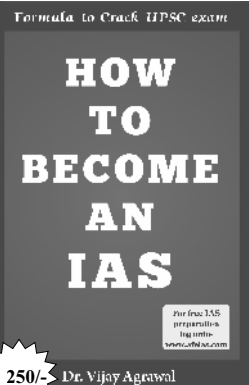
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YE-137/2016



## Gender Context of School Education: Progress and Challenges

*Shalender Sharma  
Shashiranjan Jha*



*Role of education in enhancing women empowerment can only be realized with strong efforts towards expanding equality of opportunities. National and State governments have initiated girls centric programmes to foster gender parity and uplift the status of women in the society*

**T**he idea of women empowerment assumes a key position in developmental discourses. The centrality of women empowerment in developmental discourses is closely linked with the pathways to equality of opportunities in the society. However, in practice, achieving women empowerment has remained more or less an elusive target. The evidences of women's marginalization are abundant, yet the policy intervention and measures to overcome processes of marginalization are flimsy. Fundamental duality of the development process is reflected in the neglect of women's participation in societal decision making and stereotyping them with the scriptures as idol. There is long standing history that reminds us of the fact that such duality is essentially a reflection of women being deprived of their rights and opportunities.

Gender and Marginality have to be understood in the wider context of social justice. While the economic system of a society defines the nature and pattern of marginalization, the process and the existence of marginality certainly goes beyond the organic structure of the economic system.

Marginality in the true sense needs to be verified with identity, dignity and contours of exclusion, which are embedded in the opportunities that shapes women's access to higher levels of education. This, eventually, leads to social separation for women in general and women belonging to socially disadvantaged groups in particular.

The subordination of women in the society and persistent stratification in education has resulted in bleating about gender inequality at policy level. There have been normative moves around uplifting the status of women in education by means of voices in favour of reservation or opening of special institutions for women. However, there has hardly been substantive effort that could actually engage with ideas related not just to participation, but also with identity, dignity and contours of exclusion. Marginality of women in education is effectively maintained, if not maximally.

There is a growing recognition of girls' education in policy circles in the country. For example, the Twelfth Five Year Plan recognized that promoting girl's education is a critical issue. It not only envisaged to enable girls to keep pace with boys, but also reiterated that the girls' education should be viewed

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from the perspective as spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986 which states that education should be a transformative force, build women's self-confidence and improve their position in society. However, during the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan Period, not much rigour has been observed. Interventions need to be so designed that the principle of gender equality in education is considered both a quality issue and an equity issue. Perhaps there is need to do that 'something extra' than only developing gender-sensitive curricula, pedagogical practices, teacher training and evaluation.

### Policy Fortitude Girls' Education

Traditionally, all societies have given preferences to males over females when it comes to educational opportunity, and disparities in educational attainment and literacy rates today reflect patterns which have been shaped by the social and education policies and practices of the past. As a result, virtually all countries face gender disparities of some sort. Given the strong correlation that exists between GDP and educational attainment, all countries have incentives to make the best possible use of all of their human resources<sup>1</sup>. In discussing education and gender, it is useful to distinguish between 'gender equity' and 'gender equality'<sup>2</sup>.

### National Policy on Education 1986

Historically, since independence, various education policies have

emphasised the equality in education. Particularly the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986/1992 laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities. Education should be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. It was envisaged that the policy would neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past through a well-conceived edge in favour of women. It would foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention, in elementary education will receive overriding

**“Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate a woman and you educate a whole civilisation”**

**Mahatma Gandhi**

priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets and effective monitoring. The policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies<sup>3</sup>. Following the policy directives of NPE, several State

and National education programmes like Basic Education Programme, BEP, OBB, DPEP, SSA and RMSA. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Act, 2009 (RTE Act), was a key milestone for elementary education in the country.

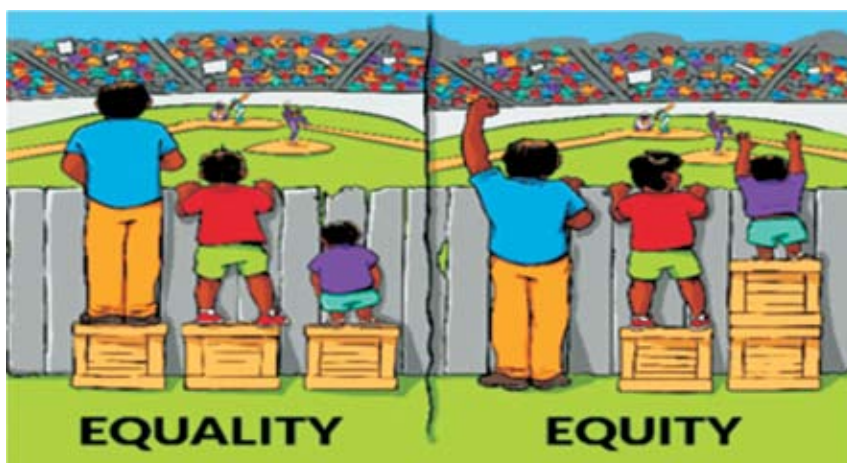
### Challenges as per New Education Policy 2016

The inputs for NEP 2016 recognizes that the relatively higher gender gaps in youth and adult literacy rates remain a principal challenge. India continues to be characterised by higher level of gender gap (8.2 percentage points) in youth literacy rate, with the youth literacy rates for male and female population (age 15-24) in 2011 being 90 per cent and 81.8 per cent respectively. India also continues to be the country with higher level of gender gap (19.5 percentage points) in adult literacy. It is clear that major efforts are needed to raise the literacy levels of girls and women<sup>4</sup>.

