

Gender Equality And Women's Empowerment

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What is gender equality? What is Empowerment? Why do we need empowerment and what steps have been taken to empower women and achieve equality?

According to a CIDA report "Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results.....

Attaining gender equality demands a recognition that current social, economic, cultural, and political systems are gendered; that women's unequal status is systemic and that it is necessary to incorporate women's specificity, priorities and values into all major social institutions." (CIDA)

Because of current disparities, however, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires specific action, which will lead to positive discrimination in favor of the depressed gender. ... Since women are the depressed gender it will require a strong voice for women in shaping their societies"

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field, measures that will empower women and achieve political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security. (OECD, 1998).

Equality between women and men should be promoted in ways that are appropriate to each particular context. This begins with an understanding of the current status of women and men, their relations to each other and the interconnections between gender and other factors. In order to understand the quantitative disparities in the current status of men and women it is important to undertake gender analysis through sex segregated data of important social and economic sectors as well as women's position in decision making. Gender analysis can provide an understanding of the social relations and how inequality can be addressed.

Both men and women have a stake in building a more just society where all people are equally valued for their contributions. Yet, gender equality has often been seen as a 'women's issue' separate from men and 'gender' often been confused to mean women only. This is part of a tendency to consider men's characteristics as the norm and women's characteristics as different from the norm. Yet, both women and men are influenced by their gender and thus, ideas about the status of women are interrelated with ideas about the status of men. In short,

change for women means change for men and vice versa. However, since men are considered superior to women, gender equality is approached from the point of empowering women to become equal to men.

Gender equality is not only a social /gender justice issue and a measure of equal participation, it is an important component for economic development. Because inequality of access to development resources and to decision-making power between women and men results in lower contribution to development by women, who are half of the labor force, than that of men. No society can exploit its full potential for development if half of its labor force is less developed than the other half. The United Nations identified this as a major reason for slow economic development of developing countries as early as at the end of its First Development Decade (1960s) and emphasized on the member countries to identify the status of women in their respective countries to identify gender economic and social inequalities and evolve strategies to reduce the inequalities. All member states of the UN are committed to gender equality. Research in this area revealed, however, that gender inequalities exist in all societies – developed and underdeveloped in different forms and degrees. This is when women of the world got united to raise a voice against inequality, which is reflected not only in lower economic and social positions of women but is also the major cause of gender violence.

The Human development Report of the UN published every year to measure human development, which according to it is a major contributor to development. The Report also stresses on the need for gender equality and empowerment of women in order to achieve equality. It has developed indices for measuring improvement in these indicators. Equality is considered by the UN as a fundamental input in human development and subsequent economic development.

Gender equality as a development goal

Gender equality is both an essential element of any development process and a result of sustainable development. Development efforts should not only aim to advance equality between women and men as an outcome, but should also advance equality throughout by applying gender analysis in planning, consultations, design, implementation and assessment.

Women's empowerment

Since it is women who predominantly experience inequality (inferiority), empowerment supports women to become more aware of the unfair power relations they face. Empowerment allows both men and women to take control over their lives by gaining skills, setting their own agendas and building self-confidence and self-reliance. It also means that women have increased control over their lives by acquiring a voice to challenge and overcome the inequality they experience. Empowerment is both a process and a result that cannot be achieved by an individual or organization for someone else. A woman can only empower herself, although organizations and agencies around the world can play a role in supporting this journey and providing an enabling environment. Gender equality is both an essential element of any development process and a result of sustainable development. Development efforts should not only aim to advance equality between women and men as an outcome, but should also advance equality throughout by applying gender analysis in planning, consultations, design, implementation and assessment.

It is one of the goals of Millennium Development (4), which proposes to: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015. The Indicators for achievement of Millennium Development Goal 4 are equality in:

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate women to men ages 15- to 24
- Share of women in wage employment in the nonagricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

The Government of India is committed to achieve the goal of gender equality, which is also enshrined in the Constitutional rights. Furthermore it has committed itself to ensure gender equality in several international conventions and Beijing Platform for Action. Almost all the political parties have inserted gender equality, in some form or the other, as an objective in their party election manifestoes. To day no person or politician can oppose gender equality as an undesirable development goal.

Without going into international comparisons, I shall restrict myself to data over-time on India to measure the extent of inequality, measures taken to reduce it through policy measures and empowerment of women as well as the effects of the measures taken so far and the road ahead. We can find answers to most of these questions through gender analysis of data on economic, social and political position of women. Sex segregated data are not available for all sectors before 1971. However, importance of collection of such data was impressed by the report of the Committee on the Status of Women 1975 and since then special efforts have been made to collect sex-segregated data. The Report, "Towards Equality"(1975) was the first exhaustive document, which brought out extreme gender inequalities in the country and the need to change this status. The Report was presented to the Parliament, which recommended that the P.M. take specific administrative and legislative measures at removing economic and social injustices and disabilities and discrimination to which women continued to be subjected even after a quarter century of Independence. It is interesting to note that the Parliament's recommendations did not take note of gender inequalities as such but was concerned about injustices and discrimination and disabilities which when removed would no doubt create a more enabling environment but will not necessarily lead to equality because importance of measures for gender equity were overlooked by the Parliament in its recommendations. It is only in subsequent research and pressure from the women's movement that these measures have been introduced in piecemeal.

Since then through gender specific government policy measures, international gender focused development aid and collective actions by women's groups have led to reduction of inequalities somewhat. The results of this collective efforts of almost quarter of a century (1975-2001) has been captured through collection and analysis of exhaustive data in the report prepared by Dr. Sarla Gopalan (retired Secretary Department of Women and Child Development Gov't of India) "Towards Equality - The Unfinished Agenda - Status of Women in India -2001" commissioned by the National Commission for Women. Gender analysis of the data on several sectors of Indian society reveals, however, that after 55 years of Independence gender equality is nowhere in view.

What has changed since Towards Equality?

Following policy measures are significant:

- A section included on Women's development in the 6th Five Year Plan and each Plan subsequent to it. The focus in the Plan priorities in this section has progressively changed from women's welfare programmes to women's empowerment and gender equality issues including insisting on all sectoral ministries to appoint a gender specialist and evaluate their budgetary allocations for gender budgeting.
- Setting up of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) & National Commission for Women (NCW). While the NHRC takes up all human right violations, a slogan has been coined by women activists that human rights are women's rights. Thus NHRC thus is more often faced with cases of gender violence. NCW has been constituted especially on demand from women activists in order to have national level and states level commissions, which will recommend policies, which will bring about gender equality and women's empowerment. These are spoke persons on women's issues. However, because of its limited powers and being under the government the NCW has often been seen to be not doing enough to strengthen women's voices. At states level few Commissions are strong enough to mobilize public opinion and manage state level political bosses for effective pro-women policies and programmes.
- Amendments to existing laws and new laws passed by the parliament with gender perspective.

