



## **Government of Tamilnadu**

### **Department of Employment and Training**

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Subject : Social Issues in India and Tamil Nadu  
Topic : Women Empowerment

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**Commissioner,**

**Department of Employment and Training.**



# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights, such as:

1. Freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity.
2. Have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace, to make their own choices and decisions.
3. Have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities.
4. Have equal social status in the society.
5. Have equal rights for social and economic justice, Determine financial and economic choices.
6. Get equal opportunity for education.
7. Get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias.
8. Get safe and comfortable working environment.
9. Women have the rights to get their voices heard.

## **Main Reasons behind Gender Inequality**

1. Patriarchal Society
2. Giving low priority for women education
3. Women are lower in physical strength hence the men could easily have power upon women
4. Females are confined within the walls and men are carried all economic activity
5. Women are economically depended especially during pregnancy
6. Lack of political will

## **IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

**Under-employed and unemployed:** Women population constitutes around 50% of the world population. A large number of women around the world are unemployed.

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The world economy suffers a lot because of the unequal opportunity for women at workplaces.

**Equally competent and intelligent:** Women are equally competent. Nowadays, women are even ahead of men in many socio-economic activities.

**Talented:** Women are as talented as men. Previously, women were not allowed higher education like men and hence their talents were wasted. But nowadays, they are also allowed to go for higher studies and it encourages women to show their talents which will not only benefit her individually but to the whole world at large.

**Overall development of society:** The main advantage of Women Empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society. The money that women earn does not only help them and or their family, but it also helps to develop the society.

**Economic Benefits:** Women Empowerment also leads to more economic benefits not to the individuals but to the society as well. Unlike earlier days when they stayed at home only and do only kitchen stuffs, nowadays, they roam outside and also earns money like the male members of the society. Women empowerment helps women to stand on their own legs, become independent and also to earn for their family which grows country's economy.

**Reduction in domestic violence:** Women Empowerment leads to decrease in domestic violence. Uneducated women are at higher risk for domestic violence than an educated woman.

**Reduction in corruption:** Women Empowerment is also advantageous in case of corruption. Women empowerment helps women to get educated and know their rights and duties and hence can stop corruption.

**Reduce Poverty:** Women Empowerment also reduces poverty. Sometimes, the money earned by the male member of the family is not sufficient to meet the demands of the family. The added earnings of women help the family to come out of poverty trap.

**National Development:** Women are increasingly participating in the national development process. They are making the nation proud by their outstanding

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performances almost every sphere including medical science, social service, engineering, etc.

**Irreplaceable in some sectors:** Women are considered irreplaceable for certain jobs, Doctor, Police officer, Lawyer etc.,

## **Role of the Government in Women Empowerment**

### **Introduction:**

Women are the most important members of the society serving multitude roles such as being a mother, sister, daughter, wife, and a friend etc. These days the role of women has not been restricted to household rather many women are occupying a high position in society they are excelling in every field whether its sports, finance, education etc.

Thus, in the past few years, the government has launched many schemes for women aimed at their upliftment and help them to evolve better.

### **Constitutional Framework**

**Art 14:** General equality provision guaranteing equality before law.

**Art 15:** Inhibits the State from discriminating on the ground of sex.

**Art 15(3):** The State can make certain special provisions beneficial for women and children.

**Art 16(1) & (2):** Injects equal treatment and non-discrimination on the ground of sex in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

**Art 23** prohibition of trafficking in human beings.

**Art 39 (d):** Adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

**Art 39 (e):** To ensure the health and strength of workers, both men and women.

**Art 42:** State shall make provisions for securing just and human conditions of work and maternity relief.

**Art. 46:** State shall promote with special care, the interests of weaker sections.

**Art. 51(A)(e):** The duty to promote harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst all and to renounce practices derogatory to women.

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**Art. 243 D (3):** Reservation of 1/3rd of the total number of seats in the panchayats for women.

**Art. 243 D (4):** Reservation of 1/3rd of the total number of offices of chairpersons in panchayats at each level.

Similar provisions have also been made for municipalities.