### Girls Participation in Education

In order to expedite the process of expansion of educational opportunities for females, Government of India has initiated several programmes including National Programme for Education of Girls in Elementary Level (NPEGEL), the Mahila Samakhya (MS); Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Most recently, Government of India included two major programmes SABLA and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao to the package.

SABLA is a centrally sponsored programme of Government of India initiated on April 1, 2011 under Ministry of Women and Child Development. The program would cover adolescent girls 11–18 years old under all ICDS projects in selected 200 districts in all states/UTs in the country. The basic objectives of the scheme are to enable self-development and empowerment of adolescent girls, improvement in their health and nutrition status, spread awareness about health, hygiene,



### New initiatives for Girls' Education by MHRD and next steps

- Swachh Vidyalaya – for providing separate toilets for boys and girls
- Bridging modules for girls who join KGBV
- Involvement of SMCs and parents for monitoring of KGBVs
- Convergence with other Government schemes
- Maintenance of student profile in KGBVs

nutrition, adolescent reproductive and sexual health, family and child care. The programme also aims at upgrading their home-based skills, life skills and vocational skills. The project will also include bringing back the out-of-school adolescent girls under the ambit of formal and non-formal education. The adolescent girls will also be guided about the existing public services, such as primary health centres, post offices, banks, police stations and others.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services meant for women. The scheme was launched with

an initial corpus of ₹100 crore (US\$15 million). The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was introduced in October, 2014 to address the issue of declining child sex ratio (CSR). This is implemented through a national campaign and focused multi-sector action in 100 selected districts with low CSR, covering all States and UTs. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

### Recent Achievements and Challenges

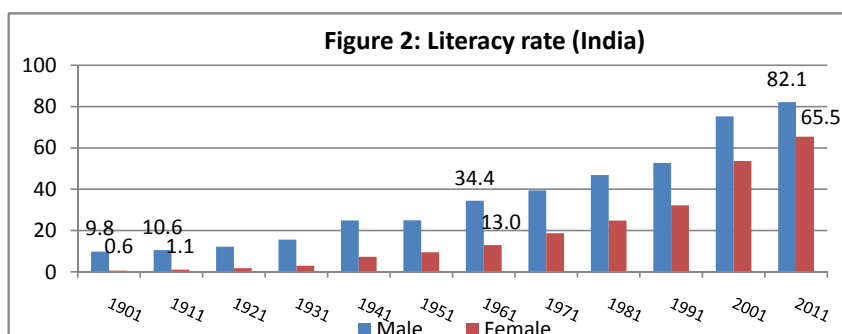
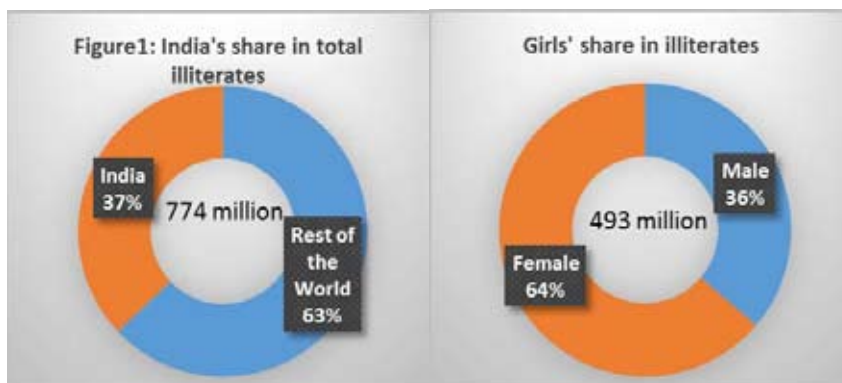
India is home to more than one-third illiterates (287 million<sup>5</sup>) of the 774 million illiterate adults worldwide. Out of total illiterates in the world, two-third are females. It is estimated that 50 per cent of illiterate are never enrolled and another 50 per cent are late entrants and early dropouts from the school.

There has been significant improvement in literacy rates both among males and females. A comparison between 1911 and 2011