The laws passed before and since CSWI report which focused on protection of women rights and safety were:

- (1) In the area of personal rights, besides the Hindu Women's Right to property - 1922 & 1937, and Hindu Succession Act 1956, Shariat law/Muslim marriage Act 1939 and the Hindu code Bill 1952, the additional laws passed to protect women's personal rights since 1971 are the Hindu women's succession Act 1978- Hindu Succession Act (Andhra Pradesh) 1985. Hindu Succession Act 2005. The 1956 Act did not give equal rights to married women in self acquired property and even the unequal share was not given to them by use of the instrument of 'will' and /or by coercing the daughters to give up their share in favor of their brothers. Also daughters had no right in the inherited property. Andhra Pradesh was the first to plug these loopholes in the Succession Act in 1986. Recently the Hindu Women's Succession Act amendment 2005 has given full equality to women in inherited property, which includes agricultural land.
- (2) In 1978 the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 amended to raise the age of marriage for girls from 14 to 18 and that of the boys from 15 to 21.
- (3) The Dowry Prohibition Act (DPA) enacted in 1961 was amended in 1984 and again in 1986 to make it a non-bailable (cognizable) offence under section 304 B and 498 A which made strict punishment possible particularly in case of dowry deaths.
- (4) While Hindu women are protected in case of divorce which itself was made more difficult under the Hindu Code Bill, Muslim women are not under the purview of the act and when applied in case of Shahbano for maintenance there was protest from the Muslim community for interference in their personal laws and a special Muslim women (protec-

- tion on divorce) Act was passed in 1986. Because of uneven treatment of women from minority communities there has been a strong demand for Uniform Civil Code-
- (5) Adoption, Guardianship's custody, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956 gives unequal, exclusive right to the father. The Act was challenged in 1999 in the Supreme Court, which by its decision set precedence for mothers and father to have equal right.
 - (6) Domestic Violence against women cases so far were registered under IPC 498 A under which few criminals have been punished and courts take ages to decide the cases. Under the new act 'Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2005' in cases registered under the act women have very broad rights and it is mandatory for the courts to decide the cases within a stipulate period. The Act has been termed as the Magna Carta for women's liberation.
 - (7) Regulation & Prevention of Misuse of sex determination (RPMSD) Act 1994: Unfavorable sex ratio, particularly in 0-5 age group through female feticide has led the government to pass the RPMSD act. Under the act both the parents and the doctors assisting in feticide are liable for severe punishment including jail. However not a single conviction has been reported during the 11 years since the law was passed.
 - (8) Rape is a major and a very severe form of violence against women. Rape is a cognizable offence. Section 376 of IPC deals with all cases of rape including that of minors. Section 354 of IPC deals with As a result of Mathura (a minor) Rape case 114A amendment in Evidence Act was added, it was approved that the courts shall not ask for evidence in rape cases. There are very strict rape laws with immediate imprisonment and punishment up to 7 years. There has been a discussion on extending death penalty in case of rape. However, it has been opposed by women's groups who insist that implementation of the existing laws and speedy verdicts by the courts will be enough deterrent and death penalty will only further reduce conviction rate; currently conviction rate is very low and cases drag on for years.
 - (9) Bill on Sexual Harassment at work place (with a very broad definition of 'work place') is expected to be passed in the winter session of the Parliament.
 - (10) Immoral Traffic prevention Act 1986 prevents trafficking in women & children and child prostitution.

There has been rapid progress in amending laws and making new laws for protection of women and for stricter punishment for crimes against women. However, as laws have become stringent there is increase in reported crimes against women. However, large majority of cases are not registered and from among the ones registered a number of them are withdrawn and the ones that reach up to the courts few get completed and criminals punished.

But once the cases go up to the judiciary, judges have been liberal in interpretation of the laws in dealing with cases involving women's issues.

- **Policies for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women:**

- **The National Policy on Education (1992)** brought focus on girl's education – Education being mother of all Institutions. The data on Literacy Rates by sex show much greater increase in female literacy than the males (Table 1) rapid increase in number of girls Per 100 boys at Primary and Secondary Levels (Table2) and at University and Higher levels of Education (Table 3). Education is the main empowerment instrument for women.

Table 1 Literacy Rates – India; 1951-2001

| Year | Persons | Male | Female |
|-------|---------|-------|--------|
| 1951 | 18.33 | 27.16 | 8.86 |
| 1961 | 28.31 | 40.40 | 15.34 |
| 1971 | 34.45 | 45.95 | 21.97 |
| 1981 | 43.67 | 56.50 | 29.85 |
| 1991* | 52.21 | 64.13 | 39.29 |
| 1997@ | 62.00 | 73.13 | 50.29 |
| 2001# | 65.38 | 75.85 | 54.16 |

Source: Registrar General, India, Note: Literacy Rate for 1951m 1961, 1971 and 1981 related to population aged five years and above. Census could not be held in Assam in 1981 and J&K in 1991.

@ An analysis based on NSSO Survey 1998, National Literacy Mission.

Census, 2001

Table 2: Number of Girls per 100 Boys in Primary and Secondary Schools 1950-1997

| Year | Primary Classes | Secondary classes |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1950-51 | 39 | 16 |
| 1960-61 | 48 | 23 |
| 1970-71 | 60 | 35 |
| 1980-81 | 63 | 44 |
| 1991-1992 | 71 | 50 |
| 2001-2002 | 90 | na |

Educational Development

Literacy rate of females has gone up from 8.9 % in 1951 to 54.2% in 2001. Both, rise in income and increase in the age at marriage are responsible for it as well as government's implementation of compulsory universal primary education and non-formal education programs like National Elementary Education Mission, Operation Black Board, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and innumerable NGOs initiatives The latest policy announcement of investment of Rs.80, 000 corors on universal Secondary Education in the next five years is a major initiative of the Government of India. Contribution of NGOs in imparting literacy to adult women and drop out girls is of significant.

Disparities between male and female education still exist. However, the importance of education has been brought out by The National Committee on Women's Education 1959 and National Plan of Action 1976. National policy on Education 1986. Program of Action on Education for Women's Equality brought out the importance of education for empowerment of women, development and gender equality. National Development Council Committee on

Table 3: Index of Growth in Enrolment of Girls in Higher Education 1970-71 &1993-

| | 94 | |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Category | | 1993-94 |
| Graduation | Total | 292 |
| | Female | 445 |
| Post Graduation | T | 331 |
| | F | 456 |
| Research | T | 470 |
| | F | 784 |
| Diploma/Certificate | T | 231 |
| | F | 300 |
| 1.Total for general education | T | 296 |
| | F | 447 |
| Professional education | | |
| Graduation | T | 302 |
| | F | 465 |
| Post Graduation | T | 425 |
| | F | 632 |
| Research | T | 467 |
| | F | 164 |
| Diploma/Certificate | T | 219 |
| | F | 222 |
| 2.Total For Professional | T | 316 |
| | F | 458 |
| Grand Total for 1+2 | T | 298 |
| | F | 448 |

Female as %age of total 1970-71 22% 33%

Source: Based on Data of the University Grants Commission quoted in NCRT Report ‘Fifty Years of Women’s Education in India’ (1947-97)

Literacy – 1992-93 reported on a World Bank study in 29 countries, which showed an inverse relationship between child mortality and women’s education and direct correlation between immunization status of children and female education.

