



**THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS),  
Sivakasi**

(Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Reaccredited with "A" Grade by NAAC,  
College with Potential for Excellence by UGC & Mentor Institution under UGC PARAMARSH)

**NAAC SSR Cycle IV (2015-2020)**

**1.3. CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT**

**1.3.1. COURSES RELATED TO CROSS  
CUTTING ISSUES**

**LIST OF COURSES**



**THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS),  
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**COURSES RELATED TO GENDER, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY, HUMAN VALUES AND  
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

The following courses are mandatory for UG Programmes

S. No.	Courses Related To Gender, Environment And Sustainability, Human Values	Description
1.	Environmental Studies	Create awareness on environmental issues and inculcate environmental ethics.
2.	Peace Education	Promote them to learn about Non-violence and Peace, global harmony, role-models and human rights.
3.	Value Education and Gender Studies	The course mandatory for all first UG students in the curriculum tells about the societal values, family values, professional ethics, and morality as a part of Gender studies, sex and gender, adolescence period, gender equality, women employment and women health is focused. As a whole the course hub on peaceful contentment of women. It enables the students to maintain peace and harmony with in our own self and to maintain a universal human goodness.
4.	Women Studies	Create awareness on gender equality, relationship with family and environment, breast feeding and child care and nutrient requirements.



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**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS  
B.Sc. PHYSICS  
PERCENTAGE OF SYLLABUS REVISION  
2017 AND LATER**

THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS), SIVAKASI  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS  
B.Sc. PHYSICS PROGRAMME  
(For those who have joined in 2017 and later)  
CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM  
PROGRAMME CODE – GLPH  
PROGRAMME SCHEME

Component	Course Code	Course Title	Teaching Hours Per Week	Credits	Duration of Exam. (Hrs.)	Marks Allotted		
						Internal	External	Total
<b>Semester I</b>								
Part I	GLGT11/ GLGH11/ GLGF11	സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാവിദ്യാർത്ഥിനി/ Hindi Language Course - I/ French Language Course - I	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part II	GLGE11	Communicative English-I	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part III	GLPH11	Mechanics and Properties of Matter	4	4	3	25	75	100
	GLPH12	Physics applications in Everyday life	3	3	3	25	75	100
	GLPH1A	Fundamental Physics (Maths & Chemistry)	4	4	3	25	75	100
Part IV	GLPE11	Peace Education	2	2	2	25	75	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>				<b>600</b>
<b>Semester II</b>								
Part I	GLGT21/ GLGH21/ GLGF21	സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാവിദ്യാർത്ഥിനി/ Hindi Language Course -II / French Language Course - II	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part II	GLGE21	Communicative English-II	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part III	GLPH21	Optics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH2L	Lab I	6	4	3	40	60	100
	GLPH2A1	Digital Electronics (Maths)	4	4	3	25	75	100
	GLPH2A2	Solid State Physics and Digital Electronics (Chemistry)	4	4	3	25	75	100
Part IV	GLS21	<b>Value Added Course</b> Environmental studies	2	2	2	25	75	100
	GLCL23	<b>Value Added Course</b> Introduction to Computers and MS office	2	2	2	25	75	100
Part V	-	Extension Activities – Physical Education and Social Awareness Programme		1				100
<b>Total</b>			<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>				<b>900</b>
<b>Semester III</b>								
Part I	GLGT31/ GLGH31/ GLGF31	സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാവിദ്യാർത്ഥിനി/ Hindi Language Course -III / French Language Course - III	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part II	GLGE31	Communicative English-III	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part III	GLPH31	Electricity	4	4	3	25	75	100
	GLPH32	Electromagnetism	3	3	3	25	75	100
Part IV	GLPH3N	Physics for the new world	2	2	2	25	75	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>				<b>700</b>
<b>Semester IV</b>								
Part I	GLGT41/ GLGH41/ GLGF41	സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാവിദ്യാർത്ഥിനി/ Hindi Language Course -IV/ French Language Course - IV	6	3	3	25	75	100
Part II	GLGE41	Communicative English-IV	6	3	3	25	75	100

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*S.S. Devi*  
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2017 AND LATER**

Part III	GLPH41	Basic Electronics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH4L	Lab II	6	4	3	40	60	100
Part IV	GLPH4N	Solar Energy and its Applications	2	2	2	25	75	100
	GLPH4DSL	Skill Based Course Discipline Specific Course Scientific Skill Development	2	2	2	40	60	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>				<b>600</b>
<b>Semester V</b>								
Part III	GLPH51	Classical Mechanics	6	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH5E1	Digital Electronics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH5E2	Atomic and Nuclear Physics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH5E3	Fiber optics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH5E4	Energy physics	5	5	3	25	75	100
Part IV	GLGV51	Value Added Course Career Guidance and Subject Viva	2	2	2	25	75	100
	GLWS51	Value Added Course Women Studies	2	2	2	25	75	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>				<b>700</b>
<b>Semester VI</b>								
Part III	GLPH61	Solid State Physics	6	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH62	Wave mechanics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH6L	Lab IV	6	5	3	40	60	100
	GLPH6E1	Thermodynamics	5	5	3	25	75	100
	GLPH6E2	Bio physics	5	5	3	25	75	100
Part IV	GLSE66	Skill Based Courses (Open to all) Self-Employment courses Domestic Electrical Appliances Servicing	2	2	2	25	75	100
	GLSE66L	Self-Employment courses Domestic Electrical Appliances Servicing – Lab	2	2	3	40	60	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>				<b>700</b>

  
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# WOMENS STUDIES

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Published by  
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CELL  
THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE  
FOR WOMEN  
*(An Autonomous Institution, Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University and  
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Excellence by UGC)*  
Sivakasi- 626123.

**Dr.T.Palaneeswari,**  
**M.Com.,M.Phil.,Ph.D.**  
**Principal.**



**THE STANDARD FIREWORKS**  
**RAJARATNAM COLLEGE**  
**FOR WOMEN,(Autonomous),**  
**Sivakasi**

## **FOREWORD**

Women today are marching towards a triumphant future provided with great talents and they make an indelible mark in success of their given surroundings. Women education aims at improving the knowledge, which brings the opportunity to make a difference. Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare.

We offer a broad curriculum and a range of opportunities for all our students that equip them to excel in academic, social, cultural and community endeavours. With an ambitious mission to foster holistic education and to highlight the multifaceted dimensions of women's role in the society, **Women Studies** is proffered as **Value Added Courses**. The aim of this course is to create worthy students who turn out to be, not only successful citizens, but also good human beings who will go an extra mile to transform this world for the better.

Our appreciation goes to the renowned members of the management for their tremendous support right from the beginning. Our talented faculty and dynamic students will take the program to reach new heights.

*T. Palaneeswari*

## PREFACE

Today we boast of our prowess in Information Technology. Technology has become an integral part of the lives of our teenagers. They spend much time wired to the gadgets. A recent consumer survey has labeled children , born between 1985-1997 as technology babies .But on the flip side , the same technology is being used in India to fashion a future without or with a very few of them. India's child sex ratio spells disaster to our nation.

There are crimes against women which send shivers down the spine. Sex detection, sex selective abortions are rampant everywhere. Women are beaten, burnt alive, raped and maimed. Their sufferings begin even before their birth and continue throughout their life. This shatters their psyche and hinders their progress and they are unable to emerge as full fledged persons. Women are denied their basic and fundamental rights. They are abused and marginalized in all ways possible not only in India but every where. Their hands are tied and they are silent spectators. In short, justice is denied to women.

Education, stringent laws and economic progress have not made substantial dents on attitudes; younger generation should come out from their ignorance and negligence. They must fight against all odds and establish their justice everywhere. We are proud that India progresses in many ways. But it is to be noted with regret that female infanticide, dowry harassment and dowry death are increasing day by day. Hence with louder voice and stronger force all must stand together to fight against the evils perpetuated against women and to create a society free from gender discrimination, Violence against women and inequalities.

With this noble vision, the paper on 'Women Studies' is introduced in our college. This book entitled 'Women studies' will empower and enhance the youngsters to change their secondary status and restore their glory. We are confident that this book will fulfill its aims and the objectives.

The editorial Board owes its gratitude to the management for extending their patronage and support. We would like to thank our former Principal Dr.(Mrs) D. Sasireka and Dr. (Mrs.) T. Palaneeswari for their guidance and encouragement in bringing out this book.

We express our sincere thanks to the contributors because without their help this book would not have been a reality. In equal measure we are deeply indebted Mrs. P. Prescilla, Assistant Professor of Information Technology and Ms. D. Ponezhil, Assistant Professor of English for the spontaneous gesture of help offered in computer work that alone helped us to achieve phenomenal success for the outcome of the publication. Finally our thanks are due to the Himalaya publishers who helped to bring out this book on time.

Sivakasi

**Editors**

**THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,  
(Autonomous) SIVAKASI.  
PART IV - Non Major Course  
SEMESTER V  
GLWS51 - WOMEN STUDIES  
(For those admitted in June 2017 and later)**

<b>Contact hours per week</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Total number of hours per semester</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Number of Credits</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>02</b>

**Course Outcomes**

On successful completion of the course, the learner will be equipped to

- CO1: Agree move towards gender equality
- CO2: Analyze the ways to protect themselves through laws
- CO3: Improve their relationship with family and environment
- CO4: Justify the importance of breast feeding and child care
- CO5: Plan the nutrient requirements for their family members

**Unit - I** **(9 hrs)**

Women's Studies - Feminism – Methods and Perspectives - Move towards gender equality - Women and Gandhi – Women and Media.

