

# **DEVELOPMENT AND PATRIARCHY**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**Development and Patriarchy**" submitted by Amita Tripathy, in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of this university is her own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree to this university or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dipankar Gupta', is written over the printed name.

PROF. DIPANKAR GUPTA

(Supervisor)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.S. Gandhi', is written over the printed name.

PROF. J.S. GANDHI.

(Chairperson)



**DEDICATED TO MY**

**BROTHER**

**ARUN**

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Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Dipankar Gupta, for his constant help, valuable suggestions and relevant discussions, which refined my thinking to do this work.

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*Amita Tripathy*

**AMITA TRIPATHY**

# ***CHAPTER - I***

## ***Introduction***

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

"Any thought, any idea, any theory, is simply a way of seeing, a way of viewing an object for a particular vantage point. It may be useful, but usefulness is dependent upon particular circumstances - the time, the place, the conditions to which it is applied. If our thoughts are taken to be final, to include all possibilities, to be exact representations of reality then eventually we run up against conditions where they become irrelevant. If we hold them in spite of their irrelevance, we are forced either to ignore the facts or to apply some sort of force to make them fit. In either case, fragmentation is the result."

- Bohem Xi

These words of Bohem Xi, a Chinese philosopher, eloquently sum up all that we attempt to show in our thesis, ideas, thoughts and theories are often held in fixing, as a matter of truth, and of life and death. In the process of the dynamism and the growth of ideas is lost what remains are the rigid, dogmatic claims of different positions which in themselves are nothing but different ways of seeing reality. With this quote, we start the present study on "Development and Patriarchy" which is another way of seeing reality.

Though the concern for studying women and organizing action for improving the condition of women is not new, what is strikingly different is the new perspective based on the theoretical knowledge and ideological underpinning both in research and in action. Gender refers to the differences between males and females in human society over a whole range of variables - behaviour, personality traits, identity, psychic configurations, roles, functions, rights, rewards and so on. In addition, it also denotes norms applicable to every aspect of life - sartorial to gastronomical, sexual, linguistic and sanctioned conduct in everyday life. All these norms result in creating as a cultural ideal, a particular type of individual, recognized as a woman or a man. The primary identity of a person in a human society is that of gender, which according to psychologists, gets fixed in early infancy. Feminist expositions have assembled considerable evidence to drive home the point that gender is culturally constructed. The most convincing evidence comes from differences in the way gender gets constructed across cultures. While all societies use woman-man dichotomy, the criteria applied for demarcation vary enormously. What is considered as 'manly' or 'womanly', what are deemed to be appropriate roles and activities, differ widely across cultures. These distinctions are conceived, constructed and acted upon by people in society and far removed from what natural differences alone would warrant. (Krishnaraj, 1996 : WS-9). Gender relations are the key to

understanding the inequalities between men and women. These inequalities are expressed in many ways - **explicit and implicit**.

The explicit measures are well known and are revealed in statistics depicting differences in the sex ration, in child infanticide, literacy rates, health and nutrition indicators, wage differentials and ownership of land and property. The implicit relations are those embedded in relations of power and in hierarchies and are more difficult to measure. Located in the household, in custom, religion and culture, these intra-household inequalities result in unequal distribution of power, control over resources and decision-making; dependence rather than self-reliance; and unfair unequal distribution of work, drudgery and even food.

Gender relations need to be measured in the context of participation in and sharing of the important decision-making process that results in the above inequalities. Such a measure would help identify the differing degrees of inequality in terms of age, income levels and geographical location. For governments and concerned citizens seeking to redress these inequalities, indices are a means of determining the issues on which they must concentrate, and provide feed back on the effectiveness of their actions. Clearly then, the accuracy of any measure of gender inequality needs close scrutiny. Women's role in social transformation is being pushed forward for the second time in modern history. The new thinking that has emerged challenging various assumptions about women vis-a-vis



the development process in actuality linked to issues involving the 'invisible women' who had largely been ignored by the earlier movements and its leadership. It is not possible to bring about transformations in women's roles and life options from a middle class perspective, or a middle class based movement. Effective participation of the 'invisible women' to set in motion the process of defining need-based-goals - both short term and long term - is extremely vital, to ensure equity, autonomy and dignity for women in a new social context. It is rightly said that women, like men, are both born and made. "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman and it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature". (Beauvoir, 1960 : 8)

At the same time it should be stressed that because of women's long historical disadvantaged position in society, there is need for specific transitional strategies, policies, measures and actions, if they are to actively participate in the execution of the objectives set-forth by the countries of the region. Industrialization and urbanization extended to cause economic growth which has traditionally brought radical changes in the lives of women and their families, without their having had anything to say about it, and often they have not shared in the benefits to be derived. It has been observed that the changing positions of women in relation to changes in the structure of the society, and also socio-cultural and attitudinal factors affecting the status of women.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this work is:-

- (i) To assess women's position since independence;
- (ii) To analyze what impact development has had on their status;
- (iii) To highlight on the nature of development, i.e. the ideology behind it;
- (iv) To what extent they have been successfully implemented ?
- (v) Is patriarchy inherent in the development model?
- (vi) How feminists view the impact of development on women?
- (vii) Analyze a brief historical over view of women's position in order to understand the present status;
- (viii) Finally, have things changed altogether in modern times i.e. with ever increasing control over nature women are getting emancipated or worsening their status.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Literature on women studies is voluminous. It embraces all walks of women's life. However, the thrust is uniformly the same - the inferior status of women in one form or the other, under various pretexts and their consequences on one hand and on other it is seen that women's position has changed. A major civilizational transformation has been taking place through the 20th century. The transformation concerning women, has been achieved by their struggles but will eventually change conditions of men and women. We can broadly divide them into two categories: some supporting

the development model and some are against development model. One category highlighting the schemes and policies of government favouring women in terms of their social, economic and political development and other category pointing out the flaws of development model which has degraded women's status.

Review of women studies perceive 'development' as characterized by patriarchal values - which have not only marginalised women but rendered them invisible. Man made development has turned to be a threat to women development. Hence academicians as well as administration have ultimately agreed that, development not engendered is endangered. But outstanding applauses for women participation often results in feeble claps in reality (Joseph, 1997 : 1-8).

Women participation in development is also not free from gender dimensions. In the development process, gender bias takes the form of alienation of women from the mainstream, lesser or no benefits to their efforts in term of return or recognition, discriminatory policies and programmes, no control over resources and regulatory institutions including education, employment and technology and even physical drudgery and mental agony.

The review of available literature on women participation in the development programmes of various types of organization can be organised in five sections for our convenience to get the key arguments.

- (i) There is a gender bias in development activities. Development is assumed to be sex-neutral. But policies and programmes can be biased towards males under the pretext that they are either the bread winners or physically superior. Even with legal protections and regulations men can be unfair to the fair sex as family head, employer, programme personnel, organized leader, etc. The gender biases perceived and practised in various fields of development process such as exploitation in work, discrimination in opportunities and benefits, non-recognition of contribution etc. are presented forthwith. It has been found that work of the women may not be reflected in data due to the biased outlook of the agencies collecting the data. Statistical bias result in the under-estimation of the role of women in development.
- (ii) Women's work and worth are generally under-valued and hence underpaid.
- (iii) Women have limited command over resources and regulatory institutions. It prevents them from getting equal opportunities and a fair share of return in the society as well as in the family.
- (iv) It is observed that educational imbalances and bias in extension programmes limit the opportunities for women. It is also found that technology gap exist between men and women. These will impair effective participation of women in development.

(v) There is a kind of gender based division of labour. According to the nature of job and the degree of drudgery there exist apparent division of labour on the basis of sex, especially in agriculture and the informal sector. It is found that difficult and monotonous tasks are reserved for women and whenever technology lessen the drudgery men will occupy that job.

### **Women in Policy and Programmes**

Feminists go on to argue that the programmes of official agencies for women have been marginalized in development activities which restricted women's participation in government programmes. Reports of Committees, Conferences and Conventions of national government and international organizations have reinforced the need for women's participation in development and suggested measures for the same. They have created an awareness about women participation world wide and influenced the policies and programmes of both governmental and non-governmental organization. While government organizations are inflexible and conservative, a change in the outlook of the society to increase the participation of women can be created only by the non-governmental organizations. The need for organization to mobilise women is materialised by NGOs, however, there can be limitations on their part and might not be very effective.

The eminent scholars who have done studies on this basis are Maitreyi Krishnaraj, Vandana Shiva, Leela Dube, Bina Agarwal, Malvika Karlekar, Alfred de Souza, Maria Mies, Madhu Kiswar, Neena Desai and

others. Feminists in India are theorising on women's oppression and the possible ways to overcome them. We discuss these theorisations, because they bring out the diversity of articulations existing around the category 'women' in the Indian context. Further, the different theorisations are themselves representative of different strands of feminism within the Indian context. The articulation of the category 'woman' by these different feminists show their own circumlocation i.e. the varied contexts of struggle in which these feminists are rooted. As such their views reflect the views existing in the multiple contexts of struggles within the women's movements in India. The overall discussion presented could thus be understood as in a more general representative sense, than only as the perceptions of individual feminist authors.

Now coming to the other category which focuses on the developmental strategies and policies are mainly the Government of India reports, five year plans, human development reports, non-governmental and voluntary organisations, which reveal the changing status of women since independence. As human development moves centre stage in the global development debate, gender equality and gender equity are emerging as major challenges. Gender discrimination, though amongst the most subtle, is one of the most all pervading forms of institutionalized deprivation. From women's problem to women's issues, finally to women's perspective there has been a whole re-shaping of paradigm of development with the

realisation that real development cannot take roots if it by-passes women who not only represent nearly half of the country's total population (accounting for 407.1 million in absolute numbers, as per the 1991 Census) but represent the very kernel around which societal re-orientation must take place, the government has directed all its efforts towards removing gender-biases and thus guarantee women equal status in the real sense as it ensured in the Constitution of India.

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

This study may bring to light some new aspects to enlarge and broaden the scope of our mind by seeing and analyzing both sides of the argument. In one case development and patriarchy go hand in hand and in the other, they oppose each other. Therefore, principal aim of this study is to evaluate the position of women in recent times and how it has evolved gradually since the new development model has been put into practice. While dealing with this, I will try and give a comparative study of pre-independence and post-independence time in order to reflect on the changes and development (if at all) which has taken place. The position of women can be analyzed in context of economic, social, political aspects from the available information i.e. books, journals, periodicals, Government of India reports, etc.

Thus, this study deals with some issues and raises questions and attempts to answer some revealing aspect of our changing society which

has not been dealt in this manner. The objective is to go deep into both sides of the picture in order to have a balanced and unbiased view of the women's position in contemporary India.

### **SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION**

Now it is important to have a brief look at the study before going to the details directly. This would give a picture about how we are going to deal with the present work on '**Development and Patriarchy**' in order to analyze it. This format has five chapters in all.

