



## Atrocities on Women in India - A Sociological Study

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### Keywords :

Male violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. Although not every woman has experienced it, and many expect not to, fear of violence is an important factor in the lives of most women. It determines what they do, when they do it, where they do it, and with whom. Fear of violence is a cause of women's lack of participation in activities beyond the home, as well as inside it. Within the home, women and girls may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse as punishment or as culturally justified assaults. These acts shape their attitude to life, and their expectations of themselves

There are various forms of crime against women. Sometimes, it begins even before their birth, sometimes in the adulthood and other phases of life. In the Indian society, the position of women is always perceived in relation to the man, from birth onwards and at every stage of life, she is dependent on him. This perception has given birth to various social customs and practices. One important manifestation of these customs and practices has been that of Sati. It is seen as a pinnacle of achievement for a woman. This custom of self-immolation of the widow on her husband's pyre was an age-old practice in some parts of the counter, which received deification. The popular belief ran that the goddess enters into the body of the woman who resolves to become a sati. The practice of sati has been abolished by law with the initiative of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the early decades of nineteenth century. However, there has been a significant revival of the practice of sati in the last few decades. Indeed, Rajasthan has been the focal point for this practice in recent years.

Violence against women both inside and outside of their home has been a crucial issue in the contemporary Indian society. Women in India constitute near about half of its population and most of them are grinding under the socio-cultural and religious structures. One gender has been controlling the space of the India's social economic, political and religious fabric since time immemorial.

The condition of widows is one of the most neglected social issues in India. Because of widowhood the quality of life is lowered for many Indian women. Three percent of all Indian women are widows and on an average, mortality rate is 86 percent higher among elderly widows in comparison to married women of the same age group. Various studies indicated that (i) legal rights of widows are violated, (ii) they suffer forceful social isolation (iii) they have limited freedom to marry (iv) restrictive employment opportunities for widows, (v) most widows get little economic support from their family or from the community.

It is common to read news about violation or wrongs committed on women everyday. Our orthodox society is so much prejudiced by age-old habits and customs that a violated woman, whether she is forced or helpless, has no place in the society.

Another danger in India is that, Indian law does not differentiate between major and minor rape. In every ten-rape case, six are of minor girls. In every seven minutes a crime is committed against women in India. Every 26 minutes a woman is molested. Every 34 minutes a rape takes place. Every 42 minutes a sexual harassment incident occurs. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped. And every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death over dowry. One-quarter of the reported rapes involve girls under the age of 16 but the vast majority are never reported. Although the penalty is severe, convictions are rare.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Becker's (2005)** model of effort allocation implies that an hour of a man's time produces more of value to an employer than an hour of equally skilled and experienced women who has greater responsibilities. This in true influences both employer's treatment of equally capable male and female employees and worker's subsequent decisions about investing time and energy in household versus market-work. The model implies that small initial disadvantages faced by women in the work-place can lead to extreme results in the division of labour in the household, occupational segregation and earning difference. Even a small amount of discrimination against women in the work place gives men a comparative advantage in market work. Likewise a small "natural" advantage in child-care activities gives women an advantage in household work.

**Dwaraki and B.Kumaresan (2005)** asks that do women have a nice in the of real of rural development working women have been in the nears in the last 5-10 years like it is the want in the in rather confused world of rural development those in the same by try to cling into anything new novel as if they have found the phenomena what with the slogan of empowering women especially rural women the grace for being associated with scavenger women is spreading like mass hysteria in about last one year. So much as any one in the realm of rural development, today in any discussion on scavenger women is an ignoramus. This is based on very small scale study conducted exclusively for the purpose needs no justification. The authors in this study have covered just 10 women scavenger from about four contiguous villages in which three office bearers the President, Secretary and Treasurer were personally interviewed on a very small list of question concentrating on the aspect of self-sustenance for us contention of contention of authors that women workers can find nice in the realm of rural development.

**Jennifer (2005)** in his study about sanitary workers that economics status showed a significant difference according to their age, marital status duration of working, life and position at work.

**Henning and Jardim (2005)** in their book stated that the women managers has achieved their position through pro-

gressive career advancement and their current positions through progressive career advancement and their current positions were ones not regarded as feminine. The question being addressed was how they had managed to depart from traditional female roles to active success in a man's world.