Education thus is not simply a matter of social justice but more a matter of economic growth, social well-being and social stability. The Committee also found that absence of facilities for higher levels of education leads to higher drop out rate at primary levels of education. .

The drop out rates at primary school levels is high for both boys and girls and was almost equal in 1996-97. In fact in secondary class the drop out rates of boys is higher than that of girls.

(Gopalan: Table 5.10 page 148).

One of major recommendation of the BPFA is allocation of sufficient resources on education. The GOI committed itself to double the expenditure on education from 3% to 6% of GDP. However, ten years later (in spite of levy of an education cess of 2%) the expenditure on education as %age of the GDP has gone up to 4%.

The growth in the number of institutions between 1950-51 & 1998-99 for different levels of education is given below

Table : 4 Growth in Recognized educational institutions

| | Primary | UP | HS | College | Professional | University |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1950-51 = 100 | 209671 | 13596 | 7416 | 370 | 208 | 27 |
| 1998-99 Index | 626737 334 | 190166 715 | 112438 660 | 7494 4937 | 2113 9843 | 237 1139 |

In spite of increase in educational institutions, India will achieve universal primary education target 30 years after Korea and 20-years after Malaysia (UNDP Human Development Report 1999).

- National Policy on Empowerment of Women.
- The 73rd & 74th Amendment to the Constitution reserving 1/3 of seats for women in elected village & urban local bodies passed in 1972 and 1974 have brought millions of women across the country into local level decision making bodies not only as members of the institutions but also as their heads and chairpersons (Table5 and 5-A)
- Besides while the proportion of women voters voting has been lower than that of the men, the difference in the proportion has narrowed. from 15 percentage points to just 8 (Table6).

Women's representation in higher level decision making bodies i.e. in the lower and upper house of the Parliament (Table 7) and in State legislatures (Table 8) show that women constitute a miniscule proportion of the total members. However, their proportion in Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) has gone up from 6.1% in 1989 to 8.4% by 1999. In 2004 it is 9.1%. However, in state legislatures has either gone down or has remained stagnant. Efforts at passage of the Constitutional Amendment for 33% reservation of seats for women in national and state level legislatures has been strongly opposed by all political parties in spite of commitment in their party election manifestoes gender equality and one-third representation of women in all decision making bodies.

Their representation in Council of Ministers has remained steady at 10% for decades. (Table 9). However there number among cabinet ministers is never more than one member Even among party executives the proportion of women ranges from 5-12%; lowest being among leftist parties who have never have had a woman as member of the Politburo until very recently. However, there are a number of political parties headed by women - Congress I, Samta, BSP, (AIADMK) and AITC (Gopalan Table 9.7 p. 290).

Table 5: Women Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions (Percentage), 2002

| S. No. | India /States/Union Territories | 1997 | | | 2002 | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|--|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | GP | TP | ZP | GP | TP | ZP |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 33.84 | 37.01 | 33.21 | 33.00 | 33.65 | 33.24 |
| 2. | Arunachal Pradesh | Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act not yet passed | | | | | |
| 3. | Assam** | 18.01 | 26.09 | - | 33.45 | 34.73 | 30.00 |
| 4. | Bihar | Post 73 rd Amendment Election not held in the State, not available | | | | | |
| 5. | Chhattisgarh | - | - | - | 33.74 | 34.33 | 34.67 |
| 6. | Delhi | NCT government propose conduct of Panchayat Elections | | | | | |
| 7. | Goa | 36.53 | - | - | 31.76 | - | 34.00 |
| 8. | Gujarat | 17.29 | 33.43 | 33.38 | 33.35 | 33.48 | 33.54 |
| 9. | Haryana | 30.74 | 35.31 | 80.53 | 33.59 | 34.65 | 34.71 |
| 10. | Himachal Pradesh | 32.93 | 33.59 | 33.33 | 36.78 | 33.90 | 34.66 |
| 11. | Jammu & Kashmir | State proposes adopting 73 rd Amendment | | | | | |
| 12. | Jharkand | Current Figure not available | | | | | |
| 13. | Karnataka | 43.79 | 40.21 | 36.45 | 44.86 | 42.24 | 38.09 |
| 14. | Kerala | Current Figures not available | | | 36.21 | 38.40 | 34.20 |
| 15. | Madhya Pradesh | 32.93 | 34.84 | 2.99 | 33.82 | 33.44 | 33.79 |
| 16. | Maharashtra | 33.33 | 33.31 | 33.31 | 33.33 | 36.06 | 33.73 |
| 17. | Manipur | 35.67 | - | 36.07 | 35.48 | - | 36.07 |
| 18. | Meghalaya | Traditional Councils performs duties of local government. | | | | | |
| 19. | Mizoram | | | | | | |
| 20. | Nagaland | | | | | | |
| 21. | Orissa | 33.35 | 33.35 | 33.26 | 35.88 | 35.14 | 34.66 |
| 22. | Punjab | 35.69 | Election due | | 35.69 | 32.78 | 31.90 |
| 23. | Rajasthan | 29.73 | 31.67 | 3.21 | 34.52 | 36.29 | 36.11 |
| 24. | Sikkim | 37.34 | - | 30.43 | 36.88 | - | 31.52 |
| 25. | Tamil Nadu | 25.07 | 35.31 | 3.40 | 26.86 | 26.94 | 26.37 |
| 26. | Tripura | 33.55 | 34.18 | 34.29 | 33.33 | 35.81 | 34.15 |
| 27. | Uttaranchal | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 28. | Uttar Pradesh | 15.08 | 23.11 | 23.60 | - | - | - |
| 29. | West Bengal | 36.33 | 35.18 | 33.94 | 22.46 | 22.42 | 21.58 |
| | Union Territories | | | | | | |
| 30. | Andaman & Nicobar Islands | 34.33 | - | 33.33 | 34.39 | 37.31 | 33.33 |
| 31. | Chandigarh | Currents Figures are not available | | | 33.95 | 40.00 | 30.00 |
| 32. | Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 34.07 | - | 25.00 | 36.29 | - | 33.33 |
| 33. | Daman & Diu | 39.68 | - | 33.33 | 26.98 | - | 40.00 |
| 34. | Lakshadweep | 37.97 | - | 36.36 | 37.97 | - | 36.36 |
| 35. | Pondicherry | Not available. Post 73 rd Amendment Elections not held at the State | | | | | |
| | India | 6.40 | 8.86 | 3.38 | 3.66 | 2.70 | 2.99 |

Note: Annual Report 2000-01, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Source: India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development. (2004). Government of India, II & IIIrd Periodic Report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: CEDAW Periodic Report. New Delhi. P. 86.