**Chapter I - Introduction:-** This chapter generally introduces the topic and defines development and patriarchy. It gives us a review of literature of the previous studies done earlier on this topic to get familiar. In order to understand this work, the main aims and objectives are clearly stated. Then the need or significance of the work is highlighted, which makes it new and different from the rest. Finally, a brief paragraph is given on each chapter to have a gist of the dissertation in a glance.

**Chapter II - Feminist Perspective:-** This chapter deals with the feminists in India and how they deal with development and help in overcoming the ways to overcome women's oppression. It states their arguments on development and how it effects women in worsening their status. They view that after three decades of planned development, the picture of women's position has aggravated considerably in every sphere. Technology has not only accentuated status differentiation but with the



prosperity among dominant caste groups, patriarchal norms have become stronger and women's subordination extended to newer areas. This chapter also briefly views the feminist theories.

### **Chapter III - Patriarchy, ideology and contemporary India:-**

In this chapter we will analyze and attempt to answer the questions raised earlier in terms of fulfilling the aims and objectives of this study. It would deal with arguments as stated and counter arguments to get a complete picture. Some important questions would be (a) Is patriarchal ideology strengthened or weakened in recent times, especially how development has had an impact on the existing ideology? (b) Is the new technology gender neutral or not? (c) To what extent feminist argument stands correct or they are giving a true picture of patriarchy in relation to development?

**Chapter IV - Role of Development:-** 'Development' is a term which has been used more frequently in the changing process of the life of the people for their welfare as well as their better survival. Being a multi-dimensional process, it would be appropriate to talk in terms of welfare of human beings as a whole and **women in particular**. Since independence, major emphasis was placed on different development projects for rural and urban areas including special programmes for women. How they were benefited? It also emphasizes on social, political, economic and legal implication of development in emancipating women. Then come to the main

aims and objectives of development policies and schemes. Finally, come to the role of education, media and women's movement in determining aspirations, technology, productivity, vertical and horizontal mobility of women. And also compare women's position before planned development was introduced to that of women's position since independence. Thus this chapter would evaluate women's status keeping development policies and schemes in mind.

**Chapter V - Summary and Conclusion:-** This chapter would sum up the whole discussion. Then draw major conclusions from the argument carried out. To state clearly (if) patriarchy is inherited or not in the development process. Can we conclude that it is the social setting or milieu which has to be changed and development process is a mechanism which can help in eliminating or doing away with inherent patriarchy existing since ages.

## ***CHAPTER - II***

### **Feminist Perspective**

## **CHAPTER - II**

### **FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

In the last two decades, issues concerning women have received global attention. There has been a vast increase in the women-centered development literature. Feminists in India are theorizing on women's oppression and the possible ways to overcome it. The feminists consider that after nearly five decades of planned development, women's position has worsened considerably in every sphere. Technology has not only accentuated status-differentiation, but with the prosperity among dominant caste groups, patriarchal norms have become stronger and women's subordination entered into newer areas. Before probing into it, we may have a look at the feminist theory.

### **FEMINIST THEORY**

The term feminist theory is an invention of the academic branch of the mid and late twentieth-century feminist movement. It refers to generating systematic ideas which could define women's place in society and culture, including the depiction of women. Feminism is a concern with issues affecting women, a concern to advance women's interests, so that therefore anyone who shares this concern is a feminist, whether they acknowledge it or not, then the range of feminism is general and its meaning is equally diffuse.

The main task confronting feminist theory was to document both past and present gendered inequalities. Many of the early writings addressing to this project discussed women as either 'other' or 'victim'. These characterizations ran through the writings that might be classed as either **liberal** - the belief that women have the same capabilities as men and should receive equal treatment. **Socialist Marxist feminist** perceived variation of the notion that capitalism created or augmented gender inequality or **Radical feminist** viewed - versions of the idea that women were inextricably different from men and at least equal, and possibly superior to them.

#### CONSTRUCTION OF FEMINITY:-

This construction of the women as victim, as a patient in need of immediate treatment, has, over the past decades, grown deep roots both in common discourse as well as in social science analysis. A history of oppression is not denied, nor should its implications for the relations between genders be under-estimated. What is being stressed is the view that women are not mere helpless victims. Here, one might add that the so-called victim displays unexpected reserves of strength and energy. It is only when women's own voices are heard, can one begin to question these stereotypes; the reconstruction of women's lives through a reading of personal narratives and recording of life histories and oral histories help not only in creating alternative models, but also in understanding better

analytical categories, such as gender, women and femininity. "The true history of women is the history of their on-going functioning in that male-defined world on their own terms. The question of oppression does not elicit that story and is therefore, a tool of limited usefulness to the historian" (Lerner, 1979: 1-5).

How can women's contribution be judged on their own terms, and not in relation to external standards? And who will be the judges? A close look at women's lives provides numerous examples of how in fact individuals have, while acknowledging differences, resisted succumbing to the victim or women-in-need syndrome (Karlekar, 1991 : 20-21).

#### **FEMINISM'S CONCERN WITH GENDER:-**

It is important to know why are feminists so concerned with the argument that the differences we see actually operating in society are 'natural'? Feminism has a political stake in this because what is biological appears beyond control by conscious action. Feminists expose the falsity of this claim by analysing the process by which gender comes to be constructed culturally: for instance, beliefs such as 'women are passive and submissive by nature'. To show that the differences in psychological attributes are learned provides a basis for altering them. We pave the way for the liberation of women from stereotypes and straitjackets which are in fact un-natural, open up more choices for women, remove the stigma of social disapproval from activities dubbed 'unfeminine'.

Evidence of cultural variation in gender attributes point to the lack of uniformity in practice across cultures and the flexibility of gender specific aspirations, both of which violated the requirement of the 'natural'. Appeal to 'nature' foreclosed all arguments where as reference to the social-cultural retains the possibility of change. The necessity for change then can be buttressed by exposing the harm done to women, in human society in general, when culturally constructed differences are taken to be essential. Feminist research on gender focuses on the cultural process of gender differentiation and the process by which social power and authority get expressed through discriminatory allocation of material and social resources and unequal sanctions. This process concretely disadvantages women and lead to their subordination and oppression.

Historically speaking, there has been a major theoretical shift in the premordial unit of social reality and is corresponding deliberate and systematic cognitive reflection on women's situation in society. An attempt is made to present the basic tenets of two theoretical perspective of pre-mordial units of social reality, and reflect on the theoretically articulated propositions on women's situation. There are two theoretical perspectives one being structural functionalist and marxist.

**Marxian Perspective** Engels traced the oppression of women to the historical onset of private property. Private property necessitated strict control over women's sexuality to ensure that inheritance be guaranteed to

the off-spring of the male-owner of the property. Male-dominated monogamous marriage, which involved the economic dependence of the wife upon her husband, provided this control. Monogamous marriages were developed to protect the institution of property bringing to an end previously existing command family system. The change in family type, in turn, brought about changes in the sexual division of labour which added to the women's oppression.

Engels states that the pre-dominance of the man in marriage is simple a consequence of his economic pre-dominance and will vanish with it automatically. But so long as the family continues to be the economic unit of the society, the position of women cannot be fundamentally changed. He sees the family as an instrument of perpetuating women's subordination.

Marx and Engels believe that beginning of women's liberation could be witnessed in the nineteenth century capitalist society. They argued that the demand for female wage labour would raise the status and power of proletarian women within the family - true equality between the sexes, however, could only be achieved in a socialist society in which the forces of production were owned communally. The onerous duties of house work and mother would no longer be performed by individual women, since all work was the responsibility of the community. Engels says private house-keeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of children becomes public matter. (Pandey, 1987 : 108)



**Functional Perspective:** The unequal relations between men and women and the sexual division of labour have been explained by structural functionalists as a normal feature of every society. They see the subordination of women and the sexual division of labour as beneficial for society. Hence, what is functional and universal cannot be abolished.

Those who consider the sexual division of labour as universal terms to biology to explain their position. The anthropologists Tiger and Fox assume that human beings behave in accordance with the human biogrammer, that is, a genetically based programme which pre-disposes mankind to behave in certain ways. Although men and women are similar in many respects, there are important differences between them. Compared to women, men are more aggressive and dominant. Male dominance is seen as a "sex linked characteristics". By comparison, women are programmed by their biology to reproduce and care for children. The male and female are biologically disposed to different sexual division of labour.

Peter Murdock, another anthropologists also seeks biological distinction between men and women as the basis of the sexual division of labour in society. Unlike Tiger and Fox, he simply suggests that "biological distinction such as the greater physical strength of men and the fact that women bear children lead to gender roles out of sheer practicality". (Pande, 1987 : 108).

The sex based division of labour which arises from biological differences is in turn considered as rooted in the functional necessity. Parsons observes that there are two universal basic functions of family : "the socialization of the young" and "the stabilization of adult personalities". And within the family, women are primarily responsible for these two functions. Parsons turns to biology to assign women the responsibility of performing socializing functions.

Different feminists have expressed their views in the context of development, how women are oppressed and degraded with the advancement in science and technology. Now coming to the impact of development of women and structure of patriarchy in India, it is interesting and important enough to see Maltreyi Krishnaraj's view. The issues of equality and justice for women within the context of development models and development processes. The issues raised are simultaneously both gender issues and development issues because the outcome for women is the result of the interaction between development forms and the forms of subordination already existing in society. That development has been obvious, but that development is not gender neutral is the discovery of recent scholarship and feminist consciousness." (Krishnaraj, 1988: 2 )

To the structure that has systematically produced and maintained women's subordination, feminists have used the label '**patriarchy**'. They have used the concept to depict a system of male dominance that has some

essential and interlocking features. Three basic ingredients of this system are: control of female labour, control over female sexuality, and control over female fertility.

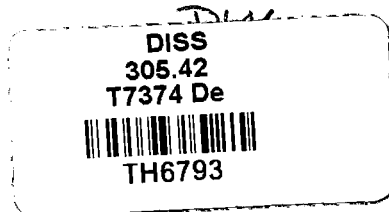
Now it is important to know what is development and how feminist view it? Today the world is divided into developed countries and developing countries. The central problem of development is the difficulty of formulating any adequate or acceptable criteria of development, i.e. how does one know whether development has taken place or how much development has been accomplished. Therefore, there is a scope for judgement, disagreement about what development is. The problem does not end there. For instance, if GNP is the criterion, what does one include in it, what does one exclude from it and why? Who decides and why woman's household work should not be part of GNP?

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Broadly speaking, there is no disagreement that development would imply that the majority of people have their survival needs met (food, clothing, shelter) and that they would come to enjoy increasingly higher levels of living in terms of education, health, communication, etc.

To be underdeveloped is to be vulnerable powerless, lack of control over assets, hence create powerlessness and it is a kind of subordination of women in a male dominated world.