**Art. 325** prohibits sex-based discrimination in relation to right to vote.

1. Legal provisions for protection of women
2. Married Women's Property Act, 1874
3. Workmen's compensation Act, 1923
4. Indian Successions Act, 1925
5. Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956
6. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
7. The indecent representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986
8. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
9. National commission for Women Act 1990
10. The Hindu succession (Amendment Act 2005)

**Working Women Hostel:** This scheme envisages provision of safe and affordable hostel accommodation to women who are working, single, and living away from homes. It carries salient features and possesses the objective of providing safe and convenient accommodation for working women with daycare facility for their children wherever possible in urban, semi-urban or even rural areas at a locality where employment opportunity for women exist. Since the inception of this scheme, around 890 hostels have been sanctioned and over 66,000 women have benefited.

**One Stop Centre Scheme:** The aim of launching this scheme is to provide support and assistance to women who are affected by violence in public and private spaces. Through this scheme, the women who are facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, education status, marital status, race, and culture will be supported. One Stop Centre provides specialized services to women who face any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honour-related crimes, acid

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attacks or witch-hunting. The OSCs are set up in each state to provide integrated medical, legal, and psychological support to women across the country.

**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojna:** It was launched on January 22 in the year 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child to generate awareness and also improve the efficiency of welfare services meant for girl child. This scheme is to prevent gender-biased sex-selective elimination and ensure the education, survival, and protection of the girl child. It also aims to celebrate the girl child. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was originally introduced to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR). The scheme is being implemented by the joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development through a national campaign. The campaign focused on multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts which have low CSR. It covers all the States and Union Territories.

**Mahila E-Haat:** To support women and also 'Make in India' through online marketing platform this bilingual online portal is a blessing. Launched on March 7, 2016, by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Mahila E-Haat is an initiative for meeting needs of women entrepreneurs. It provides a unique and direct marketing platform and also leverages technology for supporting women entrepreneurs, SHGs, and NGOs.

It provides continuous sustenance and support to their creativity and strengthens financial inclusion of Women Entrepreneurs in the economy. The main objective of this platform is to act as a catalyst by providing a web-based marketing platform to the women entrepreneurs to directly sell their products.

**Sukanya Samriddhi** literally means prosperity for the girl child. It is a savings scheme that prompts parents and (legal) guardians of a girl child to put away small sums of money on a regular basis and invest these. The cumulated amount and returns may be used to fund the education, marriage, and entrepreneurial dreams of the daughter, says the government.





### **International Institution:**

1. Convention of Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) - 1979
2. United Nations Development fund for women – 1976.

## **Domestic violence, Dowry menace, Sexual assault**

### **Crime against women**

#### **1. Sati :**

The literal meaning of sati is “virtuous women” and a women can only become virtuous, by the fact of her immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband. Sati is an ancient custom and it was prevalent in various ancient cultures.

The major factor behind the social practice of Sati was the societal attitude towards widows.

In medieval times, widows were also expected to shave their heads. The window had to maintain this austere regiment to the end of her days in the hope of being remarried to her former husband in the next life.

Social and family pressure have made sati virtually obligatory for women of aristocratic classes.

William Bentinck, the Governor General, brought a legislation in 1829, which declared the practice of sati illegal and punishable by the criminal courts are culpable homicide.

#### **Sati in Post-Independence Period:**

Despite imposing a legal ban on the practice of sati, several incidents of committing sati have taken place in the post-independence period. In fact, a large number of sati temples and commemorative structures are available throughout the country especially in the Bundelkhand region.

The commission of sati (prevention) Act 1987 provides for the more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification.



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## **2. Dowry Death:**

In the early day's dowry was an institution in which gifts and presents were given to a girl at the time of her marriage when she was required to leave her parents' home and join her husband's household.

But, in course of time, it became a crude institution resulting in female infanticide, suicide, bride-burning and other indignities and cruelties.

The problem of dowry has become a serious social evil among the upper castes and middle classes both in towns and villages.

Most dowry deaths occurs in the privacy of husbands house. Middle class women suffer a high rate of victimization than lower class or upper class. About 70% of victims belong to 21-24 age group.

### **Reasons:**

1. Male dominance and patriarchal society.
2. Daughters are considered as burden and son, an asset.
3. Economic incapability of women
4. It is considered as a symbol of prestige and position.
5. Old mindset, social and cultural sanction to dowry.
6. Low level of education among women
7. Problems in implementation of Dowry. Prohibition Laws.