**Kalarani (2005)** her classified motivations behind the decision to work as monetary, social and personal factors. For the first preference she has assigned a score of 3, for the second preference 2, and for the third preference one. Her analysis shows that among the purposes 'making use of education' ranks first followed by 'job as an engagement for spare time', 'Supplementing husband's income' and 'to raise economic status' occupies the third rank. 'Gross necessity' occupies the fourth rank and 'to have independent income' the last rank. She has proved that there is correlation between age and motivation and education and motivation.

**Kaur and Punia (2005)** about working women of Hissar District of Haryana, it is observed that most of the working women apt for job out of the gross economic necessity (50 percent), followed by the urge to raise economic status (23 percent), to make use of education (11 percent) to have independent income (9 percent) and the remaining due to miscellaneous motives. Wife's income is essential to raise family's standard of living. 18 percent were widows, divorcees and separated. Another 24 percent were single. All these women worked to support themselves and their children. In addition to this, women whose husbands' incomes were inadequate were compelled to seek gainful employment.

**Raka Sharan (2005)** conducted a survey on women workers employed in industrial and non-industrial organizations in Kanpur city. The main objectives of her study were to analyze the working conditions of women workers to measure their socio-conditions states and to study their participation in trade union activities. She had selected 100 samples in the industrial sector and 100 samples in the non-industrial sector and collected the necessary data from them. Socio-economic status of women workers we one measured with the help of kappasamy's method of rating scale. Various economic and social indicators were used to measure the socio-economic status. Her study revealed some important aspects of women labour. Among the industrial and non-industrial women workers 80 percent were from the young category that is between 20 and 35 years. The non-industrial workers were more qualified. Then the industrial workers. The working conditions of the women workers were far from satisfactory. There was sluggish participation in trade union activities among women workers. The bulk of the respondents adopted middle life style and value orientations.

**Srilekha (2005)** based states that developing countries are characterized by low income illiteracy, unemployment and low standard of living. In these countries extra income earned by women is vital to cross the poverty line, of the initiative in making the intended changes must come from the government itself in the form of incentives to women who are bound by tradition and constrained by interest bent on preserving the status-quota women in 15 to 59 age group if not in labour force are to be considered as unused resources (except when they are sake or students) A change in the attitude towards life is imperative to ensure that women gain confidence in their own capable and a new value system is accepted.

**Lalithadevi (2006)** points out that the need for extra income for family coupled with the demand for labour from industry is the greatest incentive for female workers. The availability of gadgets make household work light and less time consuming and enable women to work.

**Myrdal and Klein (2006)** conducted an international survey on behalf of the International Labour Office about the motivational forces. According to it, women work due to economic needs on the one hand and due to national necessity for increased production on the other hand. They further contin-

ue to state that a sense of vocation influences the desire of women to continue their work after marriage and some are inspired by the feeling of social responsibility and so they continue to be in labour force.

**In a study conducted by Kaur and Punia (2008)** about working women of Hissar District of Haryana, it is observed that most of the working women apt for job out of the gross economic necessity (50 percent), followed by the urge to raise economic status (23 percent), to make use of education (11 percent) to have independent income (9 percent) and the remaining due to miscellaneous motives.

**According to Franca Akarippadathu (2009)** few allocation for socio-economic and sanitation is very low and during some years nothing is spent under this head. The amount is to be spent for starting new dispensaries and strengthening the old ones. For example in Kannampady only 5 families have sanitariums, toilets. The information they receive about it is mostly from radio. Further enquiries reveal that either husband or wife under mutual agreement take recourse to some permanent method of family planning to prevent another pregnancy. They generally go for it after the second child. Women work has remained a much researched debated area. The underlying assumption in arguments for women's employment is that economic independence is the first pre-requisite to moving towards gender equality. The concept viewed in the context of opportunity in employment on the board spectrum of women's employment at one end and are women working all and paid jobs and other end are higher professional women works.

#### ABOUT THE TOPIC

##### Programmes for Women and their Impact: Marriage Legislation

In March 1961, when the bill on unequal marriages was being discussed in the Rajya Sabha, one member quoted epic against its inclusion in the institution of Hindu marriage. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the then chairman of the Rajya Sabha, had remarked: the ancient history cannot solve the problems of modern society. This is an answer in one sentence to those critics who want to maintain a gap between social opinion and social legislation.