**Unit - II** **(10 hrs)**

Women and Laws - Women and Employment - Women and Religion - Women and Casteism - Women and Marriage

**Unit - III** **(10hrs)**

Women and Family Relationships – Women and Child Care - Women and Environment - Nutrient Requirements of Women - Women and Health

**Audio - Visual Aid - (1 hour)**

***Text Book:***

Women's Studies - Faculty Members in SFRC - to be prepared and published by the Curriculum Cell.



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## WOMEN STUDIES

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**Miss.G.Sathiabama &**

**Dr. (Mrs.)P.Stella Muthu Rajam**

*“ The factor of the Extra chromosome that nature has bestowed upon women makes them neither inferior to man nor superior, not even equal but only different ”*

*-- Indian Express (1987)*

Women studies is basically an area of study about women’s issues, their problems, solution to their problems and suggesting strategies for women’s development, thereby integrating women into the mainstream life of any society be it a simple or complex, traditional or modern, small or large, and developed or under developed countries. Women’s studies examine the world and the human beings from a feminist perspective.

According to Boxer, Women studies was founded to promote and sustain the educational strategy as a break through in consciousness and knowledge that would transform individuals, institutions, relationships and ultimately the whole of society.

Women studies has had a genesis of its own in the late 1950s’ only when the problems of gender inequality, discrimination and slavery were realized and found in a state of ripped emotions among the women activists and feminists.

It resembles sociology the genesis of which is associated with rapid industrialization, science and technology having crucial massacre of innocent people and epidemiology emerged in the context of speedy urbanization, causing health problem of sanitation and hygiene. More so women studies have emerged not merely as a causal event but as a conscious effect of feminist movement.

The study of women provides the basis for critical examination both of existing disciplines and of the existing social practices they study. Women’s study sharpens our awareness of the connections between ideas and behavior. It helps us to understand our past as well as our future.

Women study also provides a basis for action in specific and practical ways for the individual, both in college and in later life.

It gives us an increased awareness of ourselves (Women and men) which may help us to understand our Personal past and future. These Personal issues – such as choosing a career, making decisions about human relationship, and planning our future touch us all in one way or the other. Women studies is not a “how to” Course, but it does bring the issues and implications of our personal decisions into sharper focus.

### **Definition of Women’s Studies**

Women’s studies is defined as “the study of women placing the own experiences of women as the center of the process”. It focuses on women’s experiences in providing observations and assumptions for establishing women’s reality. The Directory of women’s studies defines it as that body of literature that embodies various concerns for women’s equality and development. Simply speaking women’s studies is a “Scientific and systematic study of women’s /gender issues involved in the structure and functions of any society”.

Women studies is that scientific knowledge that attempts to explore the power relations between men and women approved by the social structures of any society. In doing so, it brings out women’s status and position, culture, social, and religious images of women, their problems, the nature of women’s biology in reference to reality, as well as contradictions between the general perception about women and women’s reality. To put it shortly, Women studies is a science of women, on women, by women and for women.

In simple terms women studies is a discipline of ‘women in society’. The ultimate aim of women’s studies is the empowerment of women individually and collectively.

### **Importance of Women Studies:**

Women studies have originated with the recognition that women remain to be invisible in all areas of knowledge. From the early 1980’s feminists had attempted to explain the necessity and need for women’s studies. The setting up of women’s study programs and characterizing its activities had been entailed with a recognition of women’s invisibility in all areas of knowledge.

Spender states that the description and analysis of women’s omission as independent human beings has been the most significant contribution of feminism. In spite of the political and economic conditions being hostile, women’s studies had emerged as a formal area of study first in the United States of America during 1960’s and then slowly in the Great Britain between 1960 and 1970. Since then Women’s Studies courses were set up with in the context of higher education and adult education.

The University of Kent was the first university to offer a postgraduate course in women studies i.e, M.A. Women studies in 1980, followed gradually by other postgraduate courses and

now there is a full postgraduate programme in women's studies in Britain. It is now established in various degrees in countries like North and South America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Arab world. "Such courses, addressed in any degree course had faced problems like under funding, opposition by men and prejudiced views against women's studies. It has gone through an intense and prolonged struggle within the university system, say Brunt and others.

***Take PRIDE in ....  
Being a woman,  
A creator of life,  
And individual,  
Never degrade yourself  
By hating your  
Existence as a woman!!!***

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ sharpens our awareness of the connections between ideas and behavior.  
**Ans :** Women's study
2. Women studies helps us to understand our past as well as \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** Future
3. Women studies is not a \_\_\_\_\_ Course.  
**Ans :** how to
4. The study of women placing the \_\_\_\_\_ as the centre of process.  
**Ans :** own experiences of women.
5. Women's studies is a discipline of \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** Women in society.

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Women's studies is a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Culture of women   b) history of women   c) **science of women**   d) none of the above
2. Women's studies had emerged as a formal area of study first in U.S.A during  
a) 1980's   b) **1960's**   c) 1970's   d) 1990's

3. Women's studies had emerged in Great Britain between  
a) **1960 & 1970**      b) 1950 & 1970      c) 1965 & 1975      d) 1975 & 1985

***III Answer in One Word***

1. In which country emerged formal area of study first in women studies?
2. In which year feminist had attempted to explain the necessity and need for women's studies.
3. Which University offered a post Graduate course in women studies?

***III Paragraph Questions***

1. What are the importances of Women studies?

\*\*\*\*\*

## FEMINISM – METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. (Mrs) S. Manimekalai

*“ Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size ”*

*-- Virginia Woolf*

### Introduction

Feminism as an ideology, both preaching and practicing women’s liberation and equality added with attributes like Justice, Indiscrimination, Development and Empowerment of women has closer affinity to the discipline of women’s studies, hence otherwise called feminist study. feminists on the one hand reject the negative cultural images of women ,assignment of socially established roles and statuses between male and female, supremacy of masculine qualities over feminine qualities, demanding an evaluation between male and female on its own merits and on the other hand feminism attempts to replace ignorance and fantasy with knowledge and reality.

### Definition of feminism

Feminism “encompasses a set of believes, values and attitudes that can take on the high valuation of women as human beings”.

Feminism values women’s autonomy and advocates the creation of conditions, which will be infavour of women’s independent control of their own destiny. Feminism provokes to work for replacing ignorance and fantasy knowledge and reality. Feminism recognizes the prevalence of women’s oppression along with other kinds of oppression and hence supports the liberation of the oppressed in racism, class privileges and indiscrimination against homosexuals.

According to **Michell** feminism in the 60’s and 70’s has above all been distinguished from and of its earlier expression by the deconstruction of any fixed meaning to the notion of “women”.

Feminism is based on concrete realities and levels of consciousness perceptions and actions both historically and culturally. John Desrochers defines feminism as “an awareness of women’s oppression and exploitation in society, at work and within the family, and conscious action by women and men to change this situation”.

## **Different kinds of feminism**

There are different kinds of feminism –

1. **Eco-Feminism** which is related to Ecology. This school of feminism sees nature as Mother Earth and every aspect of nature is viewed as feminist function.
2. **Marxist Feminism**, relating to feminism sees economic freedom and social equality of woman on par with man is the basic prerogative of this Feminism.
3. **Feminism relating to Post-Colonialism**, views the liberation of woman as the most important feature of the post-colonial period. It views man as the coloniser and woman as the colonized. The feminists of this school firmly believe that education is the only powerful instrument which can cut off the shackles of colonization and set woman free off the patriarchal oppression.
4. **Psychological Feminism**, probes into the woman's psyche and their experiences related to their physical body, sex and motherhood.

All these theories and ideas relating to women have strengthened feminism. All these concepts of feminism redress the imbalance that was effected in the society between men and women. This is reflected in the works of feminist women writers. All the feminist women started handling the theme of female exploitation in the patriarchal society. They started voicing the helpless cry of female exploitation because it reduced a human being to the level of vegetable existence and she had to single handedly carry on a desperate battle against the established inhumanism of male autocracy until her feminine identity is crushed under the pressure of imperial and patriarchal ideologies.

## **Female oppressions and Feminism in India**

Manu, the founder of the patriarchal structure in Indian Society, declared that woman can be subjected to corporal punishment, that they can be enslaved by their father, husband and son throughout their life. According to Manu, the avenues of education, learning and knowledge which promote the growth of an individual should be blocked for them in all possible ways. In this view, since women are the property of their men folk, they can have no right over the material property of their family.

The first phase of feminism starts with woman's awareness of her being oppressed. Breaking herself out of the darkness of her own ignorance, she must become aware how she is being exploited as daughter, wife and mother.

## **Female Infanticide**

Female oppression starts from the moment, the girl child sets her foot on the earth. Killing of female infants is widespread among the Hindu Communities as girl-children are



considered to be a burden and shame. The Atharva Veda says, “the birth of a girl, grant it elsewhere, here grant a boy”(VI,23). The wish for a boy has assumed its human and grotesque form in female infanticide and in modern times the scientific methods of identifying the sex of the foetus has become a threat to the birth of a girl.

### **Female oppression as daughters**

The resentment of the grand parents, the father and even the mother is what a girl faces in the Indian Society. It is only a long sad and gruesome stage of discrimination between a teenage girl and a teenage boy. “The double standards start operating from the stage of adolescence, binding girl indoors and encouraging boys to develop outdoor activities. A spirit of competition, exploration and challenge is inculcated among boys and they are taught to assert their supremacy over the world in general. Girls on the contrary, are discouraged from showing aggressive modes of behavior and instead, feminine virtues of physical beauty, modesty, tolerance, patience and self-effacement are frequently demanded from them.