Is there a connection between the idea regarding what development is and how one index it and special groups with society such as women? If



development means creating such conditions that all human beings can fulfil their potential then women as half the human race, must receive such opportunities.

The indicators of the quality of life listed above, must be positive and significant for all. If they are not, then development has not helped women, though it might have favoured men. It is also possible that not only has development missed women, but they may have been hurt more in the development process and therefore experienced anti-development. (ibid.: 14-15). To halt this process of anti-development, to register voices on things according to them are good for society as a whole, women must be partners in development process. To do so, they need access to and control over crucial social and material resources, without which they are bound to be increasingly vulnerable. They would become helpless victim unable to resist the forces operating against them.

The evidence from development literature of Asia, Africa and South America point to two major threats:

- (a) The disparity in opportunities for women in all their need that ensure survival and growth i.e. the comparative aspect;
- (b) The increasingly degree of new forms of oppressions and subordination brought about by the changes taking place in society.

What is the extent of those disparities? What are the deprivations that deny women the possibilities of fuller human development? How does the development process bring about such results?

Conflict and competition accompany the dialectical process of development. What are those conflicts to which women become specially prone? What are the latent processes that sharpen such conflicts for women?

Feminists framework is that development, in its true sense, has not taken place. Current theories of development have been inadequate in general, but particularly inadequate for women. The major thesis of development hitherto has been that everyone can reach the goal through abundance, the larger the cake, the more sure will be for everyone. Not only does this not take place automatically, but what is worse, the process also reinforces inequalities in ways that entrench them deeper. The root of under development lie in the particular history of development of capitalism in an uneven way in different countries.

To discuss the impact of development on women's status in society is to confront the fact that women's oppression is as extricably bound up in an exploitative world system of which development as at present defined is a part. Real development would mean ending a system which increases the gap between rich and poor nations. In other words, if development has not

resulted in benefits to women, it is not enough to try and give them a larger share, but it is necessary to change the nature of development itself.

The pre-existing social structure where race dominance and female subservience prevailed, exacerbate the results. The earlier structures shaped the position of women in household, family and society. It is also important to recognize that in pre-capitalist, pre-colonial (or pre-developed) countries, there were also many positive features, which have been supplanted by new distortions. The present distinction between **public sphere** as male and **private sphere** as female did not exist to the same extent nor did it become the sharp dichotomy that it is at present. Development has been defined by the World Conference of the U.N. decade for women in July, 1980 that "Development is here interpreted to mean total development, including development in the political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life as also the development of economics and other material resources and also the physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth of the human person. The improvement of the status of women requires a change in the attitude and roles of both men and women's development should not only be viewed as an issue in social development but should be seen as an essential component in every dimension of development. To improve the status of women and their role in the process of development, such development should be an integral part of the global project for the establishment of a New International Economic

Order based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common internal and cooperation among our States. (ibid.: 21-22)

One can see how precisely the process has affected women. Firstly, the **capital accumulation** and technology. This has had a profoundly displacing effect on women. It is seen in the historical decline in employment opportunities for women with no signs of the decline being reversed. There is loss of valuable skills of women. Secondly, **increased dualism**. There is a small modern and developed sector, called 'organized' sector and a vast, scattered, un-integrated units of production called the 'unorganized' sector. Because of the subordinate status of women they are drawn into the unorganized sector.

Thirdly, **political economy** of women has been in addition subject to the continuing ideology of patriarchy where the relation between the sexes are unequal, discriminatory and oppressive. These relations are not merely ideological, they draw their strength from a material base through production i.e. women's labour and reproduction relations (women's role in child bearing, rearing and family maintenance) that links women's lives and leaves them in a state of dependence. The retention of structures of patriarchy has resulted in distortion commercialization. Dowry, increasing violence against women and general devaluation of women through various forms of exploitation and the manifestation of these new disorder.

Fourthly, the **strategies for upliftment** to improve the position of women followed so far have had little impact because, like schemes for the upliftment of poor and backward classes, they do not seek to strike at the conditions that cause the subordination of women but merely seek to alleviate some of the more immediately vicious emancipations. Even the alleviations have been ineffective as demonstrated by the increasing marginalization and pamperization of women in the country and the escalating violence against women.

#### **DEVELOPMENT DISPLACES WOMEN**

The major and most serious threat of technological change in India has been the displacement of female labour in several industries directly leading to increased poverty among women. While agricultural modernization has a mixed effect creating employment for some and displacing others in rural and other small industries, the impact has been unequivocally negative. The new jobs and new income earning openings tend to be taken by men even if some of these displace jobs previously done by women. The process occurs because of the inability of women to move out to new openings. These inabilities came from difficulty of physical movement and lack of endowment in new education and skills. At both the points discrimination is inherent due to the existence of male authority within the family and outside. This has intensified the dichotomisation of the



relationship between men and women, leaving women relatively worse off than men.

### **STRUCTURE OF PATRIARCHY**

Development is taking place within a patriarchal structure that accords an inferior position to women, denies them equal access and control over crucial resources. These resources are crucial because they can enhance the quality of life and low enhance one's potential to contribute to the development of society. Among them are good working conditions, fair and just rewards, education and training, health care and authority and power for decision. In some cases, patriarchy assumes new forms. Occasionally there may be loosening of fetters, but new problems may compound the final result. The underlying theme of this ideological structure is discrimination and subordination. Various forms of discrimination are enforced, maintained and extended through social control and devaluation of women. There has been not merely discrimination but a phenomenal increase in violence against women, that threaten their lives, security and physical and emotional integrity. Killing for non-fulfillment of dowry, female foeticide, harassment, prostitution, rape - these are all crimes against the female half of the humanity, a violation of their human rights.

✓ Maitreyi Krishnaraj views patriarchy in five ways:- (i) Women-workers are treated unequally; (ii) Less endowment for women; (iii) Subordination

through violence; (iv) Media's negative portrayal; (v) Support system for women prove traps for women (ibid, : 82 )

Technology today is the most crucial resource for development. **Is technology gender neutral?** Who takes decision on introduction of new techniques and whose interests are served? The relationship between technology and socio-economic structure is a complex one and the new technology in certain spheres while throwing women of some classes out of employment have also increased household incomes in some others. A women being an earner or adding to the family's income level does not alter fundamental inequalities in terms of control over crucial resources authority and decision-making and freedom of choice. This has not altered the status of women. Technological policy is inevitably entangled with the problem of poverty of women, absolute and relative. Technology indicates power. Technological change can spell absolute deprivation of women at work by simply eliminating their designed task in labour processes or technology may promote male substitution. What needs to be remembered is that human society has two halves; men and women. However, women do not wield equal power and choice in the case of technology. As the economy moves from subsistence to a modernized, monetized sector, often women are worst loser.

The connections between technology and women can be examined in many dimensions: (a) Impact on employment; (b) Impact on nature of

work; (c) Impact on health, nutrition; (d) Impact on general social status; (e) Availability of technology for increasing productivity and lessening drudgery.

Scattered evidence has shown that, by and large, the impact of technology for women has been negative. Even when a class of women are getting technical education, the choice of courses tend to be sex biased.

**María Mies** examines the effects of capitalist development on the life and work condition of poor rural women. The most important result of her analysis of even more areas of life and economy into the capitalist market economy has not improved the situation of women but on the contrary, their chances for survival and a human life have deteriorated everywhere. This applies particularly to poor, rural subsistence produce. The deterioration is not the result of some 'pre-capitalist backwardness' or of 'feudalism' but is the inevitable effect of capitalist modernization.

Feminists view the role of the State is the establishment, maintenance and further restructuring of capitalist patriarchal relations and the subordination of women; a fundamental critique of the methodology, used in social science research and social survey from a feminist point of view, a feminist critique of technology and particularly the patriarchal capitalist concept progress prevalent both in capitalist and socialist societies. The latter became particularly relevant with the appearance of new reproduction technology and genetic engineering. Moreover, on the basis of

this analysis a discussion has started between feminist and the ecology and alternative movement and a critique of those who are the way out of today's crisis in a dualization of the economy. In this context, the development of a feminist perspective of a future society, a perspective which comprises the totality of reality, has become the urgent task for today and tomorrow.

**Leela Dube** stresses that by ignoring women as social actors who contribute to continuity and change in society and the social sciences have seriously impaired their understanding of the total social reality (Dube, 1986 : xi). According to her the supposed unequal contribution of the two sexes to human reproduction as expressed through the symbolism of **seed** and **earth** provides the rationalization for a system in which women stands alienated from productive resources has no control over her own labour power and is denied rights over her own offspring.

In this there are essays on development which attempt to bring into the open the invisible or partially visible components of women's role in production and in decision-making. An inadequate understanding of these affects the programmes of development adversely. It also analyses the impact of development adversely. **Joan Mencher** deplores the lack of development programmes which focus on women and the inadequate attention of planners and implementers of programmes to the roles of women in production. She provides data on women's participation in agriculture from four villages in Kerala. The important supervisory roles of

women and their share in the making of decision in the organization of production are not acknowledged even in passing. By neglecting women in trade union activities perhaps a highly motivated and capable source of organization and leadership is ignored.

In this context, **Neera Desai** seeks to bring out the class contradictions among women and the effect of these on the movement. She argues the growth of complacency among middle and upper middle class women - the principal recipients of the gains of development in the form of education and increasing opportunities for employment and positions of leadership - resulted in a lessening of awareness regarding women's oppression and the need to identify its roots. It also dampened the spirit of resistance against the pervasive gender hierarchy and gender inequality in society. There developed an indifference towards what was happening to the masses of women due to unequal growth. The period after independence was characterized by a general apathy towards the need for mobilization of women. Desai indicates, however, that in recent years the situation has changed. A few questions come up: what about the different levels and forms of resistance? Is there any women's movement in India? Is the complex relationship between class and gender not compounded by the existence of castes, ethnic groups and the diversity of religion and religious experience?

**Alfred de Souza** in his study observes that there is great discrepancy between the idealised concept of women and the real life situation in which women find themselves. In both the industrially advanced and less developed countries, women are burdened with cumulative and economic discriminatory practices, which until recently, have been taken for granted as though they were part of the irritable scheme of things established by nature.

Legislation on marriage and divorce, though socially motivated, has been relatively ineffective because of loopholes in the law. The problem with progressive social legislation is that the new rights given to women are opposed to prevailing social and cultural norms. Thus a woman may assert her right to divorce, but a divorce and her re-marriage will meet with strong social disapproval. (De Souza, 1975 : 115).

**Malvika Karlekar** in the context of development poses two questions: Does the spread of mechanization always affect women's development opportunities adversely? And does cash income on the part of women necessarily work towards their economic independence? She answers both these questions in the negative on the basis of her study of a group of sweeper women in a locality in Delhi. The new opportunities presented by modern technology, education and urban development are being used by men in this community. By contrast the women are getting increasingly entrenched in their traditional occupation as sweepers.