### **Legal provision and government actions**

Sec 304 B of Indian Penal Code punishes the husband and relatives in case of death of the girl within seven years of her marriage in relation to demand for dowry.

Sec 498 A of the Indian Penal Code punishes cruelty practiced by husbands or relatives in relation to demand for dowry prohibition Act 1961 was passed which makes taking and giving of dowry a punishable and non bailable offence.

### **Causes of child marriage**

1. Poor socio-economic condition
2. Illiterate parents

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3. Poverty, indebtedness
  4. Dowry problem
  5. In secured society
  6. Weak laws and ineffective enforcement machinery
  7. Low status of women in society
  8. Lack of political will to eradicate the problem.

### **Consequences of child marriage**

1. Early maternal deaths
2. Poor Infant health
3. Poor Fertility outcomes (pre mature birth)
4. Domestic Violence
5. Loss of educational opportunities
6. Segregation from family and friends
7. Sexual exploitation
8. Higher infant mortality rate.

### **Child marriage protection officers and their duties:**

1. The government shall appoint Child marriage protection officers over the area specified in the official gazette. Their duties are:
2. To prevent child marriage by taking action.
3. To collect evidence for effective prosecution.
4. To advise the locals not to indulge in promoting or helping or allowing solemnization of child marriage.
5. To create awareness of the evil of such child marriage.
6. To sensitize the community on the issue.
7. To furnish periodical returns and statistics when the government may direct.

Such other duties assigned by the Government.

### **Female infanticide**

Female infanticide is the deliberate killing of new born female children.

## **Causes**

1. Poverty
2. Dowry system
3. Birth to unmarried women
4. Deformed infants
5. Famine
6. Lack of support services
7. Maternal illnesses
8. Sex-selective abortion

## **Effects**

1. Gender imbalance
2. Declining sex ratio
3. Low Female literacy rate
4. Economic empowerment declined

## **State responses**

1. Baby cradle scheme -1992
2. Girl child protection scheme -1991

## **Polygamy**

1. It is practice of having more than one spouse at one time.
2. According to Hindu Marriage Act 1955, only monogamy is permitted. In India, the only personal law which permits polygamy is Muslim personal law.
3. Polygamy discriminates against the women and violates their basic human rights.

## **Domestic violence:**

Violent (or) Aggressive behaviour within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.

## **The protection of women from Domestic violence Act 2005**

The Domestic Violence Bill was passed in 2005 and came into force in 2006. The new act contains five chapters and 37 sections.



### **Main features:**

The term 'domestic violence' been made wide enough to encompass every possibility as it covers all forms of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse that can harm, cause injury to, endanger the health, safety, life or well-being, either mental or physical of the aggrieved person.

The definition of an 'aggrieved person' is equally wide and covers not just the wife but a woman who is the sexual partner of the male irrespective of whether she is his legal wife or not. The daughter, mother, sister, child (male or female), widowed relative, in fact, any woman residing in the household who is related in some way to the respondent, is also covered by the Act.

It appears from the Act that the information regarding an act or acts of domestic violence does not necessarily have to be lodged by the aggrieved party but by "any person who has reason to believe that" such an act has been or is being committed. It means that neighbours, social workers, relatives etc can all take initiative on behalf of the victim.

The magistrate has the powers to permit the aggrieved woman to stay in her place of abode and cannot be evicted by the husband in retaliation.

This fear of being driven out of the house effectively silenced many women and made them silent sufferers.

The Act allows the magistrate to protect the woman from acts future and can prohibit the respondent from dispossessing the aggrieved person or disturbing her possessions, entering the aggrieved person's place of work or, if the aggrieved person is a child, the school.

The Act has a provision of a penalty up to one year imprisonment and /or a fine up to ₹ 20,000/- for any offence. The offence is also considered cognizable and non-bailable, while "under the sole testimony of the aggrieved person, the court may conclude that an offence has been committed by the accused".

The Act also ensures speedy justice as the Court has to start proceedings and have the first hearing within 3 days of the complaint being filed in the court and every case must

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be disposed of within a period of sixty days of the first hearing. It makes provisions for the State to provide for Protection officers and the whole machinery to implement the Act.