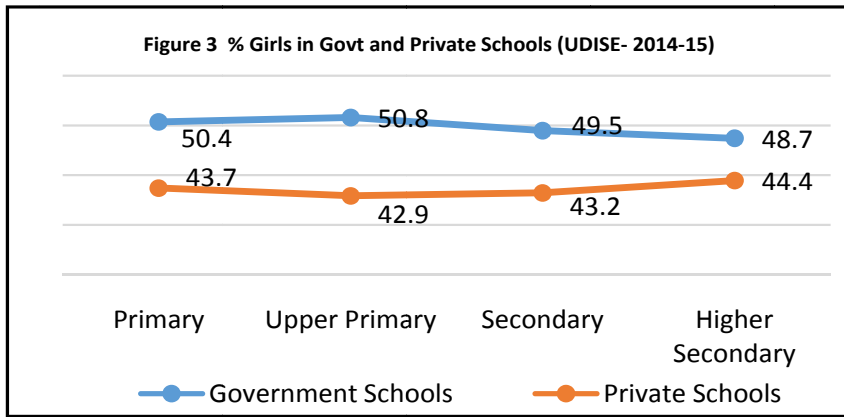
(a century) suggest that while Male Literacy Rates have improved from 10.1 in 1911 to 82.1 in 2011 (increase of 71.5 percentage points), Female Literacy Rates have improved from 1.1 in 1911 to 65.5 in 2011 (increase of 64.4 percentage points). In terms of difference between male and female literacy rate for the last century, the same has increased from 9.5 percentage points in 1911 to 16.6 percentage points in 2011. Data disaggregated by social category suggests that the female literacy rates are 56.5 per cent and 49.4 per cent for SCs and STs respectively which is lower than the overall female literacy rate (65.5 per cent). As per Census 2011, Kerala has the largest literacy rate in the country with overall literacy rate of 94 (Male 96.1; Female 92.1) which is followed by Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Goa and Tripura. On the parameter of literacy rate, among the top 10, there are 6 UTs and 4 States (Kerala, Mizoram, Goa and Tripura). The same 4 States top the chart among States for female literacy as well. On the other hand, Bihar has lowest female literacy rate (51.5) followed by Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Among the ten States with lowest female literacy rates are a mix of SC dominated (Bihar, Rajasthan, UP), ST dominated (MP, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh) and Muslim dominated State (J&K). Therefore, there is no peculiarity in the states with low literacy rates. Among the few positive signs, first is, during the past decade these State have made significant progress (mostly double digit) and secondly, India has added 217 million literates into the society during the last decade where females (110 million) outnumbered males (107 million).

### Out-of-School Girls

As per the recent study commissioned by MHRD<sup>6</sup> there are more than 6.01 million out of school children which is about 3 per cent of the total population. The percentage of out of school children was estimated







to be about 7 per cent in 2006 and 4.2 per cent in 2009 through the similar survey. The gender distribution of out of school children suggests that there are more out of school girls (3.23 per cent) than boys (2.77 per cent). Highest percentage of out of school girls are reported in the State of Rajasthan (7.5 per cent) Uttarakhand (5.2 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (4.6 per cent). On the other hand, there are States like Mizoram and Kerala which have lower percentage of out of school girls than boys. Higher proportion of the out-of-school girls are due to reasons of need for help in domestic work or to take care of siblings, as outlined in the report. The pattern of percentage of out-of-school girls is not very different in rural (3.36 per cent) and urban (2.86 per cent) areas.

### Percentage of Girls in Schools

Consequent to various national level programmes, the percentage of girls has increased substantially at all levels. Particularly during the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the percentage of girls at upper primary level increased substantially from 45.8 in 2005-06 to 48.2 per cent.

As per the UDISE 2014-15 data there is a stark difference in parentage of girls' enrolment in government and private schools. The difference can be noticed at all levels (Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary). However, the difference decreases as well move to higher levels of education. It is pertinent to note that

the percentage of girls at higher grades have increased substantially over the last decade. For example, percentage girls at class 8 levels have increased from 45 per cent in 2005-06 to 49 per cent in 2013-14.

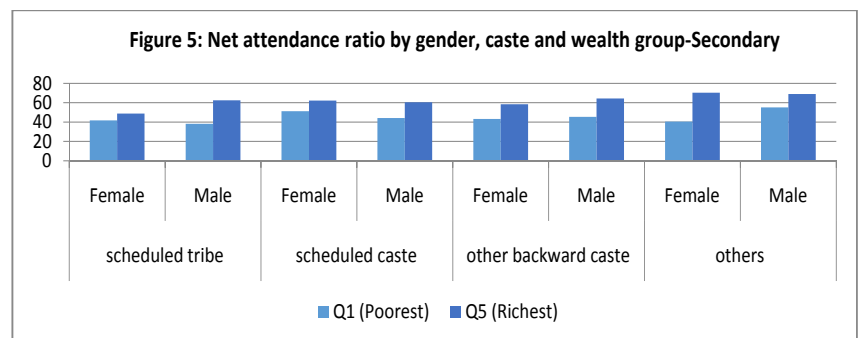
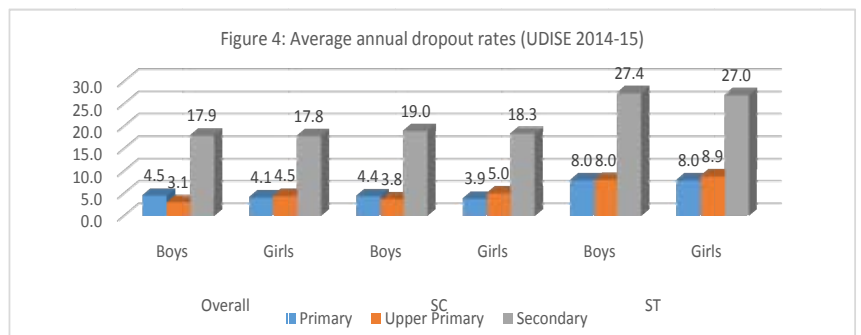
### Dropouts

Notwithstanding various programmes and measure taken to improve girls' participation in schools, the higher dropout rates are still cause for concern. Estimates from MHRD's 2014 report on out-of-school children (OOSC) suggest that out of total OOSC about 36.5 per cent male and 37.5 per

cent females are school drop-outs. As per the report, the top five reasons for girls remaining out of school includes: Poverty/Economic reason (23.9 per cent), Child is not interested in studies (17.5 per cent), Child to supplement Household income (11.6 per cent), Child suffers from some disability or poor health (10.8 per cent) and Needed to help in domestic work (8.7 per cent).