Table 5 -A Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (1995-2001)

(Figures in thousand)

| Year | Women | Men | Total |
|-------|----------------|-------|-------|
| 1995* | 318 (33.5%) | 630 | 948 |
| 2001* | 725 (26.6%) | 1,997 | 2,722 |

Table 6: Percentage of Female and Male voters casting their vote in each election in India

| Election Year | Percentage of Female Voters | Percentage of Male Voters |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1952 | - | - |
| 1962 | 29.07% | 59.68% |
| 1967 | 41.79% | 65.12 % |
| 1972 | 44.37% | 66.03% |
| 1977 | 43.26% | 62.15% |
| 1980 | 39.28% | 58.48% |
| 1985 | 41.37% | 58.04% |
| 1993 | 49.72% | 68.22% |
| 1998 | 53.35% | 66.45% |

- **Women in higher civil services:** The proportion of women in government services has gone up from 11% to 15%. In senior level services, women constitute less than 10% both in IAS (around 9%) and Indian Customs and Central Excise service (around 7%) and in Indian Police service (2%) Their proportion in Indian Statistical services and in the Central Secretariat services is also 5-7%). In some of the other services their proportion ranges between 15-20%. Their higher proportion in the Indian Foreign Service is noticeable. Their proportion in some of the other services like the Police is almost negligible, (Table 10) While women among State High Courts judges is low but has been increasing but among Supreme Court judges there has never been more than one woman. (Tables 11).

Economic Empowerment of Women.

Women experience barriers in access to economic resources land, natural resources – wood, water - capital, credit technology etc. Also most of the economic activities they do are not counted as work because they are not paid for it. Besides they have to spend lot of their time in household chores to which no economic value has been put so far.

According to time use surveys the time spent by women and men (completed in six states

Table – 7: Women’s Representation in Parliament 1952-1998

| Year | Lok Sabha | | | Rajya Sabha* | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Seats | Women MPs | % Women MPs | Seats | Women MPs | % Women MPs |
| 1952 | 499 | 22 | 4.41 | 219 | 16 | 07.31 |
| 1957 | 500 | 27 | 5.40 | 237 | 18 | 07.59 |
| 1962 | 503 | 34 | 6.76 | 238 | 18 | 07.56 |
| 1967 | 523 | 31 | 5.93 | 240 | 20 | 08.33 |
| 1971 | 521 | 22 | 4.22 | 243 | 17 | 07.00 |
| 1977 | 544 | 19 | 3.49 | 244 | 25 | 10.25 |
| 1980 | 544 | 28 | 5.15 | 244 | 24 | 09.84 |
| 1984 | 544 | 44 | 8.09 | 244 | 28 | 11.48 |
| 1989 | 517 | 27 | 5.22 | 245 | 24 | 09.80 |
| 1991 | 544 | 39 | 7.17 | 245 | 38 | 15.51 |
| 1996 | 543 | 39 | 7.18 | 223 | 19 | 08.52 |
| 1998 | 543 | 43 | 7.92 | 245 | 15 | 06.12 |
| Average | 527 | 31 | 5.91 | 239 | 22 | 09.11 |

during the year June 1998-June 1999) 55% of the work time was contributed by women and only 45% by men. However, women are at the margin of economic activities in unorganized, low skill, low paid jobs, thus large majority of women are not counted as workers. Globalization increases vulnerability of those at the margins of economies. Many women have been forced to accept low pay and poor working conditions and thus have become the preferred workers.

The process of globalization involves economic reforms in terms of stabilization measures and structural adjustment. Stabilization includes reduction in budget deficits – involving expenditure control, devaluations, imports control etc. Structural adjustments involve deregulation and liberalization – liberalization of foreign trade delicensing of industries – control on inflow of foreign capital, slashing subsidies etc.

Protected economies with extensive periods of control feel more the pain and slow process of adjustments. Economic measures for liberalization of the economy in India have included sale of uneconomic public enterprises, reduction in size of the government. After a period of devaluation, the rupee now has remained stabilized. In short term, liberalization leads to increase in unemployment, however.

Work Participation Rates:

- Exact change in work participation rate for women is rather difficult to gauge because of frequent changes in the definition of “worker” used in the Population Censuses – which give the most reliable and exhaustive country wide data The changes in definition effects the count of workers in agriculture and unorganized industrial sectors where large majority

TABLE 8: Declining Representation of Women in State Legislatures 1952-1997
(% of women MLAs)

| State | 1952 | 1957 | 1960-1965 | 1967-1969 | 1970-1975 | 1977-1978 | 1979-1983 | 1984-1988 | 1989-1982 | 1993-1997 | 1998-1999 | State. Avg |
|-------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 2.9 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 9.1 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 2.7 | 9.5 | 4.6 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | **** | **** | **** | **** | **** | 0.0 | 3.3 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| Assam | 0.5 | 4.6 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 7.0 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.8 | **** | 3.2 |
| Bihar | 3.6 | 9.4 | 7.9 | 2.2 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 2.8 | 3.4 | **** | 4.3 |
| Goa | **** | **** | **** | 6.7 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.0 | 10.0 | 5.0 | 4.4 |
| Gujarat | **** | **** | 8.4 | 4.8 | 3.2 | **** | 2.7 | 8.8 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 2.2 | 4.0 |
| Haryana | **** | **** | **** | 7.4* | 6.2 | 4.4 | 7.8 | 5.6 | 6.7 | 4.4 | **** | 6.2 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 0.0 | **** | **** | 0.0 | 5.9 | 1.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 5.9 | 4.4 | 8.8 | 4.2 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | **** | **** | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 1.3 | **** | 2.3 | **** | 1.5 |
| Karnataka | 2.0 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 3.2 | 5.1 | 4.0 | 0.9 | 3.6 | 4.5 | 3.1 | 2.3 | 4.3 |
| Kerala | 0.0 | 4.8 | 3.9 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 3.2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 9.3 | **** | 3.6 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2.1 | 10.8 | 4.9 | 3.4 | 5.4 | 3.1 | 5.6 | 9.7 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 8.1 | 5.4 |
| Maharashtra | 1.9 | 6.3 | 4.9 | 3.3 | 9.3 | 2.8 | 6.6 | 5.6 | 2.1 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 4.6 |
| Manipur | **** | **** | **** | **** | 0.0* | **** | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 0.0 | **** | 0.3 |
| Meghalaya | **** | **** | **** | **** | 1.7 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 3.3 | **** | 1.7 | 5.0 | 2.2 |
| Mizoram | **** | **** | **** | **** | 0.0 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.2 |
| Nagaland | **** | **** | **** | 0.0 | **** | **** | 0.0 | 1.7 | **** | 0.0 | **** | 0.5 |
| Orissa | 9.6 | 3.6 | 1.4 | 3.6 | 1.4* | 4.8 | 3.4 | 6.1 | 4.8 | 5.4 | **** | 4.0 |
| Punjab | 2.2 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 1.0* | 5.8 | 2.6 | 5.1 | 3.4 | 5.1 | 6.0 | **** | 4.0 |
| Rajasthan | 0.0 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 3.3 | 7.1 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 8.0 | 5.5 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 5.0 |
| Sikkim | **** | **** | **** | **** | **** | **** | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.3 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 2.5 |
| Tamil Nadu | 0.3 | 5.9 | 3.9 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 3.4 | 9.0 | 3.8 | **** | 3.6 |
| Tripura | **** | **** | **** | 0.0 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 6.7 | 3.3 | **** | 1.7 | **** | 3.0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 1.2 | 5.8 | 4.4 | 2.8* | 5.9 | 2.6 | 5.6 | 7.3 | 3.3* | 4.0* | **** | 4.1 |
| West Bengal | 0.8 | 3.6 | 4.8 | 2.9* | 1.6* | 1.4 | 2.4 | 4.4 | 7.1 | 6.8 | **** | 3.4 |
| Delhi | 4.2 | **** | **** | **** | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 | **** | **** | 4.3 | 12.9 | 7.3 |
| Pondicherry | **** | **** | 6.7 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 3.3 | **** | 2.6 |
| Period Average | 1.8 | 6.3 | 4.9 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 5.3 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 6.0 | 4.1 |