Scavenging, since it is considered polluting, has remained an exclusive monopoly of this caste and now offers increased opportunities for employment because of urban expansion.

In another study she raises question related to education and its implication on women. She says before proceeding further it is necessary to have a workable definition of equality in the context of education. Does it imply equal education for all or does it mean equal opportunities to be educated? (Karlekar, 1989: 15) There is a world of difference as **Mary Warnock** says between the equal right to education and right to equal education.

The contemporary higher education scene for girls is a good example - how restrictions in access are justified on grounds of supposed differences between men and women. College going women in India are a tiny percentage of the population; an increase in this number is linked to social perceptions of femininity. Often, a girl's educational choice is determined by what is regarded as fit for her and not by her ability or aptitude.

Finally, let us see what **Vandana Shiva** (1989) has to say in this regard. Her book "Staying Alive" has grown out of her involvement with women's struggle for survival in India over the last decade. It is informed both by the suffering and insights of those who struggle to sustain and conserve life, and whose struggles question the meaning of progress, a science, a development which destroys life and threatens survival. The

death of nature is central to this threat of survival. The earth is rapidly dying, her forests are dying, her soils are dying, her waters are dying, her air is dying.

“The violence to nature, which seems intrinsic to the dominant development model is also associated with violence to women who depend on nature for existence for themselves, their families, their societies. This violence against nature and women is built into the very mode of perceiving both and forms the basis of the current development paradigm. Contemporary science and development conserve the ideological roots and bases of the scientific and industrial revolution even as they unfold into new areas of activity and new domains of subjugation. The new relationship of man’s domination and mastery over nature was thus also associated with new patterns of domination. A mastery over women and their exclusion from participation as partners in both science and development”. (Shiva, 1989: XVI)

A science that does not respect nature’s need and a development that does not respect people’s needs, inevitably threaten survival. Indian women’s ecological struggle in India is aimed simultaneously at liberating nature from ceaseless exploitation and themselves from limitless marginalization. They are creating a feminist ideology that transcends gender, and a political practice that is humanly inclusive, they are challenging patriarchy’s ideological claim to universalisation, not with another



universalising tendency, but with diversity and they are challenging the dominant concept of power as violence, with the alternative concept of power as non-violence.

It can recapitulate the rationale behind the dominant science and technology and development paradigm that is responsible for the current economic and ecological crisis, and posits the reclaiming of the feminine principle as a non-violent, non-gendered and humanly inclusive alternatives.

Women of the third world have conserved those categories of thought and action which makes survival possible. Ecology movements, women's movements and peace movements across the world can draw inspiration from these categories of focus of opposite and challenge to the dominant categories of western patriarchy which rule the world today in the name of development and progress even while they destroy nature and threaten the life of entire cultures and communities. It is to focus on and pay tribute to the leadership of millions of unknown women in India, struggling for a life that is simultaneously peaceful and just.

To sum up, the social scientists have been critical of the over emphasis on economic growth and exclusion or neglect of social parameters from "development" planning, programmes and processes in the context of women. Further, the feminists critique of the exclusion of gender in the development paradigm has added weight to the urgency of treating "development" as social and human development. However, even though

the development discourse may have taken cognizance of the need to redefine development, planning and implementation of programmes seem oblivious of the critique. what is worth noting is that, even four decades of development experimentation and very focused critiques of the modernization - development paradigm, processes and programmes, women continue to be their victim since the family or household intervenes as a powerful variable.

The systematic inferior position of women inside and outside the household in many societies points to the necessity of treating gender as a force of its own in development analysis. In fact, the importance of gender as a crucial parameter in social and economic analysis is complementary to, rather than competitive with, the variables of class, ownership, occupations, incomes and family status.

***CHAPTER - III***  
***Patriarchy, Ideology***  
***and***  
***Contemporary India***



### CHAPTER - III

#### PATRIARCHY, IDEOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

"Patriarchy" etymologically refers to rule by the father. S. Ruth observes that in a society where men have controlled knowledge and have interpreted the classical texts, it is not surprisingly that women have lost the power of naming or explaining and defining for themselves the realities of their own experiences (Ghadially 1988: 21). Thus in a patriarchal set-up only the masculine definitions of every aspect of life is recognized. This indicates that patriarchy is a form of political power. 'Patriarchy' is defined by Hartman (1976 : 138) as a system of male oppression of women. It is a set of hierarchial relations which has a material base, in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enables them to control women. Thus this term mainly refers to power - relation which in a discursive - way relegate women to subordinated positions, by forcing them to follow the norms of behaviour as determined by the males.

Patriarchy, is not uni-causal : infact 'both men and women participated in creating patriarchy'. Patriarchy can be regarded as a universal feature of oppression, throughout history. Patriarchial relations exist in almost all institutions - social, economic, political, cultural, etc. The quest of any scientific endeavour must be to change the status-quo. In this context when one deals with the concept of 'patriarchy' and its varied

manifestation, one finds its ubiquitous existence visible in almost every aspect of our lives.

Patriarchy legitimates culturally - backed bio-pysiological differences between men and women as the basis of unequal access to resources, opportunities and rewards and to rights. Status-inequality between men and women is an age-old phenomenon reinforced through patriarchy and its institutions, gendered division of labour, and social institutions like marriage, dowry, property and inheritance, and subordination. "Patriarchy is not just a matter of differential distribution of power; it is built into the very mechanics of production. There is the existence of a **patriarchial mode of production**". (Walby 1994 : 22-28).

We also see in *Persistent Inequalities* (Tinker 1990) the contributors ask the question: why do inequalities persist? Male-female relationships are discussed in terms of the economic development theory, and it is observed that inequalities persist in the face of development.

It is seen how new forms of subordination and gender asymmetry have superseded the old, leaving patriarchial control undistributed in India. Industries like the textile industry, which were the exclusive (or men exclusive) domain of women, have been taken over by men strengthening patriarchy and existing humanities. (Majumdar & Sharma, 1990 : 185-197)

Let us have a look at the patriarchial ideology as seen by the feminists and place it in contemporary times, whether it is opposed to

development or going hand in hand alongwith development. There are few questions raised in the beginning, which can be partially answered or can be attempted to answer. The feminists perspective is convincing to some extent, but many a times extreme stands are taken and patriarchial ideology is distortedly viewed in contemporary times. A brief analysis on their perspective would give us a vivid picture of patriarchy in recent times. Let us state the main arguments given by feminists on development process and they try to analyse to what extent it holds good or true in Indian context.

Firstly, it is viewed that development is not gender neutral is the recent discovery of feminist - consciousness. In fact, patriarchy is inherent in the development system and hence favours men. But if one looks at the development process since independence, and the ideology it holds, then certainly one can argue it differently. The policies, schemes and strategies were started for the benefit of women as nothing constructive had been done before planned development was introduced. The five year plans, special programmes, constitutional guarantees, legislative measures are to uplift women as they were lagging way behind men. So many steps were taken to improve the socio-economic conditions of women. The Government of India, various State Governments and other voluntary organizations have started so many welfare programmes like CSWI, NCW, National Policy of Education, Department of Women and Child Development, Women Development Cooperations, NGOs, reservations for women etc. All these

planned efforts were the impact of development hence it favoured women more than men. if development was patriarchal by nature then conscious efforts would not have been made favouring women.

Secondly, it is said that development has missed women and have hurt women more in the process and therefore women experienced anti-development. But anti-development is only a misinterpretation because if we have a look at the government reports, Human development report and available statistical data then we see Indian women are not limited to the walls of the house. They are independent to a great extent. Perhaps, there is no field where women are not sharing the duties and responsibilities. They are working as Professors, I.A.S., I.P.S., Lawyers, Scientists, Doctors, Engineers, etc. They are backbone of Indian agriculture, so much so they are playing a key role in the development of cottage and small rural industries. If we look at four developmental decades (1951-91) then we see perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women in the country. Major achievements were in terms of health, education and employment. For example, expectancy of life for females at birth was 31.6 years in 1951 was estimated to rise to 58.1 years in 1986-90 and it did rise to 59.2 years. Similarly in the field of education, there is considerable improvement in female literacy as it came up to 39.19 from 8.9 in 1951. It has improved five times from its previous rate. Drop-out rates in primary schools has also showed continuous decline. Female literacy is higher (66

per cent) as compared to male literacy (43 per cent) thus provides some success. Even female work participation has grown from 19.7 per cent in 1981 to 22.3 per cent in 1991 and now 25.89 per cent.

Thirdly, feminists argue that women were in better position prior to planned development i.e. during pre-independence time. Current theories of development have been inadequate in general, but particularly inadequate for women. The root of under-development lie in the particular history of the development of capitalism in an uneven way.

Now if we actually have a look at the historical development of women then the picture is altogether different. From available information it is seen that women in ancient times enjoyed considerable freedom, so far as political, social and educational activities were concerned. But in post-vedic period onwards the women's position started deteriorating. Medieval period was known as the black period. Women were deprived from all social and economic rights. Even in British period there was hardly any change. But since independence, because of the conscious efforts by Government, women have been entering salaried remunerative occupations and professions, and are increasing substantially. Women are absorbing themselves at present, in various occupations and enjoying equal status more or less at par with men. They are working with almost all types of jobs such as technical, professional and non-professional in both private and public sectors, residing in rural and urban areas. This is the significant



change in Indian society. This is definitely the result of industrialization, development of science and technology and implementation of policies, programmes and schemes for women. These all are the direct impact of planned development and enhance women's position.

Socialist feminists stated that patriarchy was itself inextricably related to capitalism and the root of under-development like in the particular history of development of capitalism as stated above. Then one can argue that if capitalism had been a primary cause of women's inferior position, then women should have found greater equality in non-capitalistic nations. In actuality, women had not prospered under the brands of communism found in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or China. In those nations too, women were clustered in the jobs that paid less than those filled by men of equivalent education. The change in the economic structure of the Indian society during the British period, that is from a **'feudal to a capitalist structure'**, reinforced with the introduction of liberal western education, led to the growth of the conception of individualised sense of self-respect for human personality and urge to individual initiative among increasing sections of the Indian people. The new economic structure and intellectual forces brought about a steady transformation of social institutions. It was also seen that capitalism led to vast employment opportunities in urban areas and this led to migration from rural areas, thus in the process there was disintegration of joint families and the birth of nuclear families. With this

change, women got opportunities to make the most out of their independent family and availed the benefits of development process and thus gave rise to middle class women, who are using their full potential to be successful career women and trying to have a equal footing with their male counterparts. The working class women pursued an array of occupations and enjoyed some degree of autonomy. We see that now more and more women are demanding autonomy by seeking their identity as persons or members of society equal to men.