In Indian Society, the efforts of most of the parents are to find a suitable match of their choice for their daughters. A girl in the caste ridden Indian Society has no freedom to choose her life partner. Marriages outside one’s caste are even now considered a problematic issue. The common opinion is that only marriages arranged by the parents within one’s caste can give security to a girl after marriage in case her husband deserts her.

Brought up under restrictive circumstances, the ideal of daughterhood is to obey her parents in the choice of marriage. The traditional feminine virtues of mute acceptance and self-sacrifice are instilled in her so that she could be an attractive commodity in the marriage market. Every daughter is groomed to be the object of sale in the marriage business.

### **Female oppression as wives**

A woman’s market value in the marriage business depends upon her financial value, and not upon the value of individuality. So, after marriage she becomes a faceless entity, only the image of wife of a man and what the society expects of a wife. As she is made a mere decorative object, she is reduced to insignificance. She turns from subject to object, from consumer to be consumed. She is sought to be turned into a state of eternal bondage in the name of marriage.

In the Indian marriage system, the colonial attitude of the male spouse turns marriage into an oppressor-victim ambit. In the Indian cultural system, a wife automatically becomes a silently-suffering, self-sacrificing woman who suppresses her desires and drudges for the delights of her dominating husband. In most of the Indian marriages, the husband is not a loving man empathizing with his wife, but a typical colonizer - a cold hearted, insensitive, arrogant autocrat dictating rules. On the other hand, the Indian wife is not a full fledged individual, but a nameless

entity, a mere appendage added to her husband's name. Thus in the Indian cultural set-up, marriage is the realm in which women are ruthlessly exploited. In the name of marriage, every Indian woman becomes a weak, helpless, voiceless wife living with her husband under the yoke of marriage.

### **Female oppression as mother**

Most often motherhood is considered as the most "treasured source of any woman's identity". As a mother, a woman is more than the bearer of children. She is responsible for childcare. She has to take care of the various tasks that the family requires like catering to the daily needs of her husband and the children, maintaining the house, making and providing food for the entire family. On the role of motherhood, the idea that a mother is also an individual, who has a choice to her free will, is totally ignored or forgotten. This self-sacrificing mother is not well protected and cared for in her old age. In the old age of motherhood, the son takes up the role of the dictator and the mother is expected to follow the rule of mute-obedience to the laws laid by her son.

So motherhood becomes a process through which every woman learns "patience, self-sacrifice and the willingness to tirelessly perform the household chores. Mother hold ingrains fear, pain and the implicit obedience to male dominance, first to the husband, then to the son.

### **Conclusion**

Male dominance and unquestioned female suppression was prevalent in the Indian society in the earlier times and that was reflected in the articles of the writers belonging to that period. Woman was considered as "passive, docile, dependent and helpless". But with growing opportunities of education and employment, urbanization and industrialization, Indian women have become aware of their self worth, acquired self confidence and assured themselves of independence and individuality. They have started revolting against the oppressive patriarchy and have started redefining their roles in the society. Women are not required to find her total fulfillment in submissive domesticity, but can assert her identity in the world outside, widespread with countless opportunities of education and employment.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Eco feminism is related to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** ecology

2. Post colonial feminism views woman as the colonized and the man as the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** colonizer

3. \_\_\_\_\_ was the founder of the patriarchal structure in the Indian society.

**Ans :** Manu

4. According to Manu, the avenues of education and knowledge should be blocked for\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** women

5. Killing of female infants is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** female infanticide

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Marxist feminism feels \_\_\_\_\_ freedom as the basic prerogative of women.

- a) social    b) political    c) **economic**    d) all these.

2. Feminism as a \_\_\_\_\_ -

- a) Biology    b) **ideology**    c) Sociology    d) none of the above

3. Eco feminism sees nature as

- a) God    b) **Mother Earth**    c) Angel    d) Nature

4. Psychological feminism probes into the woman's

- a) beauty    b) mind    c) **psyche**    d) soul

5. Among the Hindu Communities, girl children are often considered to be a

- a) blessing    b) gift    c) **burden**    d) boon

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Define Feminism.

2. What is female Infanticide?

3. In which stage double standards starts?

4. Which one is the only powerful instrument that can set woman free from the patriarchal oppression

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a paragraph about the different kinds of feminism.

2. Write a paragraph about the female oppression as wives.

3. Write a paragraph about the different levels of female oppression in the Indian society.

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## MOVE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs. Emmi Gordon

*“ Woman is the companion of man ,gifted with equal mental capacities, she has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man , and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him ”*

*-- Mahatma Gandhi*

### Introduction

Almighty created women to groom the whole personality of man and enable him to lead a successful life, from the inception to inhabitation. she cares him, teaches him, knowledge and culture, shapes his character, provides life to his imagination, nurtures him, supports him, add colours to his personality, shoulders his burdens as her's, frees him from mental stresses and worries, soothes him and above all loves him in spite of his real being.

The Famous social reformer Swami Vivekananda strongly believed that, “it is only in the hands of educated and pious women (mother) the great men are born”.

*“all men rule over women*

*we*

*Romans rule over men*

*and*

*our wives rule over us!”*

hats off to Romans ! The Romans held women in greatest honour as the words of Cato and Censor quoted above!

### Gender Inequality

The bias precipitated over human beings by dividing them as male and female is known as gender divide or gender inequality.

1. The fundamentals of gender inequality lie in the unequal access to economic, social and political opportunities available for both men and women.
2. Sex role behavior patters dictated by earlier societies, where home ie, “private domain” was identified with females and productive outside work ie, “public domain” was identified with males.
3. But now productive economic activity is open to women, but she has to take dual role.

## **Key issues of Gender Inequality**

There are two key issues that have pervasive impact on the creation of gender inequality:

- a) Norms of patriarchy
- b) Modernization

### **a) Norms of patriarchy**

Patriarchal attitudes are known to affect the status of women in all societies in the contemporary world. The patriarchal system was developed among the institutions and traditions which were inspired by beliefs in male dominance and female inferiority. Patriarchy has been rooted in society, since the advent of agrarian system.

### **b) Modernization**

Modernization transformed home based family units, economic activity into an efficient, organised surplus generating process. Economic growth and industrialization may encourage women to direct their productive efforts away from the home. But unfortunately, they may not qualify for employment in proper sectors because of their education and equate with men in scoring economic contributions in the society.

## **Women in Vedic period**

To begin with Aryans, the society was founded on the institutions of home and family. The Rig Vedic expression “the wife is the home” shows how much domestic life was woven around the woman. Rig Veda, the Aryans has no desire for a daughter, while in Atharva veda the birth of a daughter is even deprecated. In Upanishads certain rituals are prescribed to have a learned daughter. Women were educated both in the spiritual as well as temporal subjects. They were given training in religious lore, historical tradition, mythology, fine arts as well as in military.

The Manusmriti prescribes duties and obligations of a woman. For Manu, woman is a perpetual minor and has to lead whole of her life under the guardianship of either the father, the husband, the brother or the son.

## **Women in Epic Period**

In the epic age the woman was considered to be a true friend of man. They embodied in themselves extreme love, devotion and selfless service to their family. Muslims adherence to *pardha* and polygamy also influenced Hindus. The women were considered inferior to men and so began to be ill treated.

## **Women of Today**

In the era followed, the customs of polygamy, the *pardha*, the denial of woman’s right over property, child marriage, *sati pratha* etc. all these practices made her a very weak

personality. Due to this, she herself became rooted to the idea that she was weak, helpless, subordinate and inferior. Hence woman themselves became great perpetrators of tyranny on the women over whom they could exercise their sadism. As a result dowry demands, widowhood misery, dominance through the mother-in-law and subservient daughter-in-law were initiated and began to engulf women. It takes a long journey to shed and forget those evils on the society of women.

### **Rationale for Women Rights**

Our constitution safeguards the rights of women from all kinds of violence and discriminations against her, both physical as well as psychological tortures. The constitutional rights have to be practiced and framed with the aim of improving the status, enforcing the provisions, counteract or lessen the figures of victimization due to various harassments. Some of the few constitutional provisions and their nature are:

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Provisions of the IPC</b>	<b>Nature of the offence criminalised</b>
1.	The Special Marriages Act, 1964	entitling widows and divorced women to marry
2.	The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	prohibiting the acceptance of marriage dowry
3.	The Act Of Prohibiting Child Marriage	prohibiting the marriage at child hood
4.	The Equal Wages Act	enlighten women workers to receive the same wage as received by male workers
5.	Article 39(1)	the right to an adequate means of livelihood to men and women equally
6.	Article 39(d)	equal pay for equal work for both men and women
7.	Article 498A	protection against harassment of her husband or from husband's family members.

### **Ways to achieve Gender Equality**

Empowerment is a multidimensional process which enables individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to transact or to be given away by some one. It is a strong feeling of self and has to be acquired, exercised,

sustained, preserved and enriched. Some of the advisable strategies to achieve Gender Equality are:

- Removing sex bias in curriculum
- Emphasizing higher education and encouraging women to take professional course
- Overcoming social taboos and traditional beliefs
- Encouraging to take careers seriously and consciously
- Sensitizing women to laws related to property, marriage, divorce, minimum wages, maternity leave benefit etc.
- Making them aware of possibilities of self employment.
- Educating their parents on the importance of making women economically self sufficient
- Including Gender Equality components in the curriculum
- Community services and social service must concentrate on legal rights, drudgery reduction, combating atrocities and violence's committed to women

The realization of mission is to concentrate and get connected with health care, environmental safety, promotion of population, education activities, family welfare, citizenship roles and responsibilities. The empowerment mechanism should also concentrate on necessary financial and service support, advancement into higher position of power, better consciousness of their rights, self reliance, self respect and dignity among women.