Table 9: Representation of Women in the Central Council of Ministers, 1985 –2005

| Year | Females | Males | Total |
|------|-----------|-------|-------|
| 1985 | 4 (10.0%) | 36 | 40 |
| 2001 | 8 (10.8%) | 66 | 74 |
| 2005 | 7 (10.4%) | | |

Note: Figures within parentheses indicate percentage to total.

* Data refers to 9 States – Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal.

* For whole of India (as on 18.10.2001)

Source: National Informatics Center, Parliament House, New Delhi.

of the women work. Thus change in definition effects Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) than Male Work Participation Rate (MWPR).

- However, the data show that fwpr has almost doubled between 1971-2001 from 13.9 to 25.7% (Table12); the wpr of the males, however, has remained almost unchanged around 52%. The main reason for increase in fwpr has been more scientific methods of counting ‘workers’. There has, however, been increase in wpr of both rural and urban women. The rapid increase in education and skill development of women and their capacity to work at lower wages has also contributed the increase in the fwpr.

Distribution by sector

Proportion of women workers in agriculture has remained almost unchanged although there has been a one-percentage point decline in agricultural labor and a one-percentage point increase as cultivators. There has been a one percentage point decline in women working in the household sector which has not been fully compensated by increase in ‘Other than Household Industry’ which recoded an increase of only one-quarter of one percentage point. The major addition has been in women working in the ‘ Other services’ sector where 8.26 percent of women work as against around 7% in 1981. (Table13).

Although the percentage of women among total workers in the organized sector has gone up steadily from 11% in 1971 to 17.4% in 1999. Table 14 shows, however, that they are concentrated in the public sector and in services and in industries where wage levels are low. The employment in the public sector has reached a saturation point, however. Women’s employment has not increased in most of the sectors except in trade, hotels and restaurants and in casual labor and there has been feminization of poverty.

Poverty Eradication Programmes include almost 13 schemes of which DWACRA is specially targeted to women. In 1999-2000 several of the schemes were merged in to one scheme SGSY and several others were restructured. Laws were passed for protection of ‘Home Based Workers’ in some industries e.g. Beedi workers. In 1996 the Government of India signed the ILO Convention for protection of HBW and also prepared a National Policy on Home Based Workers. Several labor laws have been passed during the past 40-year, which give equal

Table 10: Number of Judges by Sex in Supreme Court/High Courts as on 2003

| Name of the Court | Number of Judges | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------|-------|
| | Female | Male | Total |
| Supreme Court | 1 | 24 | 25 |
| High Courts | | | |
| Allahabad | 1 | 69 | 70 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2 | 32 | 34 |
| Bombay | 3 | 49 | 52 |
| Calcutta | 1 | 41 | 42 |
| Chhattisgarh | - | 4 | 4 |
| Delhi | 1 | 27 | 28 |
| Guwahati | - | 12 | 12 |
| Gujarat | 1 | 30 | 31 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | - | 11 | 11 |
| Jharkhand | - | 12 | 12 |
| Karnataka | 1 | 31 | 32 |
| Kerala | 1 | 25 | 26 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 1 | 23 | 24 |
| Madras | 1 | 30 | 31 |
| Orissa | - | 12 | 12 |
| Patna | 1 | 23 | 24 |
| Punjab & Haryana | 1 | 30 | 31 |
| Rajasthan | 1 | 25 | 26 |
| Sikkim | - | 2 | 2 |
| Uttaranchal | - | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 17 | 497 | 514 |

Note: Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice and Company Affairs

Source: India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Central Statistical Organization. (2003). Women and Men in India 2002. New Delhi. P.98.

Note: Figures within parentheses indicate percentage to total.

* Data refers to 9 States – Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal.

* For whole of India (as on 18.10.2001).

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

Table 11: Percentage of Women in Civil Services personnel

| Category | Year | Women % of Total |
|----------------------------------|------|------------------|
| Indian administrative service | 1993 | 9.3 |
| | 1996 | 9.9 |
| Indian Audits & Accounts service | 1993 | 15.7 |
| | 1995 | 17.8 |
| Indian Customs and Excise | 1993 | 6.7 |
| | 1996 | 7.8 |
| Indian Economics service | 1993 | 18.8 |
| | 1996 | 16.2 |
| Indian Foreign Service | 1993 | 10.1 |
| | 1995 | 13.7 |
| Indian Information Service | 1994 | 15.8 |
| | 1996 | 15.6 |
| Indian Postal Service | 1993 | 17.5 |
| | 1996 | 21.4 |

Table 12: Work Participation Rates, 1971-1991, India

| Workers | India | | | Rural | | | Urban | | |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|--------|------|
| | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male |
| 1971 (Main & secondary) | 34.0 | 13.9 | 52.7 | 36.1 | 15.9 | 53.8 | 29.6 | 7.2 | 48.9 |
| 1981 (Main & marginal) | 36.8 | 19.8 | 52.6 | 38.9 | 23.2 | 53.8 | 30.0 | 8.3 | 49.1 |
| 1991 (Main & marginal) | 37.5 | 22.3 | 51.6 | 40.0 | 27.1 | 52.5 | 30.2 | 9.7 | 48.9 |
| 2001 | 39.3 | 25.7 | 51.9 | 42.6 | 31.0 | 52.4 | 32.2 | 11.5 | 50.8 |

Source: Census of India, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001

wages, maternity relief and unemployment insurance etc.

The government has launched innumerable schemes for increase in employment and income of the poor rural population with some specifically aimed at women e.g. DWACRA. The latest Rural Employment Guarantee bill passed by the Parliament recently reserves 33% of additional employment for women.