The average annual dropout rate calculated using the UDISE 2014-15 data suggests that there is not much deviation between boys' and girls' dropout rate at all levels. However, the overall dropout rate is found to be much higher at upper primary level (boys 3.1 per cent, girls 4.5 per cent). Probably, this is the level where the focus needs to be increased. This is the stage where school distances increase<sup>7</sup>, girls undergo biological changes and social access to schooling facility also needs to be ensured.

Figure 5 provides some details on the interplay between wealth and other key inequalities that persist, by showing NARs for these groups. Figure 5 shows that the 'other' caste group,



Source: Estimates based on 71<sup>st</sup> round unit level data

those not traditionally marginalised, are somewhat better off than the rest of the categories. However, what the figures show clearly is that the largest difference, no matter the social group or areas of residence, is by poverty status, with those in the poorest quintile always significantly worse off than those in the richest quintile. This message is further indicated in Table 1, through evidence that richest SC girls have a 20 percentage points higher net attendance ratio than to the poorest girls belonging the ‘others’ (more privileged) caste category.

Table 1 presents rates of completion of primary schooling

for those aged 12-25 years in the population in 2007 and 2014, by gender and wealth group. There has been significant improvement in the completion rates both at primary and upper primary level. The progress has been impressive for girls. The overall gender disparity in completion of primary schooling declined from 10 percentage point to 5 percentage point between 2007 and 2014. The decline has been observed across wealth groups. However, the wealth difference (Q5-Q1) in completion of primary has remained quite significant at primary level. The difference in completion is

much higher for females compared to males when it is compared between poorest and the richest category. The difference in completion of primary schooling between wealth groups for male was observed to be 18 points, whereas for females it was 27 points in 2014.

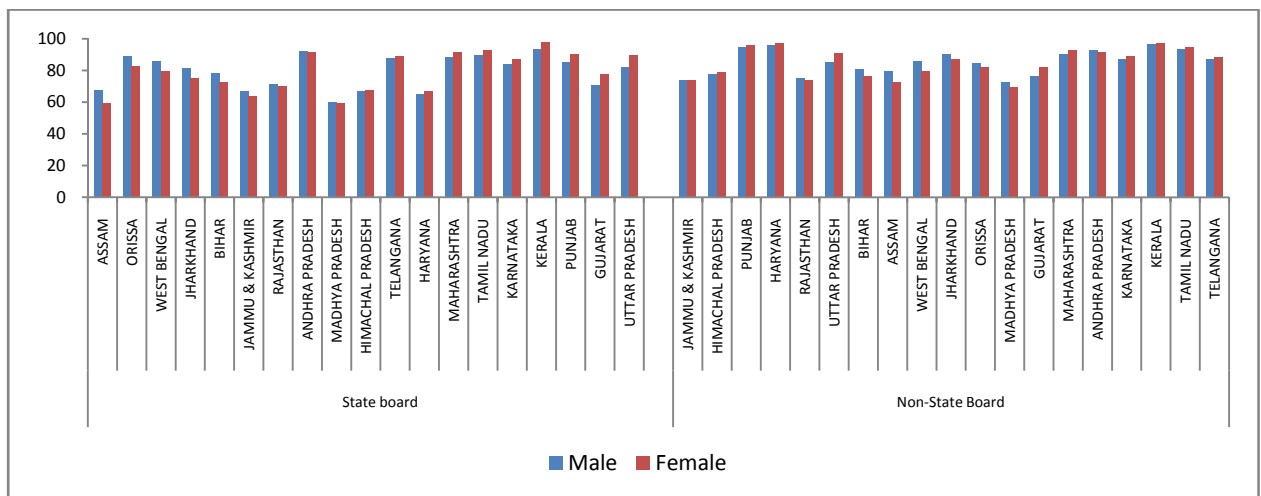
The inequality is not only limited to completion rates of primary and upper primary, this extends to secondary level as well. There exists significant inter-state gender base difference in the grade 10 pass percentage. Assam had the highest gender difference in pass percentage of grade 10 among those