### **Strategies to attain Gender Equality**

Education is the only noble way to enlighten soul, uplift self, enhance knowledge and skill, encourage to be independent and thus ultimately empower her to glory. Educating a woman is educating a family as a whole.

Higher education especially professional education is necessary to enroll her to take challenging career. It alone gives independent and instrumental initiativeness to face the world and tackle the situations ahead.

Career choice and career decisions should be taken after careful analysis and assessment, otherwise it may also end in distress, stress and lack of commitment and satisfaction. She should makeup her mind and exercise her thoughts to meet criticism and humiliation if exists.

The emergence of women on the economic scenario as entrepreneur is a significant development in the emancipation of women for securing a place in the society.

Entrepreneurship refers to the skill of discovering new economic opportunities, managing the business, taking risks and introducing innovations. A woman entrepreneur is a person who is willing to take risks with the unknown because of the adventurous spirit she possesses.

### **Conclusion**

In order to uplift and safeguard women from the wide of variety of harassment in family, profession, and society, our government has taken large steps by providing constitutional law. But to the worst result, women are still suffering and shame to mention, they were badly tortured by government servants themselves.

On the positive side, various private organizations like Self Help Groups rise to the occasion and to take care of women and give them a better status in the society.

Above all, the very psychology of women **herself** need to be changed from its mere root, she must realize her potentials, her skills, her strength and herself come out to meet the world bravely. It is a mandatory duty of none but herself! She has to portrait, carve, mould her own hood into a beautiful sculpture of her own self (esteem) and thus strive hard for her upliftment. Social and political reforms may support her in her mission of empowerment.

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### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Women are blessed with stable \_\_\_\_\_ than men.

**Ans :** mind and heart

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ prescribes duties and obligations for women.

**Ans :** manusmriti

3. Muslims adherence to pardha and \_\_\_\_\_ also influenced Hindus, after epic age.

**Ans :** polygamy

4. Educating a woman is educating a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** family as a Whole.

5. In the epic age the woman was considered to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of man.

**Ans :** true friend.

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. As per the words of Cato and Censor, Women are held in greatest honour by

a) Indians      b) **Romans**      c) Italians      d) Russians

2. Females are identified with home which is called as



- a) **private domain**                      b) public domain  
c) secret domain                      d) none of the above.
3. "The wife is the home" is the expression of  
a) **rig**                      b) yasur                      c) sama                      d) adharva.
4. Woman was considered to be a true friend of man, during  
a) Rig age                      b) Upanishad age                      c) **Epic age**                      d) none of these.
5. Education is the only noble way to  
a) **enlighten soul**    b) uplift self  
c) enhance knowledge and skill                      d) all the above.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who was the famous social reformer in India?
2. What is gender inequality?
3. Which practices are made weak personality of woman?
4. What is power in Gender equality?
5. Which one of the act gives protection against harassment of husband or from his family?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Define gender inequality and describe your views on gender inequality.
2. Discuss about gender inequality with its key issues.
3. Suggest various strategies to attain gender equality.

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## WOMEN AND GANDHIJI

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs. PitchaiKani Prabhakaran

*“ To call woman the weaker sex is a libel, it is man’s injustice to woman , It by strength is meant brute strength , then indeed, is woman less brute than man , It by strength is meant moral power , then , woman is immeasurately man’s superior.”*

*-- Mahatma Gandhi*

### Introduction

No leader in history commanded such whole hearted devotion and respect from women not only in his own country, but also in other parts of the world as Mahatma Gandhi commanded. He was a passionate lover of humanity and a passionate advocate of women’s right and equality. He worked hard through out his life for women’s welfare and equal rights. Since Gandhi set a good example by practicing what he preached, and being a harsh and merciless critic of himself, he began reforms in his own house and radically changed his attitude and treatment towards his wife Kausturiba and with that change began his work for the emancipation and social uplift of womankind as a whole. In all his writings and speeches, he spoke fearlessly against enforced widowhood, purdah system, devadasi system, early child marriages, dowry system, the economic bondage of women and marital slavery of women.

### Women and Gandhiji

Gandhi paid equal attention and gave equal place to girls and women in his own institutions and programmes of work. There was always an atmosphere of freedom and self confidence in the girls and women who lived with him or under his care in Sabarmathi and Sevagram ashrams.

### Gandhi on Women’s Education

Gandhi was a strong supporter of compulsory education for both boys and girls from 7 to 14 years. He was traditional in his approach to the social roles of women; he wanted them to be mothers and home makers and did not prefer women going outside the home to earn their livelihood .So he felt that a separate educational curriculum should be adapted to the special needs of girls in order to prepare them to be mothers and home makers.

Moreover, a separate curriculum for women may result in perpetuating the subordinate position of women. However, Gandhi suggested that women’s educational programmes should

be planned with the different vocations of the sexes in mind but that access to different branches of knowledge should not be restricted to either sex. He also insisted that women's educational should prepare them for the real challenges of their daily life.

### **Weaker sex**

Writing in *Young India*, Gandhi observed as follows: "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel. It is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior. If the non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman".

According to Gandhi woman is the personification of self-sacrifice. But, unfortunately, she does not realize what a tremendous and extraordinary courage she has over man. Being the incarnation of Ahimsa, she will occupy her proud and legitimate place by the side of man, as his mother, maker and silent leader. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

### **Role of woman in society**

Gandhi made the following observation in *Harijan*, "Modern women have circumvented men in various ways in her unconsciously subtle ways, as men have vainly, equally, unconsciously struggled to thwart women in gaining ascendancy over them. They must not ape the manners and customs of the west, which may be suited to its environment. Women's role must be the strong controlling, purifying and conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is bad and degrading. The modern girls love adventure and we must really admire and appreciate the spirit of adventure. But the modern girl dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun but to attract attention".

Regarding the married life he wrote - "Married life is intended to promote mutual good and it is meant also to serve humanity--- the idea that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical". An ideal husband and wife are equal shares of each other's virtues, joys and sorrows and Gandhi places before us Sita as an ideal wife and Rama as an ideal husband.

### **Women and untouchability**

Gandhiji gave the following message to women all over India and declared "I want you, above everything else to uproot untouchability from your hearts and serve the Harijan boys and girls, as you would serve your own children. You should love them as your own brothers and sisters, children of the same mother India....."

### **Women and devadasi system**

Gandhi asked every Indian to ponder over the fate of thousands of sisters who are destined to a life of shame and disgrace for the unlawful and immoral actions on the part of some persons who easily exploit the ignorance and innocence of some women in the name of religion.

Gandhi is of the opinion that the majority of men, who support Devadasi are married men and therefore commit a double sin against their wives.

The sight of many women under Purdah system pained and humiliated him deeply. Gandhiji is of the opinion that great wrong and injustice are perpetuated by men to the women of India by clinging to this barbarous custom.

Even in the twentieth century we hear reports of dowry deaths. In 1936, Gandhiji wrote in Harijan – “The system of dowry has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by the parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste, so long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil of dowry has to be eradicated”.

Gandhi in his message to the women quoted as follows – “The real ornament of woman is her character. Metals and stones can never be real ornaments. No man or woman is entitled for the possession of wealth unless she or he has given a fair share of it to the poor and helpless”

Gandhi’s suggestions in safeguarding her honour and purity, in his own words is – “when a woman is assaulted, she may not stop to think in terms of himsa or ahimsa. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method that comes to her mind. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and if need be die in her heroic efforts”.

All these sayings by Gandhi on behalf of women definitely evoke a response in every well wishers of humanity. These ideas are primarily meant for women. They touch each and every part of her life and serve as a guide to her in times of stress and strain.

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### ***I Fill in the blanks***

1. According to Gandhiji “Equality of sexes does not mean equality of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** occupation

2. “To call women the weaker sex is a \_\_\_\_\_” according to Gandhiji.

**Ans:** libel

3. Gandhiji called \_\_\_\_\_system as a barbarous custom.

**Ans:** Purdah

4. According to Gandhiji the real ornament of woman is \_\_\_\_\_

**Ans:** her character

### ***II Choose the best answer***

1. According to Gandhi woman is the personification of \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) self-confidence      b) self-reliance      c) **self-sacrifice**      d) none
2. \_\_\_\_\_ life is intended to promote mutual good and it is also to serve humanity.  
a) School life    b) college life      c) **married life**      d) none
3. \_\_\_\_\_ husband and wife are equal shares of each others virtues, joys and sorrows.  
a) Lovable      b) **ideal**      c) Spiritual      a) none

### ***III Answer in one Word***

1. Who was a passionate lover of humanity?
2. Who will pay equal attention and equal place to women?
3. Who were the ideal couple according to Gandhi?
4. Which system is barbarous custom in India opposed by Gandhiji?
5. Which one is the primary duty of women according to Gandhiji?

### ***IV Paragraph Question***

1. Write a note on Gandhiji on women's education.
2. Describe the views of Gandhiji on role of women in society.
3. Write a short note on the concepts of Gandhiji on women.

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## WOMEN AND MEDIA

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. (Mrs.) S. Arul Micheal Selvi &  
Mrs. L. Sujatha**

*“ The tongue of women is their sword; they take care  
not to let it rust ”*  
*--Chinese Proverb*

### **Introduction**

Media is a Latin word which denotes the significant means of mass communication- especially cinema, television, radio and press collectively. Modern media includes computers and mobile phones.