Table 13: Occupational Shift of Workers Through Decadal Census, 1971-1991

| Category | Persons | | | Male | | | Female | | |
|---|---------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 |
| I. Cultivators | 43 | 41.46 | 38.41 | 46 | 43.71 | 39.63 | 30 | 33.09 | 34.22 |
| II. Agricultural Laborers | 26 | 25.12 | 26.44 | 21 | 19.57 | 21.06 | 50 | 46.34 | 44.93 |
| III Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, orchards and Allied activities | 2 | 2.25 | 1.90 | 2 | 2.37 | 1.99 | 3 | 1.83 | 1.60 |
| IV. Mining and Quarrying | 1 | 0.58 | 0.62 | 1 | 0.63 | 0.70 | - | 0.35 | 0.34 |
| V. Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs: | 4 | 3.45 | 2.42 | 4 | 3.18 | 2.09 | 4 | 4.57 | 3.53 |
| a) Household industry | 6 | 7.85 | 7.76 | 7 | 8.91 | 8.89 | 3 | 3.60 | 3.88 |
| b) Other than household industry | | | | | | | | | |
| VI. Construction | 1 | 1.66 | 1.95 | 1 | 1.87 | 2.32 | 1 | 0.87 | 0.66 |
| VII. Trade and Commerce | 6 | 6.33 | 7.46 | 6 | 7.41 | 8.98 | 2 | 2.04 | 2.26 |
| VIII. Transport, Storage* and Communications | 2 | 2.75 | 2.81 | 3 | 3.36 | 3.54 | - | 0.37 | 0.32 |
| IX. Other Services | 9 | 8.55 | 10.23 | 9 | 8.99 | 10.80 | 7 | 6.94 | 8.26 |
| | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Census of India, 1971 (Series 1-India Part II-B (i) General Economic Tables). Women in India, A Statistical Profile – 1997, Department of Women and Child Development.

Other policies announced but no plan of action or implementation of the policy has been the fate of the followings:

- National Plan of Action for women 1976.
- National perspective plan 1988 – 2000.
- National Plan of Action for the Girl Child 1991-2000.

Table 14: Proportion of Woman among the Total Workers in the Organized Sector and Percentage Increase 1971-1999

| Category | 1971 | | | 1999 | | | Variation |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | Total | Women | % of Women | Total | Women | % of Women | In women employees 1999/1971 (%) |
| PUBLIC SECTOR | | | | | | | |
| Central Government | 27.60 | 0.78 | 2.82 | 33.13 | 2.52 | 7.60 | 323 % |
| State Governments | 40.50 | 3.53 | 8.50 | 74.58 | 13.79 | 18.50 | 390% |
| Quasi-Central and State | 19.23 | 0.86 | 4.50 | 63.86 | 5.89 | 9.22 | 684 % |
| Local bodies | 18.78 | 3.44 | 18.30 | 22.59 | 5.91 | 26.16 | 171% |
| TOTAL | 107.10 | 8.61 | 8.03 | 194.15 | 28.11 | 14.50 | 327% |
| PRIVATE SECTOR | | | | | | | |
| Large establishments | 67.40 | 10.63 | 15.77 | 77.70 | 17.92 | 23.06 | 195% |
| Small establishments | | | | 9.28 | 2.77 | 29.85 | |
| TOTAL | 67.40 | 10.63 | 15.77 | 86.98 | 20.69 | 23.12 | 195% |
| GRAND TOTAL | 174.50 | 19.24 | 11.02 | 281.13 | 48.30 | 17.18 | 251% |

Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training.

Other Good Initiatives

- Setting up of Department of Women and Child development in the Ministry for Human Resourcedevelopment has led to gender sensitization in budgetary allocations and in design of government supported development programmes. The department functions like a watchdog in the government.
- Central Social welfare Board and Rashtriya Mahilakosh (which was set up as a result of the findings of the Shram Shakti Report) have welfare and micro credit as their main functions towards empowerment of women.
- Parliamentary committee on Empowerment of women was set up in 2000, the year of Women's Empowerment in India. The Committee examines measures taken by the Union Government for women's Empowerment and in Five Years Plans and on gender budgeting.

Women and Health

Table on expectation of life at birth of men and women shows that while the female expected to live longer than the males during 1901-21, their life expectancy fell below that of the males from 1931 to 1961, it was about the same in 1971. However, since 1971, the female expectation of life has increased more than that of men and in 2001 women expected to live three years longer than the men (Table15).

Table 15: Life Expectancy at Birth of males and females during the past 100 years 1901-2001

| Year | M | F | Both | F-M |
|----------|------|------|------|------|
| 1901-11 | 22.6 | 23.3 | 22.9 | 0.7 |
| 1911-21 | 19.4 | 20.9 | 20.1 | 1.5 |
| 1921-31 | 26.9 | 26.6 | 26.8 | -.3 |
| 1931-41 | 32.1 | 31.4 | 31.8 | -.7 |
| 1941-51 | 32.4 | 31.7 | 32.1 | -.7 |
| 1951-61 | 41.9 | 40.6 | 41.3 | -1.3 |
| 1961-71 | 46.4 | 44.7 | 45.6 | -1.7 |
| 1970-75 | 50.5 | 49.0 | 49.7 | -1.5 |
| 1976-80 | 52.5 | 52.1 | 52.3 | -.4 |
| 1981-85 | 55.4 | 55.7 | 55.4 | .3 |
| 1986-90 | 57.7 | 58.1 | 57.7 | .4 |
| 1987-91 | 58.1 | 58.6 | 58.3 | .5 |
| 1991-95 | 59.7 | 60.9 | 60.3 | 1.2 |
| 1992-96 | 60.1 | 61.4 | 60.7 | 1.3 |
| *1996-01 | 62.4 | 63.4 | 62.9 | 1.0 |
| **2001 | 63.9 | 66.9 | 65.3 | 3.0 |

Source: Country Statement, International Conference on Population Development, Cairo, 1994 and Registrar General of India.

* Planning Commission July 2000

** Statistical Outline of India 2003-04, Tata Services Ltd, p. 31

Data on Infant mortality rates by sex over the years (1972-1998) given in (Table16) do not show any pattern. However, the data on sex ratio given in the Table below (Table17) show a continuous decline from 1901 to 1961 when it was 841. The ratio has improved some since then but is still low at, having gone up from 927 to 933 in 1991.

They are however higher in rural areas than in urban and higher in the southern states than in the northern states. The high expectation of life at birth of females and continuous low sex-ratio only indicate the oft-focused issue of female feticide. The earlier explanation of female feticide is not borne by data of infant mortality rates given in Table 16, however, Female children if allowed to be born, more or less live as long as the males. However such low ratio of girl children to boy children born only reconfirms wide prevalence of female feticide. The sex ratio of children born has no relevance to poverty; it has been noticed in poor states as well as the richest. (Mapping Adverse Child Sex Ratio in India November 2003 UNPF, Ministry of Health and office of the Census Commissioner of India).

The decline in sex ratio has occurred in states having large concentration of the population, is concentrated more in the northern states than in the south and includes some of the richest

Table 16: Estimated infant mortality rates by sex and residence, India 1972-1998

| Year | TOTAL | | | RURAL | | | URBAN | | |
|------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females |
| 1972 | 140 | 132 | 148 | 151 | 141 | 161 | 85 | 85 | 85 |
| 1978 | 125 | 120 | 131 | 136 | 130 | 142 | 70 | 69 | 71 |
| 1983 | 105 | 105 | 105 | 114 | 114 | 115 | 66 | 69 | 63 |
| 1988 | 94 | 96 | 94 | 102 | 103 | 102 | 62 | 65 | 59 |
| 1993 | 74 | 73 | 75 | 82 | 81 | 84 | 45 | 47 | 44 |
| 1994 | 74 | 75 | 73 | 80 | 80 | 78 | 52 | 53 | 51 |
| 1998 | 72 | 70 | 74 | 77 | 76 | 79 | 45 | 42 | 49 |

Source: Women in India – A Statistical Profile, 1997. Sample Registration System, Fertility & Mortality Indicators – 1982-1993, Registrar General of India; SRS Bulletins 1996, 1998, RGI.