Legislation must meet the social needs of the people; and because the social needs change, legislation also must change from time to time. The function of social legislation is to adjust the legal system continually to a society, which is constantly outgrowing that system. The gulf between the current needs of the society and the old laws must be bridged. The laws have got to give recognition to certain de facto changes in society. One of the changes in modern India is the change in the attitude towards marriage; hence the necessity of laws on different aspects of marriage.

The laws enacted in India relate to: (i) age at marriage (ii) field of mate selection, (iii) number of spouses in marriage, (iv) breaking of marriage, (v) dowry to be given and taken, and (vi) remarriage. The important legislations relating to these six aspects of marriage passed from time to time are: (i) The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (dealing with age at marriage), (ii) The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act 1946 and Hindu Marriage Validity Act, 1949 (dealing with field of mate selection), (iii) The Special Act. 1954 (dealing with age at marriage, freedom to children in marriage without parental consent, bigamy, and breaking up of marriage), (iv) the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (dealing with age at marriage with the consent of parents bigamy, and breaking up of marriage) (v) The Dowry Act 1961, and (vi) The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.

##### Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929

It came into force on April 1, 1930. It restrains the marriage of a child, though the marriage itself is not declared void. Accordingly, contracting, performing and facilitating the marriage of boys under eighteen and girls less than fourteen years of age

were an offence. The age of girls was later on raised to fifteen years. The amendment made in 1978 further rose the age for boys to twenty-one years and for girls to eighteen years.

The violation of the Act prescribes penalty but the marriage itself remains valid. The offence under the Act is non-cognizable and provides punishment for the bridegroom, parent, guardian, and the priest, which are three months of simple imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs. 1000.

No woman is, however, punishable with imprisonment under this Act. The Act also provides for the issue of injunction order prohibiting the child marriage. But no action can be taken for the offence if a period of more than one year has expired from the date of the alleged marriage.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946**

Among Hindus, no marriage is valid between persons related to each other within the prohibited degrees, unless such marriage is sanctioned by custom. However, this Act validated marriages between persons belonging to the same gotra or parivara (agnatic groups). This Act now stands repealed after the passing of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Hindu Marriage Validity Act, 1949**

Pratiloma (hypogamy) marriage among Hindus was invalid while anuloma (hypergamy) marriage was permitted till late 1940s. However there were judicial decisions against the validity of such marriage. The 1949 Act validated all marriage between parties belonging to different religions, castes sub-castes or sects. But it did not validate marriage between a Hindu and a Muslim. This Act also stands repealed after the 1955 Act.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**

This Act came into force from May 18, 1955 and applies to whole of India, except Jammu and Kashmir. The word Hindu in the Act includes Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and the Scheduled Castes.

The conditions for marriage between any two Hindus as provided in the Act are: (i) neither party has a spouse living; (ii) neither party is an idiot or lunatic; (iii) the groom must have completed eighteen years age and the bride fifteen years age. The amendment in the Act made in 1978 has raised this age to twenty-one years for boys and eighteen years for girls (iv) the parties should not be within the degrees of prohibited relationships, unless the custom permits the marriage between the two; (v) the parties should not be sapindas of each other unless the custom permits the marriage between the two; (vi) where the bride is under eighteen years of age and the groom is under twenty-one years of age the consent of her/his guardian in marriage must have been obtained.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Special Marriage Act, 1954**

This Act came into force on April 1, 1955. It repealed the Special Marriage Act, 1872 which provided a form of marriage for those who did not wish to conform to the existing forms. The 1872 Act provided that persons wishing to marry (under the Act) had to declare that they did not profess Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Muslim, Parsis, Christian or any other religion. In 1923, an amendment was made in the Act under which a person wanting to marry (under the Act) had not to give any such declaration. Each party was simply required to make a declaration that it professed one or other religion.

The Act, thus, recognized inter-religion marriages. The conditions pertaining to age, living spouse, prohibited relationship and mental state as prescribed by the 1954 Act for marriage are the same as provided in the 1955 Act. Under the 1954 Act, a marriage officer solemnizes the marriage. The parties have to notify him at least a month before the marriage date. One

of the parties must have resided in the district in which the marriage officer's office is located.

During this one month, any person can raise objection against the marriage. If the marriage is not solemnized within three months from the date of notice, a fresh notice is required. Presence of two witnesses is necessary at the time of marriage. This Act also provides for the annulment of marriage, judicial separation, as well as divorce and alimony. The grounds for these are the same as provided in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Hindu Widows Remarriage Act, 1856**

From Smriti period onwards, widows were not permitted to re-marry. According to Manu, a widow who marries again brings disgrace on herself; she should, therefore, be excluded from the seat of her lord. The 1856 Act removed all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows.