Media has the following features

- Has an important role to safeguard the elements of a democratic society
- Shares the thoughts of millions and millions of mass

### **Definition**

Media can be defined as the procedure or process for attaining an objective. Nowadays media has achieved complete freedom. So naturally the motive of media turns to money making. Media remind the words of Mme Jeanne Roland,

**“O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!”**

### **Good Media**

A good media should have any one of the following aesthetics:

- Principle of good taste.
- Principle of sensibility.
- Principle of refinement.
- Principle of cultured efflorescence.
- Principle of discrimination.
- Principle of artistic presentation.

### **Impact of Media on Women**

Women are portrayed as Gods in this world. Women’s day is celebrated all over the world in honour of acknowledging their talents. Today women acquire more self confidence to achieve their great ambitions. How are women inculcated through media-Good or Worse?

This can be dealt under three stages

- Women and Media in the past
- Women and Media at present
- Women and Media in the future

### **Women and Media in the past**

Only scriptures, dramas and literature acted as media in the past. During Shakespeare's time his famous lady characters – Viola and Portia were first enacted on the stage by young handsome boys. Slowly the female characters entered the stage during the reign of King Charles II.

The following table reveals the portrayal of women by the media in the past:

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Women Characters</b>	<b>Aesthetic of Good Media</b>
1	Vasuki and Nalayini	Principle of sensibility
2	Meera and Andal	Principle of cultured efflorescence
3	Avaiyar	Principle of elegance and Principle of artistic presentation

On the other hand, Manushastra desired women. It degrades women and is against the remarriage of women. Some male writers in the past exhibited their dominance over women through their literary work. For example, Milton says "Men are only for dominance and women are only for obedience". These are some stains in the impact of media on women in the past.

### **Women and Media at present**

At present the impact of media on women is partly good and partly worse. The Media at present which expose women are:

- a. Cinema
- b. Television
- c. Radio
- d. Press
- e. Computers and
- f. Mobile phone.

#### **a. Cinema**

The impact of Cinema is very powerful. Cinema can be divided into two categories:

- i. Cinema before Millennium and
- ii. Cinema after Millennium.

The exposure of women in cinema before Millennium is 48% good and 52% bad .They indirectly cause some ill-feelings on women.

The exposure of women in Cinema after Millennium is only 15% good and 85% bad. The new modern millennium cinema deviates a lot from our culture.

Majority of the films have directly dealt with the blatant sexism and vulgarism under the name of modern trend .They exhibit 99% vulgarism and only 1% goodness. The Cinema after Millennium gives more importance to the physical body features of women than their appreciable talent.

Even since film censorship came into being as result of the 1918 act, censorship has been one of the most controversial problems. There have been many criticisms against the film censorship. The film censorship enquiry committee recommended that kissing as well as nudity could be allowed only if they are relevant and necessary story. Women's Organizations and movements have raised their voice against this type of permission. Women are facing a big challenge from this type of media. They have organized processions and protect demonstrations against Kissing, nudity and raping scenes.

## **b. Television**

Television is the fastest and effective visual media which reaches people in the very reception of their houses. Television programmes and advertisements inculcate women in both good and bad ways.

There are many television interview programmes which reveals many challenging women like Kiran Bedi, Saniya Mirza, Vijayalakshmi, Mallika Badrinath, etc. These programmes provide inspiration to others. Some satellite channels broadcast effective speech of some women scholars, which are very useful.

There are many advertisements which depict homely women and good career-holding women. Such advertisement is helpful to other women to know about new products and new courses offered to women.

On the other hand, in television serials, women characters are mostly bounded to sentiments. All serials portray women either as traditional or highly protesting type in an exaggerated manner. In advertisements, women are exploited a lot in twenty to thirty seconds.

## **c. Radio**

Radio is one the portable audio media which reaches even the rural people. This media have not neglected the principles of good media. The main aim of the All India Radio to serve



the public in general and women in particular by providing information, education and entertainment.

#### **d .Press**

Press is one of the powerful media in the society. Press means “provide”. Mr. M. Chalapathi Rao in his book “The press in India” termed press as “reforming and crusading zeal”. The press should have the qualities of a good media.

The journals and newspapers of this period has not been free from the blatant sexism and subtle distortions. Mainly it focused on four landmark issues-dowry deaths, rape, sex determination tests and Sati.

While an issue like dowry death first came to media’s attention in early 1979 and continued sporadically in the news up to 1984, amendments to the dowry law were passed by the Parliament. The Sati controversy was also confined in the latter half of 1987. In this way, the press clearly put forth the things that happen to women and help them to provide justice.

Some special magazines and journals were published for women. These magazines and journals got an enriched popularity among the readers. They explored the highlights of women, their problem and also gave counseling to tackle their problem.

At the same time, cheap, mere journals and magazines expose women badly. The articles in such magazines kindle only the sexual feelings of the readers.

In spite of some black marks, the press dealt with new trends and inventions. Even though its attention is towards new technologies, it exploits women badly to some extent.

#### **e. Computer**

Computer is one among the effective media. It acts as the fastest link between the people who live in opposite poles. The bad exposure of women happens in this media through internet. In internet, lot of useful information as well as vulgar and blatant sexual scenes is incorporated. Even the Government tries to abolish the computer centers which encourage such vulgarity, this crime continues.

Computers possess the qualities of good media. But it is mislead by others and used in wrong ways.

#### **f. Mobile phones**

Nowadays mobile phones with camera are becoming popular. SMS messages are full of vulgar words which portray women badly. Indecent vulgar pictures are available in mobile phone. Some bad guys use mobile phones with camera in wrong ways.

## **Women and Media in the future**

In future, the bad exposure of women cannot be totally eradicated but to certain degrees. All media should concentrate in the welfare of women. They should give hands in rising up the women community. According to La Martine's words,

**“There is a woman at the beginning of all great things”**, the media should uplift women in all aspects.

### **Conclusion:**

Media is to open up the large masses in society to new information, new thought, new attitudes and new aspiration, which lead them to new achievements. The media is the device that can spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes quickly and widely.

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### ***I Fill in the blanks:***

1. Media can be defined as the \_\_\_\_\_ for attaining an objective.

**Ans:** Procedure or Process

2. At present, the motive of media turns to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Ans:** money making

3. Some male writers in the past exhibited their \_\_\_\_\_ over women through their literary work.

**Ans:** dominance

4. Press means \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** Provide

5. All media should concentrate in the \_\_\_\_\_ of women.

**Ans:** Welfare

### ***II Choose the best answer***

1. Modern media includes \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a) Radio
- b) television
- c) cinema
- d) **computers and mobile phones**

2. Vasuki and Nalayini were portrayed by the media in the past with regard to

- a) Principle of refinement
- b) **Principle of sensibility**
- c) Principle of elegance

- d) Principle of artistic presentation
3. The exposure of women in cinema after millennium is
- only 15% good and 85% bad**
  - only 48% good and 52% bad
  - only 18% good and 82% bad
  - only 28% good and 72% bad
4. The Government tries to \_\_\_\_\_ which use internet in a wrong way.
- establish computer centers
  - nationalize all computer centers
  - abolish the computer centers**
  - collect special tax from computer centers
5. Pick out the correct statement below:
- Some good guys use mobile phones with camera in wrong ways.
  - In future, the bad exposure of women cannot be totally eradicated but to certain degrees.**
  - Television and press had never portrayed women badly.
  - All media need not concentrate in the welfare of women.

### *III Answer in One Word*

- Define Media
- Who says “Men are only for dominance and women are only for obedience”?
- Which media is the fastest and effective visual media.?
- Mention the main aim of the All India radio.
- Which media is one among the effective media?

### *IV Paragraph Questions*

- Describe about the portrayal of women in the past by the media.
- Discuss about the exposure of women by cinema.
- Explain about the exploitation of women by press.

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## WOMEN AND LAWS

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Mrs. K. Gogapriya

*“The book of female logic is blotted all over with tears,  
and justice in their courts is forever in a passion ”*  
-- William Thackeray

### **Introduction:**

In India women are deprived of social, economic and political independence. They are made dependent on the male members of her family. All decisions for her are taken by men only. Her legitimate rights are denied in many a case. For no fault of hers she has been suppressed and oppressed in every walk of life especially whenever she was subjected to rape, kidnapping, adultery, sexual harassment, indecent assault and unmarried motherhood.

Her modesty has been outraged within and outside the four walls of her house and at work place. The lack of education and awareness of her legal and constitutional rights and the lack of means and support has made her submit passively. Law alone cannot tackle the problem of women. Social awareness can be brought by educating the people at different levels of the need of such laws.

Let us see the myth behind the Law and the reality.

### **1. Child Marriage Restrain act of 1929 (Popularly known as Sarada Act)**

To Prevent child marriages this act fixed the minimum for males 18 years and for female now 15 years by the Hindu marriage succession act of 1955. Only the special marriage act of 1954 fixes the minimum age at 21 and 18 years for males and females respectively. While penalising the performance of child marriage is necessary, the benefit of such legislation is greatly offset by the fact that the marriage itself is held valid. Parties to the marriage are punishable and the marriage itself is not void.

### **2. Widow Remarriage**

The social reformers like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had succeeded in passing the widow remarriage act of 1856 with the co-operatives of the British Government in India. On the outset the law ensures the widow to remarry which would be of an appreciable attempt.

Though the law granted freedom to widow to remarry it precisely prevented them from remarrying since it implied loss of property.

### **3. Rape**

Rape is the most under reported crime in this country. According to law (sect 375 of crpc) a man is said to commit 'rape' if he has sexual intercourse with a woman in circumstances falling under any of the following.

#### Description:

- 1) Against her will.
- 2) Without her consent
- 3) With her consent :When her consent has been obtained by pulling her in fear of death or hurt ,with her consent; when the man knows that he is not her husband
- 4) With or without her consent when she is under 16 years of age.