Table 17: Sex ratio of Population (F/M 1000) 1901-2001

| Year | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 | 1931 | 1941 | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| F/M | 972 | 964 | 955 | 950 | 945 | 946 | 841 | 930 | 933 | 927 | 933 |

Source: Registrar General of India 1991 series 1 and 2001- Provisional Population Totals

districts of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. In a recent study supported by UNFPA on 'Infanticide in Rajasthan – Causes and Practices' conducted by VIHAAN, Society for Child Development, the sex ratio has been declining from 1961 to 1991. In 2001 it recorded a small increase over 1991. However, in 2001, 70 districts in 16 states and Union Territories have recorded more than 50-point decline in the child sex ratio. The sex ratio is lowest in Kurukshetra (Haryana), Ahmedabad and in South Delhi. Some of the most prosperous district of Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have the lowest sex ratios. Besides the decline between 1991-2001 has been recorded in all districts of Punjab and all district have a sex ratio of below 850 (2001). A similar trend has been recorded in Haryana, Gujarat and Delhi.

Besides, aborting female fetuses is common among upper-middle class educated couples.

In spite of the Passage of Regulation and Prevention of Misuse of PDI (pre-natal diagnostic Investigation Technology) in 1994, in 2001 the child sex ratio (0-6 age group) has declined from 945 to 927. Death rate by sex among 0-4 age group is 24.8 for girls and 22.7 for boys (Gopalan Table 4. 4 page 74). However, over-all sex ratio has gone up somewhat between 1991-2001 primarily due to longer expectation of life for women than men. Better outreach of health facilities (the per capita expenditure on health has gone up from Rs. 0.61 in 1951 to Rs 85.10 in 1994-1995 (Gopalan Table 4.9 page 125). Intensive healthcare awareness programmes run by the government and the NGOs have contributed to better health so has use of soap and more availability of water.

However, increase in sex ratio between 1991-2001 is primarily due to higher life expectancy of women. Programme for awareness on family planning and late marriage have led to decline in fertility rates from 5.3 (1970) to 3.4 (1991).

Gender Equality, Women's movement and Women's Empowerment

The women's movement in India today is a rich and vibrant movement, which has spread to various parts of the country. Women's movement consists of female-headed NGOs working for welfare of women who became activists and raised the issue of social, economic, legal and political discrimination suffered by Indian women who because of the patriarchal structures of the society were far from equal with men. During the last thirty years the movement has gone through a process of maturing from a demand and demonstration phase to mature interventions in policy, active participation in creating new institutional and organizational structures, professionalism and participation in discussions at local, national and international levels. The issues taken up by the movement are located within the sphere of the private, and are directly linked to the body and a woman's position within the family while understanding fully that what happens within the four walls of the house has direct correlation with what is happening outside of it and that public and private are connected and what happens inside the home is the result of patriarchy which pervades all institutions –private and public.

Since women are not equal to men, there is need to fight the current social attitudes and change institutional frame works that stand in the way of equality. The efforts will have to be made at two levels: one to trigger the process of equity and second to empower women through awareness generation on their current situation and their rights, with particular focus on grass root women. They held demonstration, and public campaign and used theater as a median for awareness generation.

The seventies consisted of various scattered movements that addressed issues ranging from the creation of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and their struggle for equal wages to the Chipko movement's effort to raise the issue of a woman's right to land. Towards the end of the 1970s and the beginning of 1980s there was enormous increase in establishment of various women's groups, many registering themselves as NGOs in order to be able to collect funds for their activities.

In addition to earlier methods, the eighties were characterized by attempts to develop structures, coalition groups, support institutions as well as developing global sisterhood. Women's organizations were active on a whole range of issues, which they saw were inter-linked to control over women's bodies. They took up the issues of rape, domestic violence, dowry, personal law, sati and fought for the creation of new women-sensitive laws or amendments to existing laws.

The eighties began with the first National Conference on the Women's Movement that addressed the issue of rape and harassment of women. The Mathura Rape Case in 1980 ended the silence on violence against women, which led in 1983 to an amendment in laws pertaining to rape. Among the provisions was a minimum seven years imprisonment. However, these laws still remain anti-women and ineffective and sustained advocacy efforts to amend and implement these further continues.

When it came to domestic violence women's groups were successful in their struggle to introduce a legal provision which established this as a crime which the police were obliged to register and act upon -Section 498 A under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Under this violence

inflicted on a woman by her husband or his family was declared a non-bailable, non-cognizable offence. But as has been mentioned earlier there is a steep rise in the reported crimes against women among which domestic violence incidences constitute a major form of violence and that while women do find the courage to report the cases 80% of them are dropped. Recently under pressure from the movement and its spokesperson, the National Commission for Women, the Government of India has passed a 'Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act which has given the women wide ranging rights in case of domestic violence.

In 1982 an amendment was passed to the Dowry Prohibition Act, which stated that an official inquiry would be conducted if the wife died within seven years of marriage. If found guilty of dowry harassment the husband (and co-accused) faced seven years in jail as well as fines. Some of the other important decisions taken were those surrounding stree dhan (the gifts given to the bride by her parents, husband and in-laws).

Personal law was addressed in 1985 with the Shahbano case. It raised the issue of divorce (talaq) and maintenance of Muslim women. Despite official roadblocks the Supreme Court gave a landmark ruling. It established the right of a Muslim woman to maintenance. However, the Government of India bowed down to religious sentiments against interference in the personal laws of Muslims.

In the early campaigns, groups learnt from day to day that targeting the State was not enough and that victims also needed support. So a further level of work was needed: awareness raising or conscientization so that violence against women could be prevented, rather than only dealt with after it had happened. Legal aid and counseling centers were set up, and attempts were made to establish women's shelters. It was only when groups began to feel sucked into the overwhelming volume of the day-to-day work of such centers that they began to feel that it was not enough to do what they now saw as 'reformist' and 'non-campaign' work. Knowledge was recognized as an important need. India is such a vast country; what did activists in Karnataka, a state in southern India, know of what was going on in Garhwal in north India? And yet, everywhere you looked, there was women's activity, activity that could not necessarily be defined as 'feminist', but that was, nonetheless, geared towards improving the conditions of women's lives.

In the nineties women took up the issue of communalism and globalisation and feminisation of poverty through wider networking both at the national and international level. As the movement moved from women's issues to issues of livelihood and sustainable development they began to address the issue of population policy demanding the exclusion e.g. of Norplant in the Family Planning Programme because of its devastating side effects, taking forward the campaign against hazardous contraceptive technologies started in the eighties. The politics of population growth and control was further brought out at the international level in the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development.