### **Salient features of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005**

1. Includes physical and mental ill-treatment.
2. Primarily meant for the protection of wife or female live-in partners.
3. Law also extends to sisters, widows or mothers.
4. Harassment in the form of dowry demands also included in this law.
5. Gives women **right to secure housing**.
6. Court can also issue protection orders that prevent the abuser to harass the women by acts at her workplace.
7. Act proposes appointment of protection officers and NGOs.
8. Breach of protection order is a non-bailable offense.

### **Sexual harassment:**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that occurs in the workplace. The courts defined sexual harassment as an act which includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as:

1. Physical contacts and advances
2. A demand or request for sexual favours
3. Sexual pornography
4. Any other unwelcome physical, Verbal or non verbal conduct of sexual nature.
5. It affects the dignity of the women, prevents them from entering into economic activities, hampers the work environment and thus affects productivity and economic development. With the increase in the number of working women, a new arena has opened in which the violation of human rights and the dignity of women are challenged.
6. Each such incident results in the violation of fundamental right of gender equality and right to life and liberty. It is a clear violation of rights under articles 14,15 and 21 of the constitution. One of the logical consequences of such an incident is also

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the violations of victims fundamental rights under article 19(1) (g) to practice any profession or to carry out any occupation trade or business.

### **The sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act 2013**

The act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. The act came into forces from 9 December 2013.

The Act will ensure that women are protected against sexual harassment at all the work places, be it in public or private. This will contribute to realisation of their right to gender equality, life and liberty and equality in working condition everywhere. The sense of security at the workplace will improve women's participation in work, resulting in their economic empowerment and inclusive growth.

### **National Women's commission**

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was set up a statutory body in 1992 under the National Commission for women Act 1990 to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for the women. It recommends remedial legislative measures, facilitates redressal of the grievances and advises the government on all policy matters affecting the women.

The first commission was constituted in 1992 with Ms Jayanti Patnaik as the Chairperson. The current chairperson is Lalitha Kumaramangalam.

### **Composition**

A chairperson to be nominated by the central government. Five members to be nominated by the central government from amongst the person of ability, integrity and standing - and have experience in various fields, like law or legislation, trade union, management of industry, potential of women, women's voluntary organization, administration, economic development, health, education or social welfare. A member secretary to be nominated by the central government.



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## **Functions:**

The functions of the Commission as enumerated under Section 10 of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 are as follows:

1. Investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws;
2. Present to the Central Government, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
3. Make in such report's recommendations for the effective implementation
4. of those safeguards for improving the conditions of women by the Union or any State;
5. Review, from time to time, the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereof so as to suggest remedial legislative measures to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;
6. Take up the cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities;
7. Look into complaints and take suo motu notice of matters relating to, deprivation of women's right.
8. Participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of women.

## **National policy for the empowerment of women (2001)**

1. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.
2. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.
3. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres.
4. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development.
5. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women.



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6. Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal level are some of other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girl and women persists in parts of the country.

**Goal and Objectives:**

1. The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women.
2. The Policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving its goals.

**Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include**

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



## **National Mission for Empowerment of women**

1. The national mission for empowerment of women (NMEW) was launched by the government of India on international women's Day in 2010 with the aim to strengthen overall processes that promotes all round development of women.
2. It has the mandate to strengthen the inter sector convergence facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments.

### **Aim:**

To provide a single window service for all programmes run by the government for women under aegis of various central ministries. In light with its mandate, the mission has been named Mission Poorna Shakti, Implying a vision for holistic empowerment of women.

### **Focus areas of the Mission:**

1. Access to health, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for women.
2. Coverage of all girls especially those belonging to vulnerable groups in schools from primary to class 12.
3. Higher and professional education for girls / women.
4. Skill development, micro credit, vocational training , entrepreneurship , SHG development.
5. Gender sensitization and dissemination of information.
6. Taking steps to prevent crime against women and taking steps for a safe environment for women.