### **4.Abortion**

There are certain types of social legislation ,which seek to protect interests and benefits of special concern to women. The Suppression of Immoral and Traffic in women and Girls of 1956 better known as SITA Act is interested to protect the helpless women and girls from a typical mode of exploitation not altogether unknown in the country.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy act 1971 may also be mentioned in the context of social legislation relative to women. It provides that a pregnancy may be terminated where the length of pregnancy does not exceed twenty weeks, if two medical practitioners of the opinion that the continuation of pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant women or grave injury to her physical or mental health.

### **5. SATI**

The commission of SATI (prevention) act 1987 provides for the more effective prevention of the commission of Sati and its glorification and for matters connected here with or incidental there to.

This act was passed after tremendous pressure from the progressive sections on the event of Roop Kanwar's forced SATI on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1987. This newly formed SATI committee had collected Rs.30 lakhs and was planning to erect a monument where Roop Kanwar was publicly murdered.

### **6.Divorce**

- a) Divorce of Hindu:

The Hindu marriage is considered as sacrament and so once entered into cannot be dissolved. The passing of Hindu marriage act of 1955 starts a new tradition with its provision for divorce. The new act permits dissolution of marriage on grounds of adultery, Change of religion, junacy,

incurable diseases, desertion and others, in sort when the purpose and aim of marriage which is joint living and companionship cannot be released.

As the Hindu family law based on the age old Manu Smiriti which says marriage a sacred union that means divorce is impossible in Hindu society. Yet the custom which dominates the society makes woman from depriving this opportunity.

#### **b)Divorce of Islam:**

The Islamic marriage has the character of a contract and hence it allows divorce to both parties through on different conditions. The husband can divorce his wife without even assigning reason and without resorting to the court. He had only uttered the word “Talaq” or divorce three times.

The Islamic religion expected women to observe fidelity towards her husband. When this obligation of martial union was not fulfilled the husband could divorce his unchaste wife. Even after divorce she had to wait for three-menstrual period to ascertain whether she was pregnant.

#### **7. Eve-Teasing**

Eve-teasing has been defined as follows:

When a man by words either spoken or by signs and or visible representation or by gesture does any act in public place, or signs, recites to litter any indecent words or songs or ballet in any public place to the annoyance of any woman.

The offence of Eve-teasing in-different wordings included in Indian penal code diction 350,354 and 509.Yet eve-teasing is on the rise that amounts to death. We have witnessed Sarika Shah’s case.

#### **8. Property right**

Woman had no property right on the joint family property till 1989.She had only limited interest in the joint family property. On 25.3.89 the Tamil Nadu government introduced an amendment giving co- parcenary right to daughters in par with the son which is of a land mark in the status of woman.

It gives women full ownership in the property inherited or acquired by her. The widow, the mother and the daughter now not only inherit property along with the son but also take an equal share with him. Section 14 of the act gives women the right to acquire absolute ownership of property. The Hindu Succession Act 1956 provides equal share to women in the properties of their father.

#### **9.Dowry**

Dowry means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly.

Technically, dowry is what is given to the son-in-law or to his parents on demand either in cash or kind. Today marriages are fixed on the amount of dowry that is promised by the bride's family to prevent this culture the government has enacted the dowry prohibition act in 1961 and the same has been amended in 1984.

**Conclusion:**

Legal provision relating to women and the actual situation in which they find themselves, it is clear that something more than legislation is required. The Indian Legal System also does not take into account the reality of the social conditions either by incorporating them in the various enactments made from time to time. The legal system, which means the courts, lawyers, police, bureaucracy continuous to be male dominated and therefore the laws have functioned contrary to their declared objectives.

The execution of laws is more important than making them  
-Thomas Jefferson

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***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. The Islamic husband can divorce his wife by uttering the word \_\_\_\_\_ three times.  
**Ans :** Talaq
2. Women had no property right on the joint family property till \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** 1989
3. Presents/gifts given to bridegroom without demand is not \_\_\_\_\_ under Dowry Prohibition Act.  
**Ans :** dowry
4. Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 fixed the minimum age of marriage for females at 15 and it is \_\_\_\_\_ under special marriage Act , 1954.  
**Ans :** 18
5. Daughters have equal right as sons to their \_\_\_\_\_ property.  
**Ans :** Parent's

***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. The medical Termination of Pregnancy Act  
a) 1773                      b) **1971**                      c)1974                      d)1975
2. The Hindu family law based on  
a) Vedas                      b) **Manu Smiriti**                      c)Upanishads                      d)None of the

above

3. Under which act provides equal property share to women
  - a) **Hindu Succession Act 1956**
  - b) Hindu minority act
  - c) Hindu women rights to property act
  - d) Maintenance Act.
4. Hindu Marriage Succession Act of 1955 fix the minimum age for female
  - a) 12 yrs
  - b) 10yrs
  - c) **15yrs**
  - d) 16 yrs
5. Who was the social reformers of widow remarriage?
  - a) **Iswar Chandra Vidyasager**
  - b) Mahatma Gandhi
  - c) Rajaram Mohan Roy
  - d) Rokmani devi

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Expand SITA.
2. Which case is the witness of Eve - teasing?
3. What is Dowry?
4. Which law states that rape is an offence?
5. Who was forced to SATI on 1987?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Describe about the child marriage Restrain Act and Widow Remarriage Act.
2. State Divorce of Hindu and Islam Religions.
3. Explain about property right and dowry.

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## WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

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**Mrs. M. Uma Rani &**

**Dr. T. Palaneeswari**

*“You are a woman; by serving you must worship, and by serving you must rule”*

*-- Rabindranath Tagore*

### **I. Introduction**

Work is worship- the striving force at the back of every woman. The ability behind everyone is their empowerment. To view the empowerment of human resource, men and women are twin eyes. The society can march towards development only when it accepts the women participation, grants responsibility and utilize her ability. The prosperity of a society lies on the employability of women.

### **II Objectives of the study**

The aim of this article is

- To limelight the life style of women workforce in India.
- To grant view on emerging careers for educated women.
- To bring to light the problems of working women
- To inform that the progress of the society lies in the empowerment of women.

### **III Life style of women workforce in India**

In India working women lead a life of dual responsibilities, if they are married and have a family. They still have traditional roles to fulfill and prefer a career to avoid domestic drudgery.

With the majority of working women the family takes precedence over their job. They prefer to stay in joint families where their children can be taken care of while they are at work. When they come back in the evenings from relatively modern surroundings of their work spots, their personalities undergo a change to accommodate the demands of their time and attention by different family members whose predominant feelings are of having been neglected.

These women often do their shopping on the way from office. They reserve their weekends for heavy house –work which will help them to cope with the rest of the week with relatively less tension. Weekends are also reserved for spending time with their spouses and children, for entertainment, family duties, visits, etc.. Actually speaking they hardly have time for personal needs.

Despite the freedom and confidence of their jobs and pay packets, working women still prefer to leave the financial decision making and budgeting to their husbands. They are unwilling to compromise on their dual burdens and prefer job with flexible timings. They are not unduly fashion conscious, but take pride in graceful clothing. Indian working women are managing their double role admirably.

#### **IV Women employment in India**

There are four categories of working women in India. Some work while they are waiting for matrimony. A majority work because they are qualified, wants a second income and a different kind of life for part of the day. A small section consists of career women. A sizable of women is bread winners.

A casual traveller to any part of the country can see women working hard, but they are working in the informal sector. An estimation of national commission on self employed women states that 94% of workforce is in the informal sector.

Within the organised sector where women are in decision making capacities (Indian Administrative Services, Indian Foreign Services and Indian Police Services) were 311 in 1985, the figure crawled up to 430 in 1992,501 in 1996 and reached 645 in 2000.

Economic liberalisation and new freedom mantra have thrown open a new world of market opportunities for women .There is virtually no field of enterprise that women cannot enter.

#### **V. Emerging careers for educated women**

Education bears an important relationship to the occupation of women. The education grants her not only higher occupational prestige and earnings but also aids her in entering areas of male domain.

1. **Journalism:** Suits the women with a flair for writing, an ability to express ideas concisely and curiosity about people and events around them.
2. **Public relations:** Attracts imaginative and ambitious young women to do the task of image building on the products and services.
3. **Advertising:** Offers exciting and challenging career to hard working women, where there are technical and ground duty branches.
4. **Civil airlines:** Becoming pilot is an expensive exercise for professional training, yet once employed, they are paid handsomely.
5. **Building and construction:** Organised sector attracts architects and provides more job options at all levels.

6. **Engineering and technology:** Discipline options for women are computers information technology, environmental engineering, leather technology, food instrumentation engineering, rubber and plastics and so on.
7. **Dairy technology and food processing:** Provides ample opportunities to women with an academic background in chemistry, biotechnology and dairy technology.
8. **Cost accountant:** Fascinates women who have love for numbers, logical approach, innovative, mind persistence, determination and an ability to get along with people.
9. **Chartered accountant:** Enterprising chartered accountants with initiative have the challenging option for setting up highly productive private practice.
10. **I.T. enabled services:** Includes employment in call centres, technical support centres, medical transcription, data processing in banks, accounting and financial services, companies, stock exchanges, mutual funds, etc. and graphic information systems, content publishing, creation of web pages, multimedia and multimedia data bases.
11. **Managerial consultants:** Qualified MBA's with some years of experience are successfully setting up their own consultancy services in a range of management areas such as finance ,marketing ,market research, personal service.
12. **Entrepreneurship:** Women with impressive qualifications and entrepreneurial spirit setup efficiently run home based business, create and market innovative products and services.
  - **Creative art and craft:** Talented and more inclined towards art and crafts making use of their skills to create various gift items.
  - **Fashion designing:** Aptitude for designing and tailoring clothes can turn their spare room into an exclusive boutique.
  - **Gardening and animal care:** Operating plant nursery to sell ornamental plants, bouquets and animal care unit for breeding pet animals and food for those pets.
  - **Teaching:** Running tuition centres, coaching to appear for competitive examinations, operating play schools and crèches
  - **Catering service:** Aptitude in culinary skills can setup catering services for variety of food items, from pickles and sauce to specialized items like chocolates and cakes and even complete meals.
  - **Creative writing and assistance in publishing:** Women with language skills can write articles for journals and magazines .They can edit

manuscripts or proof read for grammatical and typographical errors for book and magazines publishers.