**Table -1: Inequality in School Completion**

| Wealth Group       | Primary 2007 |    |                          | Primary 2014 |    |                          | Upper Primary 2007 |    |                          | Upper Primary 2014 |    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------|----|--------------------------|--------------|----|--------------------------|--------------------|----|--------------------------|--------------------|----|--------------------------|
|                    | M            | F  | Difference (Male-Female) | M            | F  | Difference (Male-Female) | M                  | F  | Difference (Male-Female) | M                  | F  | Difference (Male-Female) |
| Q1                 | 72           | 54 | 18                       | 77           | 67 | 10                       | 46                 | 27 | 19                       | 77                 | 65 | 12                       |
| Q2                 | 77           | 64 | 13                       | 85           | 79 | 6                        | 54                 | 39 | 15                       | 86                 | 78 | 8                        |
| Q3                 | 81           | 71 | 11                       | 88           | 83 | 5                        | 60                 | 48 | 12                       | 89                 | 83 | 6                        |
| Q4                 | 85           | 78 | 7                        | 90           | 87 | 3                        | 68                 | 58 | 10                       | 92                 | 88 | 4                        |
| Q5                 | 92           | 87 | 5                        | 95           | 94 | 1                        | 81                 | 76 | 5                        | 96                 | 94 | 2                        |
| Overall            | 83           | 73 | 10                       | 87           | 82 | 5                        | 64                 | 53 | 11                       | 88                 | 82 | 6                        |
| Difference (Q5-Q1) | 20           | 33 |                          | 18           | 27 |                          | 35                 | 49 |                          | 19                 | 29 |                          |

Source: Calculation based on NSS 64<sup>th</sup> (2007) and 71<sup>st</sup> (2014) round unit level data

**Figure 6: Inequality in Pass percentage: Grade 10 by gender and State**



Source: Calculation based on UDISE data 2014-15

who appeared from State board. This result is significant for the reason that girls have lower pass percentages in States that have typical characteristics of under development.

There is encouraging evidence in relation to the academic achievement. As per the latest National Achievement Survey of Class X students, conducted by NCERT, girls' learning achievement is no inferior to boys. Overall mean score for girls in English Language is 252 as compared to boys' 248. Similarly, mean score in Modern Indian Language (MIL) girls' score is 254 and boys' score is 246. However, scores are exactly equal (250 each) for boys and girls in Mathematics, Science and Social Science.

### Conclusion and Recommendations:

This paper has explored participation in schooling in India, starting off with answering the question, *what are the patterns of literacy rates in India and how the participation in school education in India and how have they been changing?* The analysis in this paper has focused on identifying key issues that represents gender context in education. As discussed in previous sections, India has made significant progress in improving basic education indicators over the last two decades. Average educational attainment of the population is increasing, and demand for enrolments is gradually shifting from the elementary to the secondary level. However, there remain substantial challenges, if the goal of equal education opportunity is to be achieved. It is important to note that in fact, almost universal gross enrolment rates at elementary level hide important following facts:

- i. Although there has been increase in enrolment rates, girls are enrolled in grades much lower than they should be given their age;
- ii. Those who eventually complete the elementary cycle have spent much longer than they should, hence they

are usually with high opportunity cost of schooling;

- iii. Presence of large number of underage and overage girls at elementary level (caused by delayed/early entry in school and repetition) presents pedagogic challenges;
- iv. Despite improvements in the enrolment rates, the inequality in completion of school education still remains a concern. These features of elementary education in India determine the profile of students entering secondary education.

The results presented in this paper suggest that disparity in the participation measured in terms of net attendance ratio has remained quite high. The net attendance ratio of girls has remained significantly lower compared to that of boys. The pattern is quite stark with reference to the socially disadvantaged section of the society. The interaction between caste and economic status has resulted in the persistence of inequality. The disparity in participation needs to be looked not only by identifying difference between male and female participation but also compare participation of girls in the socially disadvantaged group with participation of other caste group girls.

Moreover, inequality is observed to have persisted with reference to location. It is observed that girls in urban areas are somewhat better off than rural areas. Overall, it is observed that, in most cases, girls are somewhat worse off than boys. Further, this is evident that richest SC girls have a 20 percentage point's higher net attendance ratio than the poorest girls belonging to the 'others' (more privileged) caste category.

The inequality in completion of different levels of education is also observed to have persisted over the years. Girls continue to experience disparity when compared with males. Of greater concern is the wealth inequality in completion of

school education. Opportunity cost of girl's labour and early marriages continue to be serious challenges. This is aggravated by the fact of schools not being inclusive and safe spaces for girls. While schemes like KGBVs and NPEGEL have been successful, their reach has been limited in numbers. The larger education delivery system must respond to these barriers more effectively to retain the girls in the schooling system, after enrolment<sup>8</sup>.

Role of education in enhancing women empowerment can only be realized with strong efforts towards expanding equality of opportunities. National and State governments have initiated girls centric programmes to foster gender parity and uplift the status of women in the society. The central message from the above analysis is that richest sections are the ones to get benefited first by the expansion, therefore, creating more pro-poor based policies are much needed instrument to reduce gender disparity further.

### Endnotes

1. World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, 2012, UNESCO
2. Photo credit: <http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>
3. National Policy on Education 1986 (as modified in 1992)
4. Some inputs for draft NEP 2016, MHRD
5. Source: Adult and Youth Literacy, National, regional and global trends, 1985-2015
6. National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out-of-School Children in the Age 6-13 in India
7. Most States have defined neighborhood norms as 1 KM for primary and 3KM for upper primary school under the RTE Act.
8. Shalender Sharma, Crossing Barriers: Access to Education (Challenges), Yojana, January 2016

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YE-134/2016

# Women's Empowerment: A Critical Appraisal

*Subhash Sharma*



*Holistic and critical empowerment of women (being 48 per cent of total population) is the need of the hour wherein all stakeholders should have synergy for concrete action on the ground, especially for security, inclusion & development and both women and men will have to work together in supplementary and collaborative partnership with each other.*

*Undoubtedly women's emancipation should adopt a strategy of 'think globally, act locally'*

**F**rench Revolution of 1789 is considered as the liberation of mankind but it did not liberate the women and slaves because its declaration focused only on 'Rights of Man and Citizen', while women and slaves were not included in the definition of 'citizen' and women were not 'men'. If we look at the male-female interaction in biological, social-cultural, economic, political and spatial dimensions, we find various forms rang from difference, distance, discrimination, deprivation to disempowerment, specially in the context of rural Indian society.