Again, with the inception of capitalism and fading of feudalism the rural women were also benefited because the abolition of landlordism and the break down of its socio-cultural milieus had affected women of the stratified agrarian community in a positive manner. The aboition of feudalism certainly gave a new izzat (honour) to women as it has eliminated sexual oppression by feudal lords. Even in rural areas, tribal women have gained considerable consciousness about their status and role, education, employment and decision-making.

Fourthly, feminists view that the various forms of exploitation are the manifestation of the new disorder 'development' i.e. dowry, violence on women and general devaluation of women in work place. But we see women in a better position only as a result of the new developmental model. The constitution of the National Commission for Women may be understood as a significant step in the right direction. Traditional patriarchial control over

women, especially within the family, have become considerably weak. Women's movements against their oppression and exploitation and for equality in family and society have created a high level of consciousness. There has also been a visible reduction in injustices and atrocities committed on women by the family members, employers. Besides articulating the quest for equality in general, specific demands have been made for equal wages, for recognition of women's work in the family and for special provisions for women to facilitate their participation in decision-making in all walks of life. Even as women are being gradually independent with the aid of education, they are conscious of their rights and avoid being exploited. For that matter, educated women need not give dowry as they are employed and are equal earning members like their spouse. It is seen these days that educated girls and boys find their respective spouses and the question of dowry does not arise many a times. As the traditional concept of a women's role is gradually changing and girls have started taking up white collar jobs. In some families the earning of the girls are set aside for providing her dowry and marriage expenses but gradually the inhibition of the parents to be supported by the earnings of a daughter is also breaking down. There are extreme cases of parents not wanting the daughter to get married, as it would deprive them of her earnings.

Fifthly, as feminists argue that development has displaced female labour in several industries, which is most serious threat of technological

change in India. Women do not wield equal power and choice in the use of technology. This change can spell absolute deprivation of women at work by promoting male substitution.

But, when one looks at the career complex of women, then we see the trend of gainful occupation on point of educated women, which started since independence. It is accelerating eventually. The recognition of equality as a fundamental human right irrespective of sex, race, etc. by UNO in 1948 has opened the doors of freedom to women all over the world, India being no exception - she is striving to bridge up the centuries old gap between the man's and the so-called women's sphere of work. In this onward march of hers, control over reproduction by scientific devices has helped in making her an independent being. The process of adaptation to new opportunities is opening before her and assimilation there of, is proceeding. The employment opportunities for women seem to be expanding and this trend is gaining pace everywhere. In many sphere for jobs or entrances there is a specific number of seats reserved for women, which makes it easier to achieve, for example, Bank Services, State Civil Services etc. A landmark constitutional amendment Bill recently passed by the Indian Parliament makes a 30 per cent reservation for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas by rough estimates. Once all these bodies are constituted, and election held, as many as 8,00,000 women at the grass-root level would be entering public

life. This legislation, therefore, represents major step in empowering women and in ensuring their participation in democratic institutions at the elementary level.

Sixthly, the eco-feminists view that violence to nature, which seems intrinsic to the dominant development model, is also associated with violence to women, who depend on nature for sustenance, for themselves, their families, their societies. This is due to the contemporary science and technological advancement which with industrial revolution has unfolded into new areas of activity and new domain of subjugation. The new relationship of man's domination and mastery over nature was thus also associated with new patterns of domination and mastery over women and their exclusion from participating as partners in both science and development.

If we counter argue to the eco-feminists who tend to draw analogy between nature and women is kind of a extreme stand. The very fact that one associates women with nature and men with the dominating nature of science is fallacious as in this manner, women are told and made to accept that they are weak and modern technology is only exploiting them. But if one looks at the present scenario, then one can say that women have developed gradually with the advancement in science and technology as time and again there have been avenues open for both sexes in almost all the fields. Survival of fittest seems to be dominant, irrespective of your sex. The women's movements, feminist consciousness and gender awareness is

the result of development in science and technology where education and media have influenced women to come out of the four walls and be aware of their personal rights individually and collectively to fight for a cause and get success in the process.

Seventhly, the Radical Feminists view that women were inextricably different from men and atleast equal, or possibly superior to them. There seems to be slight problem in their definition, because the very cause they are fighting is being self defeated as they claim to seek for equality a 1:1 ratio in every sphere but how is it that women are possibly superior to men. The patriarchal ideology which existed since centuries is being weakened as it is dominating and claims to be superior to women.

Finally, let us analyse if patriarchal ideology is **strengthened** or **weakened** in contemporary times, with above points and arguments one can say that patriarchal ideology is weakening, due to the impact of development which helps in doing away with the rigid, traditional attitude of male dominance. patriarchy is not inherited in development process rather any attempt to assess the status of women in a society should ideally start from the social framework. Social structures, cultural norms and value systems are important determination of women's roles and their position in society. Thus influence social expectation regarding behaviour of the two sexes, both as individual, and in relation to each other. Social traditions are a major influence in shaping attitudes as well as behaviour patterns of

human groups emerging trends of society cannot be viewed in isolation from them. The response of the structural forms of forces of change in other sectors of life is not easy to predict. Social structure can stimulate certain trends of change, but at the same time it can also prove to be impediment in their path.

As women are improving their status, the major factors that are responsible for change in the perception of working women about their new roles both on the domestic as well as employment front include social legislation, industrialization, urbanization, education, mobility and their exposure to development that have been taking place in European and American societies. The process of modernization have brought about attitudinal and behavioural changes among working women relating to family, marriage, education and employment. Their training, orientation and outlook provides a strong impulse for change and modernization.

It is surely truism today that women's issues no longer belong exclusively to the women's movement, if they ever did. This situation is especially visible in the world of development, and finds its clearest expression in proliferation of references to 'gender' in local, national and international fora, among state functionaries, development experts, academics and activist may of whom would not think of themselves as feminist - one hears repeatedly of gender bias, gender sensitization, gender planning and gender training, to mention just some of the more common

examples of its contemporary use. Firstly we see gender norms for women in the 1990s are in any case being remoulded : the new cosmopolitan role model - one who can be a perfect housewife and still go out and get what she wants.

Secondly, this dichotomy of public and private sphere is open to considerable confusion. Only a very small percentage of women are in fact exclusively associated with the 'inside' sectors of the urban and rural middle classes and their numbers are decreasing. One would like to believe that the contemporary changes overtaking us, disturbing as they no doubt are, also harbour the possibility of bringing our political and intellectual engagements into new and fruitful terrain. The time has come for those who have been working at the interface of gender and development to radically refigure its priorities, not by secluding ourselves within some putative 'pure' economy, but by broadening feminist conceptions of the economy itself. Reseeing the notion of gender from its ritualistic incantations and making it really work for a more emancipatory and inclusive social order is one of the ways open to us, one we have every reason to take.



## ***CHAPTER - IV***

### ***Role of Development***

## CHAPTER - IV

### ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT

During the post-Independence period it can be seen that there have been conscious effort to change the position of women from inequality to that of equality. It is now necessary to examine as to what is the effect of all the efforts in terms of visible attainments. Indian planners have generally seen development as a process comprehending the entire social system. Maximum production, full employment the attainment of economic equality and social justice constitute the accepted objectives of planning. Plan for development must place balanced empahsis on all these.

**'Development'** touches all aspects of community life and, has to be viewed comprehensively. Economic planning thus extends out into extra economic sphere - educational, social and cultural. This broad approach to development was to give shape to the policy of transforming India into a welfare state as directed by the Constitution. The overall development process envisages a share in the development generated by the Plans equally for women and men. Since the Constitution stresses the need for promoting, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, the welfare and development of women received particular attention from the beginning.

As attempts were made to introduce programmes of development, aimed at enabling women to play their role in our national life in an effective

manner. Partly as a result of these various measures and partly because of the general processes of social change which have speeded up since independence, the status of women in our country has **'undoubtedly undergone considerable change'**. The Government of India, therefore, felt that a comprehensive examination of all questions relating to the rights and status of women in this country would provide useful guidelines for the formulation of social policies. For this purpose, it constituted the **Committee on the Status of Women** by a Resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1971, the report known as 'Towards Equality'.

In this report, the approach to the study of status of women in India indicates three major dimensions and objectives of their inquiry:

- a) To assess the impact of the constitutional, legal and administrative provision on the social status of women, their education and employment, particularly in the rural sector during the last two decades.
  - b) To examine the status of women in the changing social pattern and
  - c) To suggest remedial and other measures in the fields of law, education, employment, population policy, etc, which would enable women to play their full and proper role in building up the nation.
- Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as Indian men.

Let us now have a brief look at the **schemes, policies, measures, strategies and programmes** made by the Government for the development of women in India since independence.

**Constitutional Measures** - The Indian Constitution guarantees certain rights and privileges for women through Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. **Article 14** ensures equal rights and opportunities to men and women in the political, economic and social spheres. While **Article 15** prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, etc. and **Article 15(3)** makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women. Similarly, **Article 16** provides equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens. **Article 42** ensures the state to make provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. Above all, the Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through **Article 15 (A) (e)** to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

**Legislative Measures** - To safeguard the various constitutional rights, the state has enacted the following women-specific and women-related legislations. **The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955**, amended in 1976 provides, the right for a girl to repudiate a child marriage before attaining maturity, whether the marriage has been consummated or not. **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956** as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the

sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence. **The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961** made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence. In 1986 the second amendment makes husband or in-law punishable, if a woman commits suicide within seven years of her marriage and it has been proved that she had been subjected to cruelty. **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971** legalises abortion by qualified professional on humanitarian or medical grounds. **The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976** raises the age for marriage of girls to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 and makes offence under this Act cognizable.

As per this Act, the Table - I presented below shows the mean age of marriage by sex in India from 1901 to 1993.

MEAN AGE OF MARRIAGE BY SEX IN INDIA FROM 1901 TO 1993

Year	Males	Females
1901	20.0	15.1
1911	20.3	15.2
1921	20.7	15.7
1931	18.6	12.7
1941	19.9	14.7
1951	19.9	15.6
1961	21.3	15.5
1971*	22.4	17.2
1981*	23.3	18.3
1993	N.A.	19.6

\* The data excludes Assam and refer to singulate mean age at marriage worked out by Hajnal's method.

**The Factories Act of 1948** (amended upto 1979) provides for establishment of a creche where 30 women are employed (including casual and contract labourers). **The Equal Remuneration Act of 1979** provides, equal pay to men and women both for equal work. Amendments to **Criminal Law 1983** provides a punishment for seven years in ordinary cases of rape and 10 years for custodial rape cases. The maximum punishment may go upto life imprisonment. A new enactment of **Indecent Representations of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986** have also been passed to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation.

#### **UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS (1951-56 to 1997-2002)**

Now coming to the five year plans, let us examine the aims and objectives behind them. The concept of women's development in the **First Five Year Plan (1951-56)** was mainly welfare oriented. The Central Social Welfare Board undertook a number of welfare measures throughout the voluntary sectors. In the **Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)** women were organized into Mahila Mandals to act as focal points at the grassroot level for the development of women. The **Third, Fourth and other plans (1961-74)** accorded high priority to education of women. Measures to improve

maternal and child health service, supplementary feeding for children and nursing and expectant mothers were also introduced.