The object was to promote good morals and public welfare. The Act declares that the remarriage of a widow whose husband is dead at the time of her second marriage is valid and no issue of such marriage will be illegitimate. In case the re-marrying widow is a minor whose marriage has not been consummated, the consent of father, mother, grandfather, and elder brother or nearest male relative is required.

Any marriage contracted without such consent is void. However, if the marriage has been consummated, it will not be declared void. The Act forfeits the widow her right of maintenance out of the estate of her first husband.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**

This Act was passed on May 20, 1961. The Act does not apply to Muslims. It permits exchange of gifts for not more than Rs. 2,000. It prescribes the penalty of six month's imprisonment or a fine up to Rs. 5,000 or both for its violation. The police, on its own, cannot take any action for the violation of the Act unless some complaint is lodged with it. No action can be taken after one year of marriage.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: Socio-Economic Programme**

Under this programme, the Central Social Welfare Board gives financial assistance to voluntary organizations for undertaking a wide variety of income-generating activities which include the production of central components in ancillaries units, handlooms, handicrafts, agro-based activities such as animal husbandry sericulture and fisheries and self-employment ventures like vegetables or fish-vending, etc.

For production units, only women organization and organizations working for the handicapped women cooperatives and institution like jails, and Nariniketans, are eligible for grants to the extent of 85 percent of the project cost and the remaining 15 percent is to be met by the grantee institutions.

The dairy scheme focuses exclusively on women's organizations having at least 20 women members, including Mahila Mandals, Indira Mahila Kendras, Self Help Groups and organizations already assisted under STEP schemes. The benefits of the scheme are meant for women whose families are below the poverty line.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: Rural women's Development and Employment Project**

The Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project (now also being called "SWA-SAKTI Project") has been sanctioned on 16 October 1998 as a Centrally-sponsored project for five years at an estimated outlay of Rs. 186.21 crore. In addition, an amount of Rs. Five crore is to be provided, over the project period but outside the project outlay, for facilitating setting up in the project States of revolving funds for giving interest-bearing loans to beneficiary groups primarily during

their initial formative stage.

The objectives of the project are (i) Establishment of self-reliant women's self-help-groups (SHGs) between 7,400 and 12,000 having 15-20 members each, which will improve the quality of their lives, through greater access to and control over, resources; (ii) Sensitizing and strengthening the institutional capacity of support agencies to proactively address women's needs; (iii) Developing linkages between SHGs and leading institutions to ensure women's continued access to credit facilities for income generation activities; (iv) Enhancing women's access to resources for better quality of life, including those for drudgery reduction and time-saving devices; and (v) Increased control of women, particularly poor women, over income and spending, through their involvement in income generating activities.

The implementing agencies will be the Women's Development Corporation of the concerned States of Bihar, Haryana, and Karnataka; Gujarat Women's Economic Development Corporation in Gujarat; M.P. Mahila Arthik Vikas Nigam in Madhya Pradesh and Mahila Kalyan Nigam in Uttar Pradesh, who will actively associate NGOs in the implementation tasks. The Government of India in the form of grant-in-aid will provide funds. At the Central level, the Department of Women and Child Development, assisted by the Central Project Support Unit (CPSU), handle the project. NIPCCD has been identified as the Lead Training Agency, while Agricultural Finance Corporation has been contracted as the Lead Monitoring and Evaluation Agency. Both of them work in close liaison with the CPSU, under the directions of the Department.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact**

Development of Women and Children in Rural Area Programme (DWCRA) was started in September 1982 in the form of a sub-plan of Integrated Rural Development Programme. The main aim of this programme was to provide proper self-employment opportunities to the women of those rural families who are living below the poverty line, so that their social and economic standard could be improved. The main points of this programme are as under:

1. Under this programme, the policy of making a group of 10-15 women has been adopted corresponding to the local resources, their own choices and skills to complete the economic activities.
2. The targeted women are financed by the loans and subsidies under IRDP.
3. Since 1995-96, Revolving Fund of Rs. 25,000 has been provided to each women group for meeting their working capital requirements.
4. The amount of the Revolving Fund was being shared by the Central Government, the State Government and UNICEF in the ratio of 40:40:20. Since 1 Jan. 1996 UNICEF has refused to contribute its share. That is why, now the ratio of 50:50 is being shared between the Centre and the State Government.
5. The District Rural Development Agency has the responsibility of implementing the DWCRA plan.
6. Since 1995-96 the childcare activities have also been included under DWCRA programme. For this purpose, each district has been allotted an amount of Rs. 1.50 lakh p.a. In this, the share of the Central Government will be Rs. 1 lakh and remaining Rs. 50,000 will be the share of the State Government.
7. In order to encourage the projects of DWCRA in the rural area, CAPART extends its support to the voluntary institutions also.
8. During the Sixth plan, 3,308 women group were formed under this programmes and the total number of members was 52,170. In the Seventh plan, 28,031 women groups were formed and the total number of members was 4.70 lakhs. During Eighth plan, 1, 41,397 women groups were formed with total membership of 22.67 lakh. During 1997-98, 36,436 lakh women were benefited. During 1998-99, 19,657 groups were formed in which 2.35 Lakh women

were benefited.

Upto March 31, 1999, 38.04 lakh women were benefited under DWCRA since its inception. Since April, 1, 1999 DWCRA has been merged with newly introduced scheme namely Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact**

The Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) aims at organizing at the grass-root level to facilitate their participation in decision-making and their empowerment was launched on 20 August 1995, to start with, in 200 ICDS blocks. The strength of the scheme lies in the strength of group dynamics. The objectives of the scheme are: convergence of the schemes of every sectoral department; awareness generation among the women from rural areas and urban slums; and economic empowerment of women.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact**

The Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY) is a scheme to raise the status of the girl child. The first component of the scheme of BSY was launched with effect from 2 October 1997. Under this, the mother of a girl child born on or after 15 August 1997 in family living below the poverty line was given a grant of Rs. 500. The benefits and means of delivery have been redesigned in the current financial years. The post-delivery grant of Rs. 500 per girl child (up to two girls in a family living below the poverty line) will be deposited in bank account in the name of the girl child or in a post office if there is no bank nearby. In the same account will be deposited annual scholarships ranging from Rs. 300 for class I to Rs. 1,000 for class X when the girl starts going to school. The matured value of the deposits (along with interest) will be repayable to the girl on her attaining the age of 18 years and having remained unmarried till then.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: National Commission for Women**

The National Commission for Women was set up on 31 January 1992 in pursuance of the National Commission for Women Act 1990. The functions assigned to the Commission are wide and varied covering almost all facets of issues relating to safeguarding women's rights and promotion. The Commission has a Chairman, five members and a Member Secretary, all nominated by the Central government.

The Commission continues to pursue its mandated activities, namely, review of legislation, interventions in specific individual complaints of atrocities and remedial action to safeguard the interest of women where appropriate and feasible. The Commission has accorded highest priority to securing speedy justice to women. Towards this end, the Commission is organizing Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats, offering counseling in family disputes and conducting training programmes for creating legal awareness among women.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: National Women Fund**

In 1992-93 a National Women Fund was established to meet the loan requirements of the poor women. This fund was established in the form of a society under the Society Registration Act by a collected sum of 31 crore rupees. This fund has given help to more than 250 non-government organizations. Women and Children Development Minister of State is the ex-official chairman of this fund.

#### **Programmes for Women and their Impact: Mahila Samridhi Yojana**

With the objective of providing economic security to the rural women and to encourage, the saving habit among them, the Mahila Samridhi Yojna was started on 2 October 1993. Under this plan, the rural women of 18 years of above age can open their saving account in the rural post office of their own area with a minimum Rs. 4 or its multiplier. On the amount not withdrawn for 1 year, 25% of the deposited amount is given to the depositor by the government in the form of encouragement

amount. Such accounts opened under the scheme account opened under the scheme are provided 25% bonus with a maximum of Rs. 300 every year. Up to 31 March 1997 2.45 crore accounts were opened under this scheme with a total collection of Rs. 265.09 crore. The Department of Women and Child Development, the nodal agency for MSY, decided in April 1997 that now new MSY accounts should be opened from 1 April 1997 onwards but the existing account could be maintained.

#### **Hostel for working women**

Under the Scheme of 'Construction /Expansion of Hostel Building for Working Women with a Day Care Centre implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development, financial assistance is given to voluntary organizations, local bodies and cooperative institutions engaged in the field of women's/ social welfare/ women's education, Public Sector Undertakings, Women Development Corporations, Educational Institutions and State Governments for the construction of hostels for working women in order to enable women seek employment and participate in technical training. The objective of the Scheme is to provide cheap and safe hostel accommodation to employment women living out of their homes.