Male-female relationship is not egalitarian in India in different arenas of everyday life because males are considered 'be-all' and 'end-all' of family decisions. For instance, at national level, girls are lagging behind boys in school enrolment – 95.4 per cent in 6-9 years, 93.7 per cent in 10-14 years and 83.8 per cent in 15-17 years age groups. Top five States in girls' education are Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Jammu & Kashmir, while five bottom States are Rajasthan, Gujarat, Odisha, M.P. & U.P. Despite Equal Remuneration Act 1948, for the same work, women (cutting across all castes, regions and religions) are paid lower wages than men ranging from

20 per cent to 50 per cent. Second, this discrimination exists both in rural and urban areas though in urban areas a both males and females get more wages than in rural areas. Further, with the increase in the level of education, the wages of both men and women workers rise and the wage difference between the two sexes narrows down. There are three inter-related processes: a) feminisation of poverty; b) casualisation, informalisation and contractualisation of jobs, especially for women, and c) sexual exploitation of women- increasing trend of trafficking of girls/women, call girls and prostitutes multiplying.

The health situation of women is still not satisfactory in India; maternal mortality rate declined from 301 per lakh in India in 2000 to 167 in 2013 due to better medical facilities. However, thousands of women still die in delivery complications due to following major causes: Haemorrhage – 30 per cent, Anaemia – 19 per cent, Sepsis- 16 per cent, Obstructed labour – 10 per cent, Toxaemia – 8 per cent, Others – 17 per cent. This is due to poverty, unemployment, lack of awareness, and lack of medical facilities (less hospitals, beds, doctors, nurses, medicines etc.). Institutional deliveries, however, increased during 2006-2011 from 42 per cent to 84 per cent in India as a whole due to National Rural Health Mission.

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Next issue is the increasing crime rate against women in India, especially rape, kidnapping, molesting, eve-teasing, dowry deaths etc. In 2013, 3.095 lakh total crimes were reported against women but conviction rate was unsatisfactory – 22 per cent in 2013, 21 per cent in 2012 and 27 per cent in 2011 (then there were 500 fast track courts in 2011 against 212 such courts only in 2013-14). During 2001-13, there were 2.63 lakh rape cases registered in India and at every 20 minutes, one rape case occurs in India. Unfortunately 65 per cent cases of rape occur while women go to attend call of nature at night in India (still 50 per cent population goes for open defecation). Moreover, many such crimes are not reported to police stations due to lack of awareness, fear from the accused/criminals, non-cooperation of the local police, fear of bad name in community etc. Further, there is an increase in gang rape cases and often accompanied with murder of the female victims-Nirbhaya's gang rape and murder in New Delhi on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012 led the mass participation in the protest and ultimately, the accused were awarded death sentence except one adolescent accused but their appeals are still pending in Supreme Court.

### **National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001):**

This policy envisages to create Gender Development Indices (GDI) for better planning, programme formulation and adequate allocation of resources, and collection of gender disaggregated data. National Council (headed by Prime Minister) and State Council (headed by Chief Minister) *was to be* formed including representatives of concerned Depts/Ministries, National/State Commissions for Women, Social Welfare Boards, NGOs, women's organisations, trade unions, corporate sector, financing institutions, academics, experts etc. Women's Component Plan is to ensure 30 per cent of funds/ benefits flow to women from all Ministries/

Departments. Ministry of Women and Child Development was made the Nodal Ministry to review its progress. Highlights of Policy are:

- a) Advancement, development & empowerment of women in all spheres of life;
- b) More responsive judicial legal systems sensitive to women's needs;
- c) Women's equality in power-sharing and active participation in decision-making;
- d) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in development process;
- e) Strengthening & formation

**...more resources, motivation and consciousness-raising for education and employment of women is the need of the hour by making education up to degree level free, better school/college infrastructure (buildings, toilets, libraries, safe drinking water etc), adequate trained teachers and organised drive for up-skilling, re-skilling, and multi-skilling in all schools and colleges- including reorienting and reorganising Industrial Training Institutes and Polytechnics for women in trades demanded by the market, state and civil society.**

- of relevant institutional mechanism;
- f) Partnership with community – based organisations and;
  - g) Implementation of international obligations, commitments & cooperation at the international, national and sub-regional levels, especially CEDAW, CRC & RCDD+5.