In the **Fifth Plan 1974-78**) there was a shift in the approach for women's development from 'welfare' to 'development' as part of social welfare as enlarged and considered to be an organised function designed to cope up with several problems of the family and the role of women. The new approach aimed to an integration of welfare with development services.

In **Sixth Five year Plan (1980-85)** was a landmark in the history of women's development as it received recognition as one of the developmental sectors and included here in as a new chapter for the first time in the history of developmental planning. It adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a three-pronged thrust on **health, education and employment**.

In the **Seventh Plan (1985-90)**, the developmental programmes for women continued with a major objective of raising economic and social status and to bring them to the mainstream. A significant step in this direction was to identify and promote the beneficiary-oriented programmes for women in different developmental sectors which extended direct benefits to women.

The **Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)** ensures that the benefits of development from different sections do not by-pass women and special programmes will be implemented to complement the general development

programmes. Therefore, the flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment will be monitored with a greater vigil. Women must be able to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process. This approach is shift to '**empowerment**' from development.

**The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)** The main objective is to achieve '**growth with equity**' need to be seen in the context of four important dimensions of state policy. These are (a) quality of life of the citizen; (b) generation of productive employment; (c) regional balance; and (d) self-reliance. It aims to empower all the disadvantaged sections of the population, especially the SCs, STs and OBCs, minorities and women to integrate them in the mainstream by setting regional centres, special cells, enforcing reservation and monitoring programmes and thus bringing socio-economic change and development.

Now it is important to see the impact the policies and programmes by Government. To what extent it was implemented successfully? As one sees it over a period of four developmental decades (1951-91) have brought about changes in the socio-economic status of women in the country. Major achievements is seen in fields like health, employment and education.

In the field of **Health**, significant gains in respect of women's health status have been achieved. Expectancy of life for female at birth which was 31.6 years in 1951 was estimated to rise to 59.1 years in 1995. The infant



mortality rate declined from 127 in 1970 to 70 in 1992. Similarly, the sex differential which was quite high in the 70s has now been bridged. However, the 0-4 age specific mortality rate even though it has significantly declined from 55.1 in 1970 to 28.2 in 1992, continue to show higher female mortality. Although, maternal mortality rate in rural India still continues to be uncomfortably high at 324 per 100,000 live births, but it showed a declined trend from 468 in 1980 to 324 in 1989 based 1991 report.

This Table - II shows the life expectancy at birth from 1901 to 1990.

#### LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

Year	Male	Female
1901	23.63	23.96
1951	32.45	31.66
1961	41.89	40.55
1970-75	50.50	49.00
1976-80	52.50	52.10
1981-85	55.40	55.70
1986-90	57.70	58.10

Similarly in the field of **education** a number of steps were taken up for promoting women's education and equality in line with National Policy of Education, 1986. The main strategy for education was a distinct orientation in favour of women's equality and empowerment. There is considerable improvement in female literacy as it came upto the present rate of 39.19 from 8.9 per cent in 1951. The enrollment rate of girls in primary schools

has also improved from 64.1 in 1980-81 to 92.9 in 1993-94. The drop-out rates amongst girls at primary level showed a continuous decline from 62.5 in 1980-81 to 39.1 in 1993-94. However, the higher decadal growth rate of female literacy 66 per cent as compared to male literacy 43 per cent provides some consolation.

Table - III shows the progress of literacy by sex in India from 1901 to 1991.

#### PROGRESS OF LITERACY BY SEX IN INDIA FROM 1901 TO 1991

Census Year	Percentage of literates to total population		
	Males	Females	Persons
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1901	9.83	0.69	5.35
1911	10.56	1.05	5.92
1921	12.21	1.81	7.16
1931	15.59	2.93	9.50
1941	24.90	7.30	26.10
1951	27.16	8.86	18.33
1961	40.40	15.34	28.31
1971	45.95	21.97	34.45
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75
1991	64.13	39.39	52.21

In the field of **employment**, available statistics also shows that there has been a gradual increase in the number of women taking up employment in India. The document published by the Census Commissioner indicates that female work participation has grown from 25.89 per cent in 1981 to 28.27 per cent in 1991. There is an increase of 2.68 per cent in women's

participation in the total country's workforce. The census document also reveals that the increase in the workforce during the decade was much more than the growth in the population of women in the country during the same period.

The change, to some extent, could be due to the special efforts made by the Department of Women and Child Development to increase women's work in the informal sector and thus to remove this present insensitivity. Similarly, number of women in the organised sector has also risen from 12.2 per cent (27.9 lakhs) in 1981 to 14.8 per cent (40.3 lakhs) in 1993. Of the total 40.3 lakh women in the organised sector, public sector accounts 61.3 per cent while the private sector accounts for 38.7 per cent.

Further, employment of women in the Central Government has also been rising steadily from year to year and women's share has grown from 3.64 per cent in 1981 to 7.5 per cent in 1990 reflecting already a change in the women's attitude to participate in the development administration. In management level it has increased marginally, (13.6 per cent) rise in 1987 from 1985. Women's participation in decision-making in government (taking the IAS, IPS and IFS services into account) has also increased from 379 in 1983 to 565 in 1992 showing an increase of 49.1 per cent over a period of seven years.

According to the National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) there are 50,000 women entrepreneurs in the country today. They are

managing hotels, computers, enterprises, garment manufacturing and establishments dealing with processed foods, chemicals, electronics and engineering goods. According to 1981 census, 21 per cent of women are main workers as against 53 per cent men.

#### **WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES**

There are three types of welfare programmes categorized as rural, urban and other programmes through voluntary organizations.

a) **Programmes in the rural areas:**

Welfare Extension Projects, Family and Child Welfare Projects, Organisation of Mahila Mandals, Training Schemes for workers, etc.

b) **Programmes in Urban areas:**

Welfare Extension Projects and Working Women's Hostels. In urban areas it varies from region to region. The municipalities and local administration are responsible for providing basic formal education and health facilities like schools, hospitals etc. many welfare extension projects are there to meet the requirements of the problem.

c) **Other programmes:**

Grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations, condensed courses of education for adult women, Adult literacy and social education for women, Craft Training Centre, Socio-economic programmes, Nutrition programmes, Social Defence programmes, Border Area Programmes and Homes for women.

### GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES:

To strengthen the national mechanism, the government set up an exclusive **Department of Women and Child Development** under the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1985 and designating the same as the national machinery for the advancement of women in India. The support structures of the national mechanism, instituted over a period of time include the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), a charitable company registered under Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956 assisting both in promoting voluntary action and implementing programmes fully funded by the Department; the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), a society registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860 extending both research and manpower development services to the Department; the National Commission for Women (NCW) a statutory body set up in 1992 for safeguarding the inputs of women; the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), set up in 1993 to extend credit to poor and assetless women through the intermediation of NGOs; the National Children's Fund to support projects of NGOs for Child Development Welfare and the National Creche fund to extend assistance to NGOs to open new creches.

The **Department of Women and Child Development**, in its full capacity, formulates policies and programmes, affecting women and coordinates the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental

organisations working to improve the lot of women in the country. The programmes of the Department which are women specific include - employment and income generation, welfare and support services and gender sensitisation and awareness generation programmes. These programmes play the role of being both supplementary and complimentary to the other women related development programmes in the sector of health, education and labour and employment, rural and urban development, etc. Some of the important on-going interventions of the government of India.

The **Special Thrust on Employment and Training for Women**, which in line with the Eighth Plan strategy, the nodal Department of Women and Child Development has reset its priorities to accord special emphasis on employment and income generation activities for women. The main objective in all these efforts is to make women economically empowered and self-reliant through the programmes like **Training-cum-Employment Production Centres** which extends financial assistance to public sectors or corporations or voluntary organizations to train women in non-traditional trade like electronics, computer programming, fashion technology, garment making, office management, etc. Since 1983, 52,502 women and girls have been benefited in receiving training and employment opportunities. A total expenditure of Rs.27.19 crores was spent under this programme during the last ten years.

The **Central Social Welfare Board** had started the socio-economic programme in 1985. Under this programme, financial assistance is extended to voluntary organisations to undertake variety of activities, providing opportunities of work and wage to needy women like widows, destitutes, disabled, etc. Particularly those coming from economically backward and underdeveloped areas.

Then there are **Women Development Corporation** which started in 1986 in all States and Union Territories, playing the role of catalytic agents to create sustained income generating activities for women.

The other programmes were like **Mahila Samriddhi Yojana (MSY)** started in 1993 to promote self-reliance and a measure of economic independence among rural women. The **National Perspective Plan** for women in 1988 was set up to facilitate mainstreaming of women's issues in policies and programmes, to create for them a democratic, egalitarian, secular and cooperative social structure.

The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993** mark historic events in the advancement of Indian women as they ensure one-third of total seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies, both in rural and urban areas. Two years later in 1995 **Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)** was launched commemorating the 51st birth anniversary of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The plan is to coordinate and integrate and facilitate their convergence to empower women. IMY has three basic components:

convergence of inter-sectoral services, income generation activities and sustained process of awareness generation or education.

**Forward looking strategies** for the advancement of women is one of the significant documents to emerge from the International Decade for Women was divided into five sections dealing with equality, development, peace, areas of special concern and regional or international cooperation.

In 1992, the **National Commission for Women** was set up to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women, recommend remedial legislative measures, facilitate redressal of grievances and advise government on all policy matters affecting women. The Commission recommended amendments to the Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Custodial justice is recommended for women by the Commission. It took several initiatives to promote socio-economic advancement, empowerment and political participation. It is empowered to investigate cases of atrocities against women and deprivation of women's rights. It also organized a public enquiry on crimes against women.

There are a set of Constitutional Rights relating to the Violence Against Women. Some of them are like the Criminal Law Act 1983, Criminal Law Bill in 1980, Indian Evidence Act, 1872. Under this in case of rape and adultery which is an offence, the individual can be punished under this Act in case of violation.



Apart from this there are a few Acts which ensured women to have **Right to Children, Right to Property, Maintenance Acts.** Like **The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, Hindu Succession Act, 1950** which provides equal share to women in the properties of their father. Some others are **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, Indian Divorce Act, 1869 (Sections 36 & 37)**

**Institutional Mechanism for Women's Advancement** (Women's studies resource centre, 1995). As per this report India has kept in step with almost all the suggestions made by the U.N. and other frontline agencies providing support to women. The **Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI)** made a comprehensive review of the situation and status of women. The major areas of concern provided as a framework of reference, were the early age of marriage for girls, high rates of female mortality and illiteracy, low rates of female participation in the labour force, internal migration and its impact on the employment status. The critical outcome of the CSWI report was the recommendation in 1976 for the establishment of a **Women's Welfare and Development Bureau** in the Department of Social Welfare (Ministry of Education and Social Welfare). The same year witnessed the drawing up of a National Plan of action for women that would serve as a guideline not only at the national level but also at the State level.