### **All India Women's Conference**

1. The All India Women's Conference (AIWC) is an organisation based in Delhi.
2. It was founded in 1927 by Margaret Cousins, "as an organisation dedicated to upliftment and betterment of women and children".
3. As well as continuing its original mission, the AIWC has since diversified into various social and economic activities involving women.
4. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child

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### **Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board (1990)**

Social Welfare is the wellbeing of an entire community and the action to provide certain minimum standards and opportunities.



## **Functions and Responsibilities**

1. It is concerned with the quality of life, level of crime, extent of abuse, availability of essential social services as well as religions and spiritual freedoms of life.
2. It was empowered to examine schemes including financial outlay, review of progress.
3. Act as nodal department for the upliftment of socially backward group of women and children
4. Create an enabling mechanism to facilitate networking of committed social workers for the empowerment of women and children.
5. Generate awareness about the challenges of a society in transition where negative use of technologies and practices are impacting on the wellbeing of women and children.

## **Suggestions to Empower Women**

### **I. Economic level**

1. Education, especially vocational education should be given to the women.
2. Tax incentives and credit should be given to the women entrepreneurs.
3. Equal pay for equal work should be ensured to women in the employment.
4. The success stories of women entrepreneurs should be popularized and published.
5. Property right should be given to the women in reality.
6. Programs assisting in women's economic empowerment should be expedited and special incentives should be given to them.

### **Political level**

1. Reservation up to 33% should be immediately given to the women in the parliament and state Legislature.
2. Political parties must give high ranks to the women who would work as the role models for others.
3. Women's right to vote should be ensured in reality
4. Political awareness programmes should be targeted to empower the women politically.
5. Role of media, NGO's and civil society is important.

## **Social level**

1. Rationalization of religion and religious values should be done.
2. Uniform Civil code should be implemented.
3. Revolutionary changes should be brought in the family circle.
4. Process of socialization should be changed from male dominant to egalitarian. (equalism)
5. Moral and religious values which are derogatory to women must be reoriented.
6. Mass awareness program to sensitize the people especially male towards the problems of women should be started.
7. Legal framework should be strengthened, violators should be promptly punished.

## **Women empowerment schemes in Tamil Nadu**

1. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Assistance scheme.
2. Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Marriage Assistance scheme
3. Periyar EVR Nagammai Free Education scheme.
4. E.V.R.Maniammaiyar Ninaivu Poor widow's daughter's marriage assistance scheme.
5. Annai theerasa ninaivu orphan girl's marriage assistance scheme.
6. Dr.Dharmamabal Ammaiyar Ninaivu Window Remarriage scheme.
7. Thamizhaga Arasu Intercaste marriage assistance scheme.
8. Sivagami Ammaiyar Memorial girl child protection scheme.
9. Sathiyavani Muthu Ammaiyar Ninaivu free supply of sewing Machine scheme.
10. Vazhndhu Kattuvom project.

## **Role of Women and Women's Organisations**

### **Introduction:**

Indian Society which is largely male dominated, for the position of women in society Not only men, even most women internalize their position in society as a fair description for their status through their ages, these generalizations apply to some degree to practically every known society in the world



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Women play various roles in their lifetime ranging from a mother to that of a breadwinner but are almost always subordinated to male authority, largely excluded from high status occupation and decision making both at work and at home.

Paradoxically, even in our Indian society where women goddess is worshipped, women are denied an independent identity and status

In recent years, particularly with the rise of Women's liberation Movement this discrimination against women has been widely debated. Two main positions have emerged from this debate. One maintains that this inequality between the sexes is based upon the biologically or genetically based differences between men and women. This view is opposed by the argument that gender roles are culturally determined and inequality between the sexes is a result of a long-drawn process of socialization.

### **Reform Movement**

**Brahmo Samaj:** It was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1825 & attempted to abolish restrictions and prejudices against women, which included child marriage, polygamy, limited rights to inherit property. Education was seen as the major factor to improve the position of women.

Civil Marriage Act, 1872 was passed, which permitted inter-caste marriage, legalized divorce and fixed 14 and 18 as the minimum age of marriage for girls and boys respectively

Raja Ram Mohan Roy played an important role in getting Sati abolished

**Prarthana Samaj** was founded by MG Ranade & RG Bhandarkar in 1867. Its objectives were more or less similar to that of Brahmo Samaj but remained confined to western India. Justice Ranade criticized child marriage, polygamy, restrictions on remarriage of widows and non-access to education.