The target beneficiaries are single working women, widows, divorcee, separated and working women whose husbands are out of town. Women getting training for employment and girl students studying in post school professional courses are also to stay in the hostel. Since inception of the programme in 1972-73, 830 hostels for 58,744 working women have been sanctioned so far. Out of the 830 hostels, day care center facilities are also available for 7668 children in 293 hostels.

#### **Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls**

The Government of India launched a programme in 1969 in the Central Sector called the Short Stay Homes for Women & Girls to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes. The services extended in these Homes include medical care; case work services; occupational therapy; education-cum-vocational training and recreational facilities.

The need for providing Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls has been due to the changing pattern of life, rapid urbanization and industrialization and the resulting migration from rural to urban areas. The breakup of social institutions like the joint family, contributes considerably in creating problems of adjustment for women and young girls. Cases of marital conflict and emotional disturbance occur. This effort is made to help the women to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time. These Short Stay Homes have been established by voluntary organizations.

At present, 273 Short Stay Homes receive grants from the Department, covering approximately 8190 beneficiaries. Under the scheme the grant is being released at the revised financial norms on the recommendation of the State Governments to the extent of Rs.4, 51,350 (Recurring and Non-recurring) when approved by the Government of India and subsequently, recurring grant of Rs. 4, 01,350 is given to the Home every year on the basis of 'C' Class City. There is also a provision for some increase in subsequent years on the component of rent and the maintenance cost for residents.

Provisions have also been made for upgrading skills and capacities of staff and residents as well as education of the children of residents. The implementation of the scheme has been transferred to the Central Social Welfare Board.

#### **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)**

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#### **Employment and Income Generation-cum- Production Units (NORAD) (STEP)**

Under the scheme, which is assisted by Norwegian agency for International Development (NORAD), projects of skill development and training of achieving self-reliance through income generation for women are supported. These projects of training for income generation are in the non-traditional trades of electronics, watch manufacturing/assembly, computer programming, garment making, handlooms etc. During the year upto Dec, 1997 Rs. 1.56 crores has been sanctioned to benefit about 6980 women through 45 projects. Between 1982-83 when the scheme was launched, till 31 Dec, 1997, 1.40 lakh women have been benefited through 887 projects.

#### **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)**

The National credit Fund for Women is an innovative mechanism for reaching credit to poor women. Through access to credit, it aims to raise the capacity of women by enhancing through productivity and economic self-reliance. It has provided credits to over 2.32 lakh women since its inception from 1993. It encourages formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) for promotion of thrift and credit leading to income generation activities.

#### **Eradication of Child Prostitution**

The public concern on the issue of child prostitution originated in a landmark judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in 1990. In response to Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on the subject, the Court ruled that the States and Central Government should initiate comprehensive measures for the rehabilitative care of such children and elimination of this social menace. The Court directed the Government to form a Central and State Advisory Committees. As per the directives of the Supreme Court, a Central Advisory Committee was constituted to eradicate child prostitution. Further a Subcommittee has been set up to frame recommendations/ plan of action for the rescue and rehabilitation of all child prostitutes. The Subcommittee has submitted its report.

The report of the Central Committee (1994) was deliberated upon in the national consultations held in 1994 at Mumbai. Predictably, it was felt that regional consultations were essential to document and understand the problem. Accordingly, a

number of regional workshops were held at Calcutta, Goa, Hyderabad, Patna, Chandigarh and Bangalore with assistance from UNICEF. A report has been prepared and submitted in August, 1996.

### **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women**

As a follow up action to the commitments made by India during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing during Sep. 1995, the Department has drafted a National Policy for the Empowerment of Women after nation-wide consultations to enhance the status of women in all walks of life on par with men and actualize the constitutional guarantee of equality without discrimination on grounds of sex.

The draft policy was considered by a core group of Experts in its meeting held on 8.11.1995. The draft policy was circulated to select women organizations for holding regional level consultations with State Governments, State Women Commissions, State Social Welfare Advisory Boards, Women's Organizations, Academicians, experts and activists. These women's organizations completed the process of regional level consultations in December, 1995.