The plan identified areas of health, family planning and nutrition, education, employment, legal provision and social welfare and called for

planned intervention for improving the conditions of women in India in these sectors. The Women's Welfare and Development Bureau is charged with the nodal responsibility of (a) coordination and collaborating with other Central Government Ministries, (b) initiating policies, programmes and measures, (c) collecting data and serves as a cleaning house, (d) monitoring programmes for women's welfare, (e) coordinating the implementation of programmes at the State Government level, (f) serving the national committee, the steering committee, inter-departmental coordination committee, etc. (g) administration of legislative enactments on prostitution, dowry, sati, etc.

The **monitoring cell** of the Women's Bureau set up in 1985 has 27 programmes in 8-10 departments to monitor. The emphasis has been on reviewing targets and in a limited way assessing the quality of services (motivating training and self esteem). The second type of projects relate to (a) employment generation as a single goal (b) utilization of employment generates with backward and forward linkages. They also visualize an overall of production relation as a major goal. Under the first category are five women development corporations.

The most dynamic of the programmes of the Women's Bureau in terms of ideology / approaches is the **Support of Employment Programmes (STEP)** initiated in 1986. The effort is to integrate women in the eight mainstream employment sectors namely agriculture, small animal

husbandry, handicrafts and handloom. In 1991, two more such programmes were planned by the Women's Bureau. A 50-Backward - District programme where the goal was to be to achieve female literacy and the other an area plan which integrate women and children into development was introduced.

#### ROLE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENT:

Even the **Women's movements** have had a strong impact in altering the status of women. Firstly, it has helped in contributing to the widening of the debate on women's issues in India. The reassessment of the challenges of growth, development and equity shared from women's perspective has generated interacting debates on dimensions and causes of gender inequality. Growth of women's studies, the women and development debate, reconstruction and reinterpretation of 'her own history', her identity, her subjectivity, have all influenced the dialectics of the women's movement and its agenda for action. It is seen in the past century that women's movements have broken through many barriers, transforming the way women live and contributing to broader social and political change. These movements may have varied in content, pace and scale from country to country, but they have shared a common concern for the advancement of women and the progress of society.

### **ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS:**

In recent years, scholars have paid increasing attention to the role of women in development and to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as effective vehicles for change. NGOs are non-governmental organized collectivities with the purpose 'organized' encompasses a wide range of structures from informal, unstructural associations and groups to highly structured and formalised collectivities. NGOs are both indigenous and international. They are private foundations funding indigenous organizations to implement programmes, indigenous women's groups, such as village women's credit associations, groups based on occupational distinctions, or groups informally created for a particular purpose, such as providing child care for working mothers. Some intermediary organizations that are large 'outsider' initiated. They catalyze and broker existing services for clients, train or provide services to local women and / or encourage the formation of client women's groups. NGOs also evolve, from a harnessing of existing action groups by outside leadership to further strengthen them and consolidate the position of women. Regarding women's programmes, the selection and design of these programmes are reflected in their different approaches to economic development depending on the specific issue.

### **ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMANCIPATING WOMEN FROM SUBORDINATION:**

The development of educational facilities in India after independence have benefited the women and encouraged them to seek employment and

to discard the traditional concepts. Education on aggregative cultural phenomenon viewed is in perspective to space and time, plays significant role in determining the various attributes of socio-economic and political development of an area. The reason behind the importance given to education being obvious, education is a value in itself, since it develops the personality and the rationality of individuals. Secondly, the usefulness of educated persons to society at large. Their knowledge by serving a social purpose, raises their status in society. Education provides the necessary qualification to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and consequently improves his or her socio-economic status.

With the recognition of the need to direct the process of social change and development towards certain desired goals, education has come to be increasingly regarded as a major instrument of social change. To our need one of the expectations from this directed use of education is that it will bring about reduction of inequalities in society, on the assumption that education leads to equalisation of status between individuals coming from hitherto unequal socio-economic strata of society. It was on this argument that the universal declaration of human rights included education as one of the basic rights of every human being. The constitution of the UNESCO directs its efforts to achieve the ideal of equality of educational opportunity without regard to race, sex or any distinctions, economic or social.

The revival of formal education to girls, however, started in the middle of the last century, thanks to the efforts of many liberal-minded reformers. According to the Report of the Education Commission, no one will deny the progress so far. In the near future girls have quicken their pace in order to cover up the gap. The Education commission had recommended two programmes in order to achieve its aim.

- a) A programme of scholarship and financial assistance to women students in colleges and universities on a liberal scale; and
- b) A programme for the provision of suitable but economical hostel accommodation for women students.

The facts and figures speak decidedly in favour of women's intellectual achievements i.e. (39 per cent literacy rate). Even summarizing all the findings about the educational achievements of women the first point that strikes one is the rapid progress at all levels in women's education since independence. The National Committee of Women's Education felt that those who attend schools in the first standard do not continue further and there is 'wastage'. They have made several recommendations to accelerate the process of attendance and stop the stagnation, and to a great extent it is successful.

#### **ROLE OF MASS MEDIA**

We have seen that religious tradition as well as some features inherent in the social structure have perpetuated certain stereotypes and

myths about women. About their status which is subordinate to man and the social norms, attitudes and values sustained by such stereotypes are deeply entrenched. To eradicate them we need determined and purposive effort. Education and mass media of communication could be important in bringing about changes in attitudes. The role of mass media on the status of women can be considered from the following angles:-

- a) A content analysis of the media and their treatment of women;
- b) The influence of the media on their audience;
- c) The influence of the media on women themselves.

Studies have revealed that the mass media have made and can make a great impact on social change. Changes in a society's attitudes, are the result of historical growth, the gradual spread of education, the work of social reformers and charismatic leaders and so on. However, modernizing societies have come to rely increasingly on mass media for spreading messages. The media provides information and guidance and create awareness. They can assist changes in attitude by reinforcing ideas and providing real or ideal models or behaviour and can raise aspirations for better standards of living. The media can thus contribute towards the development of skills, tastes and images present in a society.

Press, radio, television, literature and films play a major role in uplifting status of women. Some noteworthy achievements by women in different fields appear in daily newspaper from time to time and the major

dailies and almost all the Indian language dailies carry a weekly women's section. Radio has a vast coverage and strong impact, even to the rural areas in comparison to press, which is not extensive. All cultural media like theatre, art, architecture and film project a pattern of moral values as well as reflect established patterns. The influence of these media on social values and modes of behaviour is thus a two-way process. Thus media helps in creating awareness among women and help them to emancipate.

### **THE REVOLUTION OF GENDER EQUALITY**

One of the defining movements of the 20th century has been the relentless struggle for gender equality, led mostly by women, but supported by growing numbers of men. When this struggle finally succeeds - as it must - it will mark a great milestone in human progress. and along the way it will change most of today's promises for social, economic and political life.

**The Human Development Report** (GDI, 1995) has consistently defined the basic objective of development as enlarging people's choices. At the heart of this concept are three essential components:

- (i) Equality of opportunity for all people in society;
- (ii) Sustainability of such opportunities from one generation to the new;
- (iii) Empowerment of people so that they participate in and benefit from development processes.

Human development is a process of enlarging the choices for all people, not just for one part of society, such a process becomes unjust and



discriminatory if most women are excluded from its benefits. Moving towards gender equality is not a technocratic goal - it is a political process. It requires a new way of thinking - in which the stereotyping of women and men gives way to a new philosophy that regards all people, irrespective of gender, as essential agents of change. The human development paradigm which puts people at the centre of its concern must thus be fully engendered.

Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but women and men still live in an unequal world. But one thing is definite that gender gaps in education and health have narrowed rapidly in the past two decades, although the pace of this progress has been uneven between regions and countries. Firstly, the female life expectancy has increased 20 per cent faster than male life expectancy over the past two decades. Secondly, the high fertility rates, which severely restrict the freedom of choice for women have fallen by a third from 4.7 live births per women in 1970-75 to 3 in 1990-95. Life choices are expanding as women are progressively liberated from the burden of frequent child-bearing and from the risk of dying in child birth. Maternal mortality rates have been nearly halved in the past two decades.

Thirdly, more than half the married women of reproductive age in the developing countries, or their partners used modern contraceptives in 1990, compared with less than a quarter in 1980. This planned parenthood has

brought women much greater control over lives. Finally, in adult literacy and school enrollment, the gaps between women and men were halved between 1970 and 1990. It is also seen in the female rates of adult literacy and combined school enrollment in the developing world increased thrice as fast as male rates between 1970-1990.

Engendering the development paradigm involves radical change in the longstanding premises for social, economic and political life. And the full working of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity, because of the prevailing inequalities in power structure. When such structural barriers exist, government intervention is necessary, both through comprehensive policy reforms and through a series of affirmative actions. Each nation has its own agenda for overcoming obstacle to equal rights, for example, International NGO, World Women's match etc.

#### **A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

As per Human Development Report (1995), the 21st century is viewed and inspired gender relations. Certainly a world order would be built that aims at the following:-

- (i) Embraces full equality of opportunity between women and men as a fundamental concept;
- (ii) Eliminates the prevailing disparities between men and women and creates an enabling environment for the full flowering of the productive and creative potential of both sexes;

- (iii) Promotes more sharing of work and experience between women and men in the work place as well as in the household;
- (iv) Regards women as essential agents of change and development and opens many more door to women to participate more equally in economic and political opportunities;
- (v) Values the work and contribution of women in all fields at par with those of men, solely on merit, without making any distinction;
- (vi) Puts people - both women and men clearly at the centre of all development processes.

Such a vision has guided the analysis in this report. The report offers a detailed analysis of gender inequality and a concrete action programme to accelerate the march towards equality. It is hoped that the analysis and proposals in this report will be useful to national and international policy makers in designing their own strategies for gender equality.

## ***CHAPTER - V***

### ***Summary and Conclusion***

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### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Today women's struggle is largely for emancipation from rigid cultural bonds which define their existence. The spread of education and an educated reaction to some of these injustices and cruelties have helped feminists to rise as a strong and expressive voice.

Despite the inhuman acts of oppression, exploitation and discrimination, women have become conscious of their position in modern India. Women's education has become a desirable activity. Preference for an educated bride is expressed even by the village-folk. They have been seeking employment outside their homes. They also participate in politics and other extra-familial activities. Urban educated could be seen today as teachers, doctors, nurses, artists, social workers, writers, etc. Their work is being recognized in various walks of life including ecology, technology, mass media, industry, health care and development programmes.

Empowerment cannot be given, it must be self-generated. All that a gender-transformative policy can hope to do is to provide women with the enabling resources which will allow them to take greater control of their own lives to determine which kinds of gender relations they would want to live within, and to devise the strategies and alliances to help them get these.