### **Organizations:**

Due to women's movement several legislations were passed like Equal Remuneration Indian Act, Minimum Wage Act, Maternity Benefit Act. to ensure equal status to women in society & more importantly at work. However, illiteracy amongst the major

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women workforce (87% of women are employed in unorganised sector), fear of losing employment & lack of awareness of the laws enacted to protect them, make it difficult for women to benefit from them.

A few organizations are working to give voice to the women workers for improvement in their working conditions:

**Self employed Women's Association (SEWA)-** SEWA is a trade union. It is an organization of poor, self employed women workers in the unorganised sector of the country. They are the unprotected labour force as they do not obtain benefits like the workers of organized sector. SEWA's main goals are to organize women workers for full employment.

**Working Women's Forum (WWF)** the forum is committed to poverty reduction and strengthening of economic, social and cultural status of poor working women, through microcredit, training, social mobilization and other interventions to poor women .

**Annapurna Mahila Mandal (AMM)-** It works for welfare of women and the girl child. It conducts various activities that include educating women on health, nutrition, mother and child care, family planning, Literacy and environmental sanitation. It works or the empowerment of women and enables them to take their own decisions and fight for security and rights. The organization also promotes individual and group leadership.

**Currently there are many women organizations of India:**

1. All India Federation of Women Lawyers
2. All India Women's Conference
3. Appan Samachar
4. Association of Theologically Trained Women of India
5. Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh
6. Bharatiya Mahila Bank
7. Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs
8. Durga Vahini
9. Friends of Women's World Banking
10. Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan



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### **National alliance of women:**

The National Alliance of Women (NAWO) is a national web of women. It is affiliation or membership is open to all liberal minded women's groups and institutions, non-governmental organizations, women workers, women's unions, individuals and others who share the principles, objectives and values of NAWO, as defined in the NAWO vision. Major objective of this organization are:

Strengthening and building new initiatives, networks, forums etc., for protecting women's rights

Monitoring the Government of India's commitments, implementing the Platform for Action with special focus on the eight-point agenda discussed at the Conference of Commitment, CEDAW, the Human Rights and other United Nations Convention.

Advocacy, lobbying and campaigning on women related issues.

Information Dissemination and Documentation.

Solidarity and linkages with other regional and global forums.

Another women organization in India is Swadhina (Self-esteemed Women) which was formed in 1986. It is principally a civil society organization focused on Empowerment of women and Child Development based on Sustainable Development and Right Lively hood. At Swadhina, it is believed that positive social change has a direct effect on the lives of women and that change is possible only through an equal and spontaneous participation of Women. Organization members are active in five states across the country in remote tribal districts of Singbhum in Jharkhand, Purulia and West Midnapur in West Bengal, Kanya Kumari in Tamil Nadu, Mayurbhanj in Orissa and East Champaran in Bihar.

### **Major projects of this organization are as follows:**

1. Women's Empowerment Through:
2. Promoting Grass-Root level Women's Organization
3. Fostering Functional Literacy, Education & Social Awareness generation
4. Augmenting Participation of Women in Local Governance
5. Encouraging Women's Income Generation & economic capacity building

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6. Strengthening Women's Participation in Agriculture & Food Security support
  7. Upholding Non-Violence & Social Empowerment
  8. Improving Family Health & Nutrition
  9. Child Development Through:
  10. Supporting Child Education
  11. Promoting Sports & Games
  12. Advancing Environment & Eco-logical awareness

All India Democratic Women's Association is also dominant woman organization which is an independent left oriented women's organisation committed to achieving democracy, equality and women's emancipation. AIDWA members are from all strata in society, regardless of class, caste and community. It has an organizational presence in 22 states in India. AIDWA was created in 1981 as a national level mass organisation of women. AIDWA believes the liberation of women in India requires fundamental systemic change. It upholds secular values and challenges and resists cultural practices demeaning to women.