United Nations Development Programme declared eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the

third goal is directly concerned with women's empowerment: eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education at all levels of education by 2015. But we could not achieve gender parity in school education by 2015, though there is improvement in enrolment of girls at all levels in all regions and communities in India. Again we could not achieve the target of reducing infant, child and maternal mortality though decline in these took place. Similarly, women's participation in employment and decision-making is not satisfactory though the champions of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation had boasted generating of massive employment. In reality, there has been a 'jobless growth' for most of the sectors of Indian economy, now manufacturing is improving. According to Tendulkar Committee on poverty line, 29.8 per cent of population (35 crores) lived below poverty line in 2009-10. The situation seems to be more or less same despite relatively a high growth rate of more than 7.5 per cent from 2002 to 2015. Sustainable Development Goals (by 2030) target for bringing down MMR to 70, IMR to 12 and child mortality rate to 25 and universal health coverage to all, inclusive and common education to all, to bring equality among men and women, and to prevent all types of violence against girls and women.

Undoubtedly, educated/working women prefer small family through late marriage, spacing, sterilisation etc. Hence more resources, motivation and consciousness-raising for education and employment of women is the need of the hour by making education up to degree level free, better school/college infrastructure (buildings, toilets, libraries, safe drinking water etc), adequate trained teachers and organised drive for up-skilling, re-skilling, and multi-skilling in all schools and colleges- including reorienting and reorganising Industrial Training Institutes and



Polytechnics for women in trades demanded by the market, state and civil society. A new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has been created.

### Central Government's Schemes for Women:

SABLA (Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls) has been implemented in 205 selected districts of India through ICDS- 100 per cent central assistance for other than nutrition (iron & folic acids, health check up & referral services, counselling on family welfare, child care practices, life skill to 11-18 yrs old girls and vocational training to 16-18 yrs old girls) and 50 per cent central assistance for nutrition. During 2014-15 (up to 31.12.2014), 98.15 lakh beneficiaries were covered for nutrition and 0.42 lakh girls were provided vocational training. One success story relates to Kajal Bhagat in English bazar in Malda district, West Bengal who refused to marry before 18 yrs and leave the school education due to inspiration from Angarwadi worker. Second, Matritva Sahyog yojana was at first implemented in 53 selected districts in India through ICDS. Pregnant women of 19 yrs of age and above for first two live births get Rs. 6000/- in two equal instalments per head during pregnancy and lactation (a central sponsored scheme since 2010-11). It was expanded to 200 additional districts and in 2016-17, it was extended to all districts. During 2015-16, its central share was Rs. 1497 crore as per provisions of National Food Security Act (2013). Third, Swadhar scheme for women in difficult circumstances (deserted widows, released women prisoners, homeless women surviving from national disasters, trafficked women rescued/runaway from brothels, women victims of terrorist/extremist violence without support/means, mentally challenged women without support, and women with AIDS/

HIV without support/deserted) was launched by central government in 2001-2 for shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalised girls/women, to provide emotional support for their rehabilitation, to arrange clinical & legal support, and to provide helpline to women in distress. Now, 311 Swadhar homes are functioning under the aegis of State government's Women Development Corporations or trusts etc. During 2013-14 against the budgetary provision of 75 crores for Swadhar, total expenditure was Rs. 53.74 crore & during 2014-15, its budget was 115 crore. Fourth, Ujjwala is a scheme to combat trafficking of women (since 2007), focusing on prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration, and repatriation of trafficked victims. During 2014-15, 289 projects were sanctioned (including 165 protective and rehabilitative homes with outlay of Rs. 16 crore. Fifth, STEP (support to training and employment programme) for women was launched in 1986-87 as a central sector scheme to provide skills to women above 16 yrs of age. During 2013-14, Rs. 7 crores were released to different States. Sixth, by December 31, 2014 there were 915 working women's hostels with 68631 working women residing there. During 2014-15, the budgetary allocation for construction of working women's hostels was Rs. 25 crores. Finally, Six Stree Shakti Puraskars are given at national level to individuals/organizations with a prize of Rs. 3 lakh each, one Rajya Mahila Samman (Rs. 40,000/-) for each State and UT, and one Zila Mahila Samman (Rs. 20,000/-) for each district. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (save daughter, educate daughter) is a flagship Scheme of the central government.

### Recommendations:

Van Staveren rightly suggests six entitlements to women related to reproductive freedom:

a) Access to contraceptives;

- b) Access to decision-making regarding children (with whom, if when and how many);
- c) Access to sex education and information on sexuality;
- d) Access to (reproductive) health care for parents and children;
- e) Access to alternative roles, other than motherhood / fatherhood;
- f) Access to economic resources.

However, these days publicity of family welfare measures is not prominent as earlier, hence to be highlighted.

Second, both Union and State governments should certainly ensure 30 per cent funding for women at the grassroots. Emphasis on jobs in organised sector should be given priority by all government agencies and private sector should be more open to recruit women for ensuring genuine gender justice as corporate social responsibility. Self-help groups have not succeeded due to non-cooperation of banks for financing.