## **VI Problems of working women**

Though women are marching forward day by day, they have many problems due to gender bias, sexual discrimination, their double role at home and due to their delicate physical status. The problem experienced by working women are as follows:

1. ***In farm sector, development in technology:*** The machines used in farms and in unorganised sector are designed to be operated by men and are not fit for the convenient operation by women workers.
2. ***Male bias in government programmes:*** The government programmes are male oriented but not women centric (eg) rescue measures undertaken in Tsunami hit areas deny employment opportunities to women.
3. ***Discrimination against women:*** Women are predominantly employed in the labour intensive, unskilled jobs in the unorganised sector.
4. ***Threat to job security:*** Contract, casual, temporary, part time piece rated jobs and home based works are increasingly replacing permanent jobs.
5. ***Sexual harassment:*** A large number of working women face sexual harassment and threat of violence at work place and it is high when they work in night shift.
6. ***Unhealthy environment:*** Unhealthy environment cause a lot of physical discomfort and mental stress resulting in :

Reproductive hazards (pregnancy outcomes such as abortion)

- a. Physical exertion (physical fatigue )
  - b. Effects of noise on birth weight of children, menstrual disturbances and infertility
  - c. Effects of chemicals such as exposure to pesticides (in agriculture) and causing spontaneous abortion.
7. ***Other Problems:*** Working women also face some additional problems at home and society as they play multiple roles. They are:
- a. Reduced entertainment and social activities
  - b. Lack of attention to house hold and family members
  - c. Posting of husband and wife at different places
  - d. Inconvenient working hour(night duty)
  - e. Family members' misunderstanding results in psychological torture
  - f. Inadequate child care facilities in work place and at home cause great anxiety and emotional strain.

- g. Looking down by the society, is still to be faced by working women.

## **VII. Employment empowers women**

After independence before 1990, women remains a commodity well decorated individually well placed in the showcase of the social showroom, a figure to be embraced, and an article to satisfy the passions of men. Male chauvinism has not allowed to her to come out of the shell and have her individual status.

The nineties are undoubtedly the decade of the women. There is no avenue she has not trodden on, no obstacle she has not overcome and no job still taboo for her. Today's woman has scaled very peak, both literally and figuratively. Most women pursue a career not only for financial reason but also for the challenge and satisfaction a job provides. Transformation in the social scene has enable the women to rightly take their place as contributing partners in the work place, pouring into the economy an immense flow of brain power and energy.

- As women receive greater education and training, they will be better employed and earn more money.
- As women earn more money, as has been repeatedly shown, they spend it in further the education and health of their children.
- As women raise economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household and village, and will have greater voice.
- As women gain influence and consciousness, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements –gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes-and command attention of police and courts when attacked.
- As womens' economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry.
- As son preference declines and acceptance of violence declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters and age of marriage will rise.
- For every year beyond fourth grade that girls go to school, family size shrinks 20 %, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20 %.
- As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive and will give birth to healthier babies.

Employment of women is essential to the development of good family and good society and ultimately a good nation. Women employment assures stability of the society. Acceptance of the commitment, dedication and achievements of women will pave way to the progress and development of our nation.

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***I. Fill in the blanks:***

1. To view the empowerment of \_\_\_\_\_ men and women are twin eyes.

**Ans :** human resource

2. Women prefer a \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid domestic drudgery.

**Ans :** career

3. Education bears an important relationship to the \_\_\_\_\_ of women.

**Ans :** occupation

4. Organised sector attracts \_\_\_\_\_ and provides more job options at all levels.

**Ans :** architects

5. \_\_\_\_\_ provides ample opportunities to women with an academic background in chemistry, biotechnology.

**Ans :** Food processing

***II. Choose the best answer:***

1. Working women hardly have time for

- a. shopping      b. family duties      c. **personal needs**      d. visits

2. An estimation of national commission on self employed women states that 94% of workforce is in the \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. **informal sector.**      b. farm sector      c. organised sector      d. technical sector

3. Aptitude in \_\_\_\_\_ can setup catering services

- a. language skills      b. **culinary skills**      c. aptitude for image building      d. academic background in engineering.

4. Women who have love for numbers may choose their career as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. managerial consultant      b. public relations      c. entrepreneurship      d. **cost accountants.**

5. Unhealthy environment cause a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. sexual harassment      b. threat to job security      c. **physical discomfort and mental stress**      d. reduced social activities.

***III. Answer in ONE sentence:***

1. Why is the employment of women essential?

2. What are the I.T. enabled services?

3. What are the careers to suit women with creativity?

4. What are the discipline options for women in engineering and technology?

5. Mention the effect on women workforce in farm sector due to development in technology.

6. State any one physical discomfort faced by women due to unhealthy environment.

7. Write down the problem to working women due to night shift.

***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Describe about the life style of women workforce in India.

2. What are the emerging carriers for educated women?

3. Narrate the problems of working women.

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## WOMEN AND RELIGION

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Mrs. P. Prescilla

*“The especial genius of women. I believe is to be electrical in movement ,  
intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency ” -- Margaret Fuller*

### Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary defines religion as, “the belief in the existence of God or Goddesses, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them”. Historically the world’s major religions have been instrumental in limiting women’s roles in society, many people view religions as inherently hostile to these recent shifts in development and population policies .For some people, the affirmation of women’s inherent inferiority is so integral to the dominant teachings of the world religions, that the religions themselves appear irreconcilable with all attempts to reach gender equity within society.

## WOMEN IN HINDUISM

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Dr. (Mrs) P.N.Kamala,

*“ In the vedas and upanishadas, women taught the highest truths and  
received the same veneration as men ” -- Swami*

### Introduction

The term ‘Hinduism’ was coined by the British to denote the sanskaritized Vedic tradition along with the Saivite, Vaishnavite traditions and the folk traditions. An attempt is made here to reveal how the religious status of women was high once upon a time in the above mentioned traditions and how it was derogated when patriarchy dominated over those traditions. Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Epics and Puranas and Tamil literature form the primary sources.

### I Procreation-Women

The ancient Terracotta female figures which were recovered from the Indus sites were considered to be the representatives of the Mother Goddess. From the Indus to the Nile, range of the culture of the Mother Goddess extended without break. Women were considered to be the cause of the procreation and were highly revered by the society.



### **a) High religious status of women**

During the Vedic period, both boys and girls had equal opportunity for education. Both observed the Brahmacharya discipline. Upanayana Samskara was performed for both boys and girls. After Upanayana, the girls could stop their education and get married. The marriage age was 16-17. But if a girl wanted to continue her studies, then she could become a 'Brahmavadini'.

## **II Procreation-Men**

When the miracle of birth was discovered and when man found his role in procreation, the man's position was changed from the marginal to the central laying the foundation to patrilineal society. Man began to realize his power over women in procreation and began to develop a cult of god of power. Mother Goddess, who were once the creators of the universe and the society, became powerless deities without any identity and were side-lined into the folk tradition. Ellaiamman, the folk deity who was once upon a time was a saviour Goddess of the village, was now given a place in the outskirts of the village.

### **a) Inequality due to Birth**

In ancient days, there were divisions among the people according to the professions they do. But later on, Purushasukta was introduced into the Rig Veda and Varnashrama came into practice. The four divisions of the society gave way to caste system. Women were considered as the fourth caste. Endogamy made caste more and more rigid. It was said that 'Karma' decides the caste and the birth of a male or female. Menstruation of women had a negative value. Based on purity and impurity, inequality due to birth was imposed on women by the patriarchy society. Thus both caste system and patriarchy degraded women.

### **b) The derogated religious status of women**

According to 'Swadharma', women's duty was to perform household duties, nurture their children and serve their husbands. In Atharva Veda, a woman is described as a property. This led to the Devadasi system. With the temple culture and feudalism, the Devadasi system came into being. Later on, the Devadasis who were connected with the temples were connected with the kings and upper class men.

### **c) Women-Bhakti Age-Tamil Literature**

In Tamil tradition, one could find Avvai, Karaikkal Ammai and Andal as religious scholars. Both Karaikkal Ammai and Andal are accepted respectively as a Nayanmar and an Aazhwar, yet their songs are never recited in the temples.

### **d) Various Myths through Epics and Puranas**

In order to socialize and internationalize feminine qualities for women, various myths were created through Epics and Puranas.

### **1) Urthvathaandava-Biological determinism**

The myth 'Urthvathaandava' emphasizes biological determinism. During Siva-Sakthi dance, sakti did not raise her foot to remove the Kundalam, as Siva using 'Lalaatikala Karana', because her female modesty prevented her from doing so. The divine competition of Siva and Sakti ended on the note that Siva, the male is the winner.

### **2) Draupathi-Reductionism**

In Mahabharata, Draupathi had become the wife of five brothers i.e., Pandavas, as per the words of Kunthi. The proverb 'Pombalai Cricicha Pochu' denotes the laughter of Draupathi at Duryodhana. In this epic, the philosophy of surrender is taught through Draupathi, a woman and she became the victim. Thus, Draupathi was reduced to Nature (fruit) and she was treated as a lifeless, mindless object.