### **Factors affecting women's work participation**

Women's work participation rate in general has been declining over the decades. The decline has occurred due to several factors:

1. Absence of comprehensive and rational policy for women's emancipation through education, training and access to resources such as land, credit and technology etc.
2. The perception of male as the bread winner of the family despite the fact that in low income households women's income is crucial for sustenance. This perception adversely affects women's education & training. Employers also visualize women workers as supplementary workers & also cash in on this perception to achieve their capitalistic motives by keeping the wage low for women.
3. Structural changes in the economy e.g. decline in traditional rural industries or industrialization.
4. Lack of assets (land, house) in their own name in order to have access to credit and self-employment opportunities

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5. Huge demand of time and energy of women for various tasks at home like child bearing and rearing etc in addition to participation in labour force leave them with little time for education, training and self-development
  6. Division of labour based on the gender between men and women & technological advancements work against women. They are the last to be hired and first to be sacked.
  7. Govt. programs to increase employment and productivity are focused more on men & women are seen as beneficiaries rather than active participants

### **Role of Women in Nations Development**

Throughout history, the central role of women in society has ensured the stability, progress and long-term development of nations.

Globally, women comprise 43 percent of the world's agricultural labor force – rising to 70 percent in some countries. For instance, across Africa, 80 percent of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, most of whom are rural women. It's widely accepted that agriculture can be the engine of growth and poverty reduction in developing nations. Women, notably mothers, play the largest role in decision-making about family meal planning and diet. And, women self-report more often their initiative in preserving child health and nutrition.

### **The Role of Women as Caretakers**

Women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. They are likely to be the prime initiator of outside assistance, and play an important role in facilitating (or hindering) changes in family life.

### **The Role of Women as Educators**

The contribution of women to a society's transition from pre-literate to literate likewise is undeniable. Basic education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of girls and women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and widely raise the standard of living.

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It is the mother in the family who most often urges children of both genders to attend – and stay – in school. The role of women is at the front end of the chain of improvements leading to the family's, the community's long-term capacity.

### **The Role of Women in the Workforce**

Today, the median female share of the global workforce is 45.4 percent. Women's formal and informal labor can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. Despite significant obstacles, women's small businesses in rural developing communities not only can be an extended family's lifeline, but can form a networked economic foundation for future generations. The role of women in the urban and rural workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades.

### **The Role of Women as Global Volunteers**

Global Volunteers' community development work in host countries worldwide strengthens women's and children's capacity and supports their sustained health and development. Under the direction of local leaders, our volunteers help ensure academic accessibility, foster parental involvement, offer psycho-social support, provide nutrition and health education, fund girls' scholarships, construct schools with girls' bathrooms, tutor literacy, and numeracy, and so much more. Contact us using the form below to learn how you can contribute to this critical agenda.

The theme for International Women's Day 2019 "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change," was chosen to identify innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, accelerating the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. Of course, women's opportunities still lag behind those of men worldwide. But, the historic and current role of women is indisputable.

### **Role of women in economic development.**

Women in rural India play a dual role--producers of goods and services as well as their domestic chores and wives and mothers--yet their contribution to economic development has been neglected. The problems most often cited by survey respondents included health, malnutrition, repeated childbearing, and education. If women's

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participation in economic development is to be enhanced, women must receive the following services: training in income generating activities, easy access to low-interest loans, and family planning services to limit childbearing.

### **Famous Women's Participation**

Indian women have always been an epitome of beauty, strength, and intelligence. Today, the success of Indian women across various walks of life has proven that they have earned this reputation very deservedly. Some of them have displayed exemplary devotion in their respective fields. Here are some Indian women's who clearly deserve a standing ovation

#### **Mary Kom Mangte Chungneijang**

Mary Kom, also known as Mary Kom is the only woman boxer who has won a medal in each of the six World Championships. She was the only Indian woman boxer who qualified for the 2012 Olympics and became the first Indian woman boxer to win a gold medal in Asian Games in 2014.

#### **Aruna Roy**

Aruna Roy is best known for her efforts to fight corruption and promote government transparency. Her parents have had a major impact on her life; her father instilled a strong social conscience, while her mother taught her to be independent minded. After studying in Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry and Indraprastha College in Delhi, Aruna started teaching. But, she realised that teaching wasn't her passion as she aimed to become a civil servant. She cleared the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) examination in 1967. Aruna is known as a prominent leader of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), a social and grassroots organisation for the empowerment of workers and peasants. In 2005, she played a crucial role in establishing the Right to Information Act (RTI). Aruna has received various awards for her service to the society, such as the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 2000, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Academia and Management in 2010. In 2011, Aruna was named as one of the '100 most influential people across the world' by Time Magazine.