Third issue of women's representation in decision-making legislative bodies has not been realised so far though reservation for women bill in both Lok Sabha and State Assemblies was passed in 2010 by Rajya Sabha but not passed by Lok Sabha as yet. *Maharashtra, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, M.P., and Rajasthan provide 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayati raj, other States provide 1/3<sup>rd</sup> reservation.*

Fourth, thousands of widows in Vrindavan (U.P.) alone are living a neglected and inhuman life (begging for food, clothes and shelter, grabbing of Ashram lands by mafia builders resulting into shelterlessness, no old age/widow pension to all, sexual exploitation, having no voting identity cards, no ration cards and finally no adequate facility for last rites after death). Similarly, the condition of thirty lakhs of prostitutes is worse in red

**Table 2 : Type of Approach in Different Plans in India**

| Approaches                  | Processed  | Plans   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 1.Welfare Approach          | Stipends to girls for education, especially homescience, sewing, embroidery                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> plans (1951-1979)  |
| 2.Women in Development      | Removal of poverty, education & health   | 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> plans (1980-1990)   |
| 3.Women's Empowerment       | To address women's felt needs, gender perspective in development process                           | 8 <sup>th</sup> plan (1992-97)                        |
| 4.Women as agents of change | To help poor women through self-help groups- women's component plan                                | 9 <sup>th</sup> plan (1997-2002)                      |
| 5.Human Development         | monitorable targets for reduction in gender gaps in literacy, wage rates & maternal mortality rate | 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> plans (2002-2012) |
| 6.Gender Equity             | Inclusiveness of all categories of vulnerable women  | 12 <sup>th</sup> plan (2012-17)                       |

light areas all over the country. They need to be rehabilitated with alternative modes of livehood on priority basis.

Fifth, the situation of women farmers and agricultural labourers has also worsened mainly due to natural calamities like floods and drought, unequal terms of trade between agricultural produces/ artisans' services and industrial products, high rate of inflation (largely due to black marketing by stockists, middlemen traders), low and unequal wages, poor health and sanitation etc. There were 6000 maternal deaths in 2013-14 in Bihar, but only 352 were reported by district officials, as admitted by State Health Society of Bihar (Times of India, 31.08.2014). As anecdote goes, about 300 years ago, Mumtaj Mahal, queen of Mughal emperor Shahjahan, died of child birth and he built Taj Mahal at Agra in her memory while almost at the same time, a Swedish queen had delivery complications and the king called French doctors to save her and later set up nursing schools to train rural women to attend delivery cases. At present, Sweden has the lowest MMR (8) and IMR (5) whereas India has very high IMR (38 in 2014, while in Bangladesh 31 and in Nepal 29) and MMR 167 (in 2013). During 1990-2012, IMR declined in India by 50 per cent while it declined by

67 per cent in Bangladesh and by 66 per cent in Nepal, because India spends only 1.3 per cent of GDP on health while Britain spends 7.6 per cent and US spends 8.1 per cent of GDP on health. Per head expenditure on health is also unsatisfactory: \$ 61 in India, \$ 102 in Sri Lanka, \$ 3598 in Britain and \$ 9146 in US. Health insurance in India is only 18 per cent. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana are good beginning in this regard. Similarly, Mission Indradhanush with seven vaccinations for children is also a step in the right direction. Swachh Bharat is equally appreciable as spending one dollar on sanitation saves 9 dollars on health, education and economic development. In India, out of 640 districts, only 193 have medical colleges and hospitals (for tertiary health). In India 70-80, per cent of medical facilities are provided by the private sector. Hence, the public sector expenditure should be increased to 2.5 - 3 per cent of GDP.

We find different approach in focus in different plans (Table2 below):

Finally, only 16 States set up 212 fast track courts in the entire country for trial of crime cases against women and surprisingly even U.P., Bihar and Gujarat did not set

up such courts in time. Union Law and Justice Ministry allocated funds up to a maximum of Rs. 80 crores annually on a matching basis from States. Earlier in 2011 when Union govt ran fast track courts fully, there were 500 such courts in India. Therefore, there is a need for 80 per cent funding from Govt. of India for smooth functioning of such courts so that conviction rate for rape may substantially increase from merely 22 per cent in 2013. U. P. govt. took a decision in August 2014 to open one fast track court in every district. In 2012 in India, there were 8233 dowry deaths and during 2001-2012, there were 91202 dowry deaths in total but the conviction rate in dowry deaths is just 15 per cent because the law enforcement machinery and courts are not sincere. But there are many false cases of dowry also.

Holistic and critical empowerment of women (being 48 per cent of total population) is the need of the hour wherein all stakeholders should have synergy for concrete action on the ground, especially for security, inclusion & development and both women and men will have to work together in supplementary and collaborative partnership with each other. Undoubtedly women's emancipation should adapt a strategy of 'think globally, act locally'. ■

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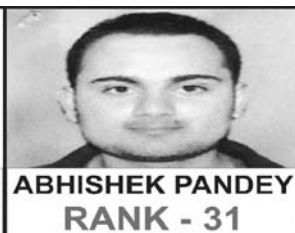
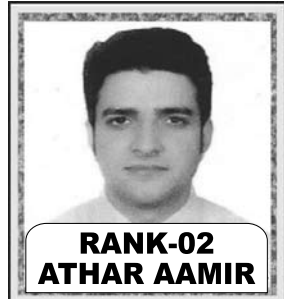


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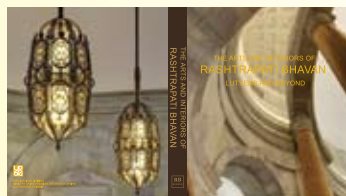


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