The movement has realized that unless women have access to elected offices, even democracies will simply be masking another kind of dictatorship – the imposition of male agendas over female ones. In view of the current patriarchal structures, however, the only way women can enter the sphere of elected political offices is through reservation of seats for women. Earlier the 73rd and 74th Amendment to the Constitution mandated 33.3% of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies. The women's groups are demanding

same reservation in state legislatures and in the national Parliament.

The increasing feminization of poverty and violence against women emerge as the two main concerns at the Beijing Conference of delegates.

Strategies for Women's Empowerment used by the feminist groups is reformist and therefore techniques used are advocacy, lobbying, litigation, and monitoring; they use any technique that has promise and they change tactics if necessary. The favored techniques have been, Protest, Litigation, Lobbying and monitoring

Feminists have been able to rely on preexisting structure of traditional women's groups (AICC, YWCA, NFIW, AIDWA, MDS etc) whose shared interests in many feminists issues has produced numbers and assistance that would otherwise have been costly and probably unattainable. Women's reservation Bill, The dowry bill and the Mathura Rape case served as a model of structure and tactics and provided considerable assistance to the incipient feminist movement as it developed. Thus despite the existence of numerous autonomous sub-groupings that compete for funding and influence, there is extensive coalition building and remarkable unity among feminists. Friendship among group activists as well as multiple group membership provide linkages and facilitate the sharing of information, mobilization of activity on a specific activity and for planning of joint strategy and ad hoc coalitions are also created as necessary within the movement and with allied groups. Thus women's movement has consciously engaged in network building and has created an effective mechanism for both specialization and cohesion. The movement is capable of energetic action through inter-group mobilization when necessary. (The amount of energy unleashed by the movement during the time of international conferences like the Fourth Women's Conference in Beijing effected partly by the huge funds invested by the united nations and several other donor agencies needs to be analyzed, however).

Organization of grassroots women into groups around an economic activity or a social issue and conscientizing the group on their rights, the effect of patriarchy and the advantages of working as groups for enhancing their economic activity has greatly empowered grass root women. Through group strength the women have been able to punish their tormentors. They have been successful in closing shops selling liquor and even in killing their tormentors within the premises of a courtroom in the presence of law enforcement authorities whom they found incapable of enforcing laws. (The Nagpur Aku Yadav case)

In spite of limitation of resources feminists have been creative in the utilization of the resources they do possess. They have exercised flexibility in choosing strategies and approaches and have employed traditional pressure-group tactics with considerable skill. The simultaneous reliance on groups' specialization and coalition activity has maximized the effective use of existing resources. To change the society in which one lives it is first necessary to modify the belief system of the people living in the society - one available route is education.

Selection of Issues and Success

When issues the movement has taken over are perceived as affecting role equity rather than role change, the opportunities for favorable impact on the political system has been maximized for feminist groups. Several factors are crucial to attainment of goals: the issue should have a broad based support, the issue is narrow enough not to challenge basic values or

divide supporters; a policy network with access and capability of providing information to decision makers, the willingness to compromise with constituents groups and in the political process and ability to define success in terms of increments of change rather than total victory. A major factor that influences success is the image of broad based support. Focus on role of equity has found considerable support. When more dominant values are in question and role change issues are at stake the possibility of success becomes limited. Confrontation has not been the chosen strategy. The tactics of the women's groups has been centrist. Women also compromise on their demands – as are being pressurized to do in passage of the Women's Reservation Bill

Successful group provide informational resources to bureaucrats and members of Parliament as well as state legislatures. To this day the most detailed and comprehensive public record of discrimination has been provided by the publication of Equality Now (1975).

Present Status of the Movement

The movement has become professional zed and bureaucratized. However, the early emphasis of the movement on “sisterhood” has remained a unifying force as a result, inclusivity remains as an operating principle. The commitment has remained movement oriented negating the role of the media stars or charismatic leaders preventing organizational demise with the departure of the key individual. Feminists possess little resources but high status

The movement has gained widespread acceptance as a legitimate pressure group.

The multiple activities and success related to equity question will keep the movement alive. In addition more laws affecting equity roles are enacted and the law protects more rights for women, sufficient momentum will be sustained to keep the movement as a viable force in politics. The movement, so far, made limited use of the courts, however if women's reservation bill fails the courts may be one avenue for redress that he movement may use to grater advantage. In the coming decades more emphasis on cementing gains already made, by continued monitoring of the commitment of administrative agencies to enforcement of existing laws. Effective impact on some issues will involve participation of women affected by it with the feminist activists.

If the women's movement continues to abide by the “political rules of the game” and if parameters are drawn around issues selected for advocacy, feminist will continue to be successful political participants in an age of declining parties and pluralist expansion of interest group politics. Today the women's movement in India is rich and vibrant, which has spread to various parts of the country.

In spite of limitation of resources feminists have been creative in the utilization of the resources they do posses. They have exercised flexibility in choosing strategies and approaches and have employed traditional pressure-group tactics with considerable skill. The simultaneous reliance on groups' specialization and coalition activity has maximized the effective use of existing resources. To change the society in which one lives it s first necessary to modify the belief system of the people living in the society - one available route is education.

When issues the movement has taken over are perceived as affecting role equity rather than role change, the opportunities for favorable impact on the political system has been maximized for feminist groups. Several factors are crucial to attainment of goals; the issue

should have a broad based support, it should be narrow enough not to challenge basic values or divide supporters; a policy network with access and capability of providing information to decision makers, the willingness to compromise with constituents groups and in the political process and ability to define success in terms of increments of change rather than total victory.

A major factor that influences success is the image of broad based support. Focus on role equity has found considerable support. When more dominant values are in question and role change issues are at stake the possibility of success becomes limited.

Successful groups provide informational resources to bureaucrats and members of Congress. To this day the most detailed and comprehensive public record of discrimination has been provided by the publication of Equality Now (1970) which has only recently been updated by the 'Unfinished Agenda' Women also compromise on their demands – as are being pressurized to do so in passage of the Women's Reservation Bill. Confrontation is not the chosen strategy and the tactics of the women's groups have been centrist.

The movement has become professional zed and bureaucratized. However, the early emphasis of the movement on "sisterhood" has remained a unifying force as result inclusivity remains as an operating principle. The commitment has remained movement oriented negating the role of the media stars or charismatic leaders preventing organizational demise with the departure of the key individual. Feminists possess little resources but high status

The movement has gained widespread acceptance as a legitimate pressure group.

The multiple activities and success related to equity question will keep the movement alive. In addition more laws affecting equity roles are enacted and more rights for women are protected by the law sufficient momentum will be sustained to keep the movement on a viable force in politics. The movement, so far, made limited use of the courts, however if women's reservation bill fails the courts may be one avenue for redress that he movement may use to grater advantage. In the coming decades more emphasis on cementing gains already made, by continued monitoring of the commitment of administrative agencies to enforcement of existing laws. Effective impact on some issues will involve participation of women affected by it with the feminist activists.

If the women's movement continues to abide by the "political rules of the game" and if parameters are drawn around issues selected for advocacy, feminist will continue to be successful political participants in an age of declining parties and pluralist expansion of interest group politics.

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