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### **Kiran Bedi**

She was born and bred in the holy city of Amritsar, Punjab. She is a social activist and the first woman IPS officer in the country. She has not only served her department with full conviction, but has also made whole-hearted contribution to many social causes. A former tennis player, the multi-talented social activist from Amritsar is credited for bringing down the number of crimes against women in West Delhi during her service. She introduced several reforms at Tihar Jail, which gained worldwide acclaim and won her the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1994. In 2003, Kiran became the first Indian woman to be appointed as a Police Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the Department of Peace Keeping Operations. She resigned in 2007 to focus on social activism and writing. She has written several books, and runs the India Vision Foundation.

**Arundhati Roy** is an author, actress, and political activist. She was best known for the award-winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) and for her involvement in environmental and human rights causes. Arundhati's father was a Bengali tea planter, and her mother was a Christian of Syrian descent who challenged India's inheritance laws by successfully suing for the right of Christian women to receive an equal share of their fathers' estates. Though trained as an architect, Arundhati had little interest in design; she dreamed instead of a writing career. She has campaigned along with activist Medha Patkar against the Narmada dam project, stating that the dam will displace half a million people, with little or no compensation, and will not provide the projected irrigation, drinking water and other benefits. In recognition of her outspoken advocacy of human rights, Arundhati was awarded the Lannan Cultural Freedom Award in 2002, the Sydney Peace Prize in 2004, and the Sahitya Akademi Award from the Indian Academy of Letters in 2006.

**Mother Teresa** became the first Indian woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Mother Teresa founded many Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation, giving her life to social work.

**Irom Sharmila** popularly known as the "Iron Lady of Manipur" is the most recognisable face of the conflict-ridden state in the North East. In spite of not clearing her class XII, she has become an "icon of public resistance" in her state. For Irom, her

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father has had a great influence in her life. On November 2, 2000, she began a hunger strike after the “Malom Massacre” where 10 people were killed, which had a major impact on her. Having refused food and water for more than 500 weeks, she has been recognised as “the world’s longest hunger striker”. On International Women’s Day, 2014 she was voted as the top woman icon of India by MSN Poll. Though Irom has refused both water and food, the government continues to force feed her. Every year, she is arrested on charges of attempt to suicide. It has been 16 years since she started her movement, but her resolve hasn’t broken yet. She states that she will only eat when the Indian government will repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in the seven states of Eastern India.

**Laxmi Agarwal** is an Indian campaigner with Stop Acid Attacks and a TV host. She is an acid attack survivor and speaks for the rights of acid attack victims. She was attacked in 2005, at age 15, by a 32-year-old man whose advances she had rejected. Her story, among others, was told in a series on acid attack victims by Hindustan Times. She has also advocated against acid attacks through gathering 27,000 signatures for a petition to curb acid sales, and taking that cause to the Indian Supreme Court. Her petition led the Supreme Court to order the central and state governments to regulate the sale of acid, and the Parliament to make prosecutions of acid attacks easier to pursue. She is the director of Chhanv Foundation, a NGO dedicated to help the survivors of acid attacks in India. Laxmi received a 2014 International Women of Courage award by US First Lady Michelle Obama. She was also chosen as the NDTV Indian of the Year. She is also the face of Viva and Diva, promoting all girls to reflect on their inner beauty rather than exterior appearance.

**Indira Gandhi** became the first woman Prime Minister of India and served from 1966 to 1977. Indira Gandhi was named as the "Woman of the Millennium" in a poll which was organised by BBC in 1999. In 1971, she became the first woman to receive the Bharat Ratna award.

**Kalpana Chawla** was the first Indian woman who reached in space. As a mission specialist and a primary robotic arm operator, she went into space in 1997.



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**Questions:**

1. Write a note on National Women's Commission.
2. Explain the role of women's organisation in the development of the nation?
3. Explain the suggestions needed to empower women's at various levels in the society in India?