Laws alone cannot bring about abiding changes in an ancient social fabric such as India's legislation may not be effective, as the enforcing agencies and institutions remain pre-dominantly gender biased.

The biases that actively check women and restrict their mobility and access to resources are rooted in economic and social interests and unequal power relations. Apparently cultural, they have a material base which make them all the more intractable and resistant to change. Patriarchal controls redefine and reassert themselves constantly cutting across barriers of caste and community destroying the dreams of a gender-just society. It is now fairly evident that a degree of societal re-orientation is needed to different sectors and at all levels.

The family is the primary and apparently problematic area of this subordination. It is an area where the values of patriarchy are strengthened and fortified, while the control over women's sexuality, labour and reproductive power is rarely questioned. It is here that violence against them reaches alarming proportions. Female foeticide, infanticide, dowry violence and torture, remain largely invisible and often tend to go unpunished, regardless of constitutional guarantees and the long arm of the law. Thus **'patriarchal values are constantly reinforced fixing tradition, customs and similar institutions'**. These sometimes endorse practices and beliefs which came derogatory to the dignity of women.

A re-orientation that would create a gender-just society, would thus, simply a radical change in all existing structures and institutions. Since the existing biases and growing inequality are not natural or biological, but socially and politically perpetuated, it is necessary to set in motion a process where gender relations are completely restructured. This would mean creating an awareness about the connection between gender, control and power and building a commitment to redress the existing inequalities. It would include an acknowledgement that empowerment means moving from one position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. It would promote women's inherent strength and a positive self-image. The focus would be on men and women within the family, in educational institutions and community-based organizations. The sensitization of males is essential not only for their cooperation but to reduce conflicts in the family which are likely when long-accepted perceptions and traditions are changed. There is little hope for any improvement in their treatment if changes are brought about in an isolated manner, while the larger social fabric remain unresponsive. The goal may perhaps not be easy to attain, but that is no reason for slackening.

As a matter of fact, several institutions have been taken up by the government in non-government sectors as part of this endeavour. Multi-media campaigns have been moved to sensitize people using, in addition to print and electronic media, songs, slogan, posters and street plays.

Innovative strategies of community mobilization have also been used. The National Literacy Missions, through Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), has played a key role in raising awareness on issues of gender equity as have the Women's Development Programme, 'Mahila Samakhya' and several others. The basic end-objective has been to enable women to become creators and producers of facets of several transformation and not remain mere passive recipients and consumers of images, ideological practices and norms.

One of the core mandates of the national machinery has been to advocate change of attitudes and values of the entire governmental machinery from within. The change in society's perception of women in the last two decades, unmatched in the history of the country makes this 'do-able'.

There is a paucity of professionally trained advocacy groups and no institutional mechanism to follow-up existing efforts in a coordinated manner. However, campaigns and pressure groups with popular support, have redefined and articulated several complex issues such as sexual and domestic violence and child marriages. The full potential of engineering change, through advocacy, has not been realized, though a promising beginning has been made.

Significantly, issues and demands for change, that fall squarely in the social sector often manage to achieve a degree of success. The Planning



Commission, has, as a result of advocacy efforts, among others, accepted that women's empowerment is inexorably linked to social attitudes and that it is important to root out biased attitudes and implant positive attitudes. It is paradoxical, however that even within the social sector issues, those which are identified as 'soft' (though the term is somewhat controversial) and relate clearly to women and child development, defined in a narrow sense, do produce results. But when gender policies are seen as impinging on critical macro-policy issues such as population policy, new economic policy, environment etc., they are seldom found to make sufficient headway no matter how well organized or documented. This is because structural factors are invariably change-resistant.

Gender training requires skills and conceptual clarity. It is also critical for the success of the effort that it is participatory and that the conclusions are reached through reflection and analysis. Gender training is not a mechanical inclusion of men and women in each workshop. It has to work at multiple levels.

For the past several years trainings have been organized by different agencies, governmental and non-governmental. The Department of Women and Child Development has set up a Working Group on Gender Sensitization and taken it up on a fairly large scale in different parts of the country. These have been found to be particularly impactful and a tremendous demand has been generated for more such programmes.

The current thinking on gender training and sensitization is to make the programmes more focussed and linked with action plans, amenable to close monitoring and evaluation. This has significant implications. In this connection, the major efforts made for training elected women representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, throughout the country, in the last two years are noteworthy. Other important measures include training on women's legal rights, employment and credit issues, leadership and organization, functioning of Women's Development Corporations, sensitization of the law enforcement machinery and development planners and administration in different sectors.

Among other important training institutions are those supported by the National Institute of Rural Development, National Academy of Administration, National Police Academy, National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development, National Council for Educational Research and Training, Indian Institute of Public Administration and selected state-level training institutes.

Several non-governmental organizations have also taken up gender training and have adopted several interesting techniques to make them effective. The extent of coverage by NGOs is also commendable. There is a healthy exchange of experiences, resources, techniques and aids in gender training. The Government has prepared a Resource Book on national and regional level training institutions, which offer gender-related training

programmes. It will be useful in making gender-sensitization and training more broad based.

Substantial efforts have been made in this particularly difficult and complex area. The experience has been a mixed one and evidently, there is considerable scope for improvement. It has been a continuous learning process for all those involved. Quite often the success of the programmes depend largely on the dynamics set in the group. Obviously, these cannot be planned as one-time events. The strategies which have emerged need to be developed and improved. Further, it is necessary to mainstream these programmes effectively so that they become an integral part of on-going training efforts in all sectors.

The major tentative conclusions drawn from this study are the following:-

- (i) In this four developmental decades we see that the status of women has improved to a large extent. The improvement is due to better education and participation in wider societal activities. We see visible changes in health, education and employment fields. For example, the expectancy of life for female at birth which was 31.6 years in 1951 was estimated to rise to 59.1 years in 1995. In field of education, female literacy is increased by 66 per cent as compared to male literacy 43 per cent. From 8.9 per cent in 1951 it has gone upto 39.19 per cent. Coming to the employment field, the available

statistics shows an increase of 2.68 per cent in last ten years. Apart from these major changes, there are many more noticeable changes in various other fields.

- (ii) We see Patriarchy is not inherent in the new development model, instead is playing a major role in erasing patriarchy from the social structure and cultural setting. It is important that women step out of their restrictive tradition and development is giving way to this. It is the age-old traditions and customs which is the major set-back to integrate women with development. As we know that the country is committed to the ideals of equality, secularism and national integration, it is thus struggling for successful implementation of several schemes to uplift women. Gender thus becomes a part of one's self-identity by internalisation of culturally 'appropriate' behaviour pattern. Hence, it is a culture creation. Wide range of development projects and programmes involving women have been implemented in recent decades and many studies have been made of women's situation and position in society. Development models have been gradually perceiving women as active actors instead of victims and passive objects and various approaches to women and development have been applied.
- (iii) Urban educated women, have broken out of the status trap unlike the high status rural women. They have joined jobs that have given

them a regular income and social esteem. These women have made a successful transition from one structural and cognitive frame of reference to another. Thus education is believed to be the crucial agent in achieving economic as well as political transformation. In fact education has been giving high value in acceptance of new practices. The emphasis on women's education has been laid as significant investment to improve their status in society. Development with the help of education has, however, opened many new avenues to a women. Modernisation, social change and education have enabled some women to enter new professions or occupation, which were totally closed to them earlier. Most importantly, education has an equal base and merit is the criteria for deciding one's success. So women stand an equal chance to compete with men. Earlier the basis was sexual division of labour where women were physically weak and hence attend a lower position which was to some extent justified. But now as mental labour is given emphasis women are treated almost at par with men.

- (iv) Media plays a powerful role in the socialisation of individual in the perception of their gender identity. Media is not a simple mirror reflecting societal values. They subtly shape our value hierarchy (i.e. normative behaviour standards) and even project values on to society. And, many a times, media projects a negative portrayal of

women which lowers the status of women. Apart from bringing change in attitude and having positive impact, it has negative implications which should be taken care as the deep foundation of the inequality of the sexes are built in the minds of men and women through a socialisation process which continues to be extremely powerful. Films and advertising should seriously consider the complaint made repeatedly, that they are degrading the image of women by using them as sex symbols, and contributing to the increase in sex crimes and deviant behaviour that threaten women's status in society.

- (v) One of the shortcomings in the new literature on gender and development is that different approaches to development, whether they be, say neo-classical, cost-benefit analysis, the structuralist perspective or Marxist, all tend to be presented in more or less equivalent manner because of their shared limitations incorporating gender issues. We thus get no sense of how many of these theories emerged historically nor what their present functions in specific context might be. Hence, one would strongly emphasize the need for an institutional approach to gender as a relation to power, and institutions in question - the State, the household, the market and the community remain abstract without history, i.e. without effective context. Even at times, the Indian feminist have a slight euro-centric

bias in their studies and analyze and deal issues in the similar manner as feminists in western countries do, even though the Indian context is altogether different.

- (vi) The development policies and schemes for the upliftment of women have not been cent per cent successful. In order to promote equality for women it must make a more deliberate, planned and sustained effort, that the new value of equality of the sexes, can replace the traditional value system of inequalities, legislation or through judicial activism can achieve little success without a simultaneous movement to change the social and economic structures and the cultural values, ideologies and attitudes of society. In India the study showed that the institutions lack a sound women and development policy and a clear gender sensitive approach. The projects at times lack a gender focus.
- (vi) Research on women in development has evolved during the decade as an instrument for the advancement of the role of women, and the main source for empirical data to assess the impact of development policies on women. It has also, in many countries, helped to sensitise the people involved in development planning and administration by raising issues resulting from their empirical investigations, and helped to promote an ideological climate and concern for women in development related matters. May be, that it is

changing slowly, but the old order is under strain and has been showing clearly cracks in its structure and functioning. This feminist consciousness and realisation of one's right is the impact of development on both men and women. It is interesting to note that good number of men are also feminists and strive for equality.

Thus the approach should be refined time and again adding techniques to include gender relations in wider sense. The objectives, strategies and other elements of the project analysis should be assessed to see how they address women's position and how they deal with the relation between men and women. Such a gender oriented approach will result in better and more realistic insights into the many relations between women and men are shaped in particular society and into the impact of project intervention of the position of women as compared to men.

However, it is important for the Indian women to be conscious of her rights and duties for equal opportunities as well as taking the opportunities given to them. Awareness creation regarding social, economic, health and culture related issues is required for women. The solution also lies in the society, in a change of 'attitude' a realisation that men and women together form a whole. Unless, the developmental programmes concentrated on women, the human resource development in India cannot be brought on par with the developed countries in the world. Thus, improvement in the status of women, through all possible ways must be considered to improve their



over all quality of life. We hope to see that the struggle to attain gender equality is successful by the beginning of the 21st century.

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