A meeting of the Secretaries of States dealing with women Development/Social Welfare Departments was held on 27.12.1995 to consider the draft National Policy for the Empowerment of Women. The draft National Policy was also discussed in a meeting of the committee of Secretaries in the meeting held on 7.3.1996. The reformulated National Policy was discussed in the Parliamentary consultative committee attached to the Ministry of Human Resource Development on 17.12.96 and 13.02.97.

The comments/ views of the concerned Central Ministries/ Departments were obtained and the revised policy document prepared on the basis of comments received from other Ministries/ Departments was sent to the Cabinet Secretariat on 30th June, 1999 for obtaining Cabinet's approval for the Policy. The Cabinet Secretariat has suggested that the process of inter- departmental consultations in the matter may be completed after formation of the new Government. The process of consultation has already been initiated.

### **Review & Amendment of the Legislation Relating To Women**

The Department of Women and Child Development is reviewing the following four Acts with which it is administratively concerned: with a view to make the provisions more stringent and to remove the lacunae:

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1886.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.

The Department of WCD had entrusted the work of reviewing the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 and Immoral (Traffic) Prevention Act, 1956 to the National Law School of India, University (NLSUI), Bangalore. The reports received from the National Law School in this regard were been sent to NCW for comments.

On the basis of the comments received from NCW with regard to the amendments suggested by the National Law School of India in the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, the Department has prepared a draft Cabinet Note, which will be circulated to the concerned Ministries/ Departments after formation of the new Government. The comments of NCW with regard to the NLSUI's report on the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 have been received and the matter is under examination. In respect of the other two legislations, namely, Dowry Prohibition Act and Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act inter- ministerial consultations are being held to bring about the amendments.

### **Rehabilitation Of Marginalized Women Of Vrindavan**

The Central Government has set up a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Minister of State for Women and Child Development to co-ordinate the efforts of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal Governments and Central Government organizations for rehabilitation of the marginalized women of Vrindavan, to monitor flow of benefits of Central Schemes to the target group; to recommend a plan of Action and implementation schedule for their rehabilitation etc.

The Committee consists of Chairpersons of NCW and CSWB, Secretaries of the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Department of Youth Affairs & Sports, Director General of Nehru Yuvak Kendra Sangathan, Joint Secretary (WD), Department of Women and Child Development, Chief Secretaries of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, besides representative of voluntary organizations and activists in the field. Three meetings were called by the Department of Women and Child Development (on 17.5.1999 in New Delhi, on 29.5.99 in Vrindavan and on 5.8.1999 in New Delhi) to identify action points for rehabilitation of the marginalized women in Vrindavan. Under the programme of Rehabilitation of marginalized women of Vrindavan, "Meera Shabhagini Uddhar Abhiyan was launched on 16.06.1999.

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Central Social Welfare Board**

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was set up in 1953 with the objective of promoting social welfare activities and implementing welfare programmes for women, children and the handicapped through voluntary organizations. The SCWB is unique in the sense that it was the first organization in post-Independence era to achieve people's participation for implementation of welfare programmes for women and children through non-governmental organization (NGOs).

Presently more than 18,000 NGOs are receiving financial assistance and guidance from the Board. The programmes implemented by the Board include: socio-economic programmes for needy/ destitute women, condensed courses of education and vocational training courses for women and girls, awareness generation projects for rural and poor women, family counseling centres/voluntary action bureau, holiday camps for children, welfare extension projects in border areas, and balwadis, crèches and hostels for working women, etc.

#### **Impact of different programmes launched by government on women**

In recent years the result of the programme launched by the programme of India in different fields (social, political and educational) has given some good results. This is quite obvious from the table 4. The literacy rate, which was 8.86% in 1951, has gone up to 53.67%. Although the cent-percent literacy is yet to achieve, in comparison to 1951 the enrolment of the girls in primary school is eight times more. About more than 40 lacs women engage in the organizing sector, playing a very important role in development, whereas in 1951 their number was 19.3 lacs.

In these years life expectancy rate has also increased. In 1951 the expectancy rate of women was only 31.6 year, which has gone up to 64.5 by 2001. From the above discussion it is quite clear that the health facility has improved a lot. It is quite clear that the condition of women has improved in all spheres of life but much more is needed to improve and establish their due position. Reality is that in spite of acceptance of science and technology, industrial growth, modernization, our policies, by the government of India, challenge, and the norms values and ethics are changing at very slow rate, leaving women development at the back seat.

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