### **3) Sita-Essentialism**

In Ramayana, Sita had to go through fire-ordeal. Then again, Rama sent her out of mere suspicion and she had to suffer in silence and at last was drowned into Mother Earth. Thus Sita becomes the symbol of patience, obedience etc., Thus myths and puranas made women feel that they are subordinates, objects of utility and had to preserve their feminine qualities.

### **III Ardhanarisvara-solution**

Excessive growth of masculinity or femininity in any individual man or woman is abnormal. Competition becomes aggression, dispute becomes war, love becomes possession, affinity becomes fundamentalism, self assertion becomes dominance, governance becomes control, norms become strictures, sacrifice becomes victimization and humility turns to slavery. The consciousness of man and woman should be a well-balanced human consciousness and Ardhanarisvara becomes a symbol for it.

From the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Epics and Puranas and Tamil Literature, it is understood that the high religious status of women was degraded with the advent of patriarchy. Men should be gender sensitized so that they would think that "Anatomy is not woman's destiny." For both, Ardhanarisvara sets up an example for leading a peaceful and a happy life.

## WOMEN IN ISLAM

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Dr.(Mrs) Hasan Fathima Badrudeen,

<p><i>“ A handsome woman is a jewel , but a good woman is a treasure”</i> -- <i>Saadi</i></p>
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### Introduction

Islam is an Arabic term meaning “submission” to the will of one God, Allah. The Arabic root “s-l-m” means “to be in peace, to be an integral whole”. The Holy Quran pictures the males’ attitude towards the females in the following verse: “And when a daughter is announced to one of them, his face becomes dark and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the people, because of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in dust? Now surely evil is what they judge (16:58,59).

### The Qur’an

Religion provides tools with which women may create a degree of spiritual, political and personal autonomy. It also forms part of women’s conditioning towards conformity to self restrictive roles and behaviour. In order to understand how religious symbols promote creativity or oppression for women, we must consider the social and cultural arrangements.

### The rights and privileges of Muslim women

Today people think that women are liberated and that the women’s liberation movement began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet (Hadith or Sunnah) are the sources from which every Muslim woman derives her rights and duties.

### Human rights

Islam, Fourteen centuries ago, made women equally accountable to God in glorifying and worshipping Him-setting no limits on her moral progress. Islam established woman’s equality in her humanity with men. Men and women both came from the same essence they are equal in their humanity. Women cannot be by nature evil or then men would be evil also.

### Civil Rights

First, she is free to choose her religion .The Qur’an states: “there is no compulsion in religion .Right has been made distinct from error” women are encouraged in Islam to contribute their opinions and ideas.

### Social Rights

The Prophet (PHUB) said: “seeking knowledge is a mandate for every muslim (male and female)” .Men and women both have the capacity for learning and understanding.

### **Political Rights**

A right given to Muslim women by God 1400 years ago is the right of vote. On any public matter, a woman may voice her opinion and participate in politics. Qur'an established the right of women to select their leader and publicly declare so.

### **Economic Rights**

The Islamic Shariah recognizes the full property rights of women before and after marriage. The muslim woman has the privilege to earn money, the right to own property. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her earnings including her husband.

### **Rights of a wife**

To foster the love and security that come with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first of the wife's rights is to receive mahr, a gift from the husband which is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage. The second right of a wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth she may have, her husband is obligated to provide her with food, Shelter and clothing.

### **Role and status of woman in society**

The Qur'an effectively ended the cruel Pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide. When the female buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed. Parents are duty bound to support to show kindness and justice to their daughters. Prophet Muhammad said "Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, Allah will enter him into Paradise".

Historical records show that women participated in public life with the early Muslims, especially in times of emergencies. Her life, her property, her honour are as sacred as those of man. If she commits any offence, her penalty is no less or more than of man's in a similar case.

### **Present day Muslim women**

One will be sore over the pitiable position of many Muslim women today. They are strong neither in the knowledge of the world nor in that of the religion. Many don't know their own rights and privileges bestowed upon them by God; they are exploited by unscrupulous males. Celluloid world and the T.V. influence their dress regulations, family life and social life. Yet there are very many among them who are not only better educated but also are sound in family and social life. A good percentage of them are employed also. But at the same time, Muslim men are to be warned here that they are answerable to God for keeping the women ignorant of enormous rights granted to them and exploiting them which is a sin against God and a travesty of Islamic faith.

Muslim women’s struggle for Constitutional rights has been a continual issue throughout the twentieth century. Women in Islam too have roles to play for the development of the family, society, industry and nation. Obeying the commandments of God and enjoying the rights and privileges bestowed upon them by God, Muslim women can live with dignity and respect at all times discharging all functions.

## WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY

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**Dr. (Mrs.) M. Ruby Dhavamani**

*“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness”*  
*-- Proverb*

### **Introduction**

Down through the centuries women have often been ill treated and given a low role in society. In countries where the dowry system is still birth of a girl child can create a dreaded financial burden for poor parents. Often a bride becomes behaves like a slave to her husband. Let us see what the bible teaches us about the role and nature of women.

### **Man’s companion**

In the book of Genesis, the woman was made after Adam the man, to be a companion or friend or helper to man. The word ‘helper’ does not mean that in any way she is slave of man. The Bible clearly shows us that the man is to care for the woman as he cares for his own body. The man is to provide for the wife as he provides for his own body. God gave a specific command to man when he created woman, which is often ignored by many people. “For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24)

### **Caring for each other**

In return for the care and protection given by the husband, the wife is to help the husband in every way that is lawful. She is to give herself to him as he gives himself to her. She is to submit to him as the authority in the home. “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church”. To obey her husband is no more demeaning for a wife than is obedience by the church to Christ Jesus.

The description of the ideal Christian woman pictures her in five basic relationships. These relationships are interwoven constantly throughout this passage.

### **To God**

First, is about the ideal Christian or virtuous woman in her relationship to god. This speaks of her as one who has a reverential trust and fear of Almighty god. “Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

### **To her Husband**

Second, is about the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her husband. She is submissive to his loving leadership. She is dependable in carrying out her responsibilities as mother and wife. She is loyal and trustworthy. “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life”. (Pro. 31:11,12). She should be an industrious woman, ready to help wherever she can. Both men and women have their own place in the orderly plan of god. If either one steps out of the proper place, there will be nothing but confusion and trouble. Headship, of course, belongs to the man. But headship is not dictatorship. It is leadership through love and a good example.

### **To her children**

Third, is about the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her children. She provides food for her household. She also provides clothing for her family. She avoids extremes in dress- She is neither overdressed nor underdressed. She sees her children as being loaned to her from God. She trains them in the ways of the Lord so that they might become what God wants them to be for His purposes. “Her children arise and call her blessed, her husband also and he praises her”.

### **To other people**

Fourth, the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to other people “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hand to the needy”. By helping the poor and uplifting the needy, she is a good neighbour. The woman with these qualities is sympathetic and charitable. She loves to extend to others the blessings which have rewarded her efforts. She knows the truth that he who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and the Lord will reward him in turn. This woman has no fear of poverty because God promises grace for our needs when we help others.

### **To her work**

Fifth, is about the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her work. She is industrious as well as hard working but not lazy whether in the home or out of it, whether working by herself or for someone else, in whatever she does, she is worker, not a shirker. Thus the ideal Christian woman is diligent in her work, finding pleasure in whatever she does. Her activity is not a matter of compulsion but of compassion. Women like Ruth\*, Deborah\*, Abigail\* and Anna\* are among many Biblical women who had roles outside the home. Yet

nothing should diminish the honour of the woman who choose to marry, have children, manage the home and use it as a place of Christian hospitality. But this is to say that a woman must ‘stay at home’ and honour her husband as head of the house because she, as a woman, is less intelligent and capable than a man. Individual intelligence and competence have nothing to do with it. It is a matter of God’s design for families.

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***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Ellaiamman, the folk deity was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the village.

**Ans :** Saviour Goddess

2. In Mahabharata \_\_\_\_\_ was reduced to nature and she was treated as a lifeless, mindless object.

**Ans :** Draupathi

3. The symbol of patience and obedience in the epic Ramayana is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Sita

4. Islam is an Arabic term meaning \_\_\_\_\_ to the will of one God, Allah.

**Ans :** Submission

5. A Muslim women free to choose her \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** religion

6. The word \_\_\_\_\_ does not mean that a woman is a servant of man.

**Ans:** “helper”

7. A virtuous woman is a \_\_\_\_\_ to her husband.

**Ans :** crown

***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Caste System was made more and more rigid by

- a) exogamy      b) patriarchy      c) swadharna      d) **endogamy**

2. ‘Pombalai Cirichaa Pochu’ – This tamil proverb denotes the laughter of

- a) kunthi      b) **draupadi**      c) kargi      d) peypedir

3. Who considered woman as an object to be protected during childhood by her father, after marriage by her husband and after his death by her son?

- a) Jamadhakkini      b) **Yaagnavalkya**      c) Janaka      d) Indra

4. Muslim women have roles to play for the development of

- a) **the family**      b) Society      c) Industry      d) all the above

5. Islam is an \_\_\_\_\_ term
- a) English      b) **Arabic**      c) Western      d) Greek
6. Children are
- a) gifts from God    b) blessing from God    c) **loan from God**    d) all the above
7. Beauty should not come from outward ornament but from
- a) **inner self, a gentle and quiet spirit.**    b) artificial beauty
- c) fine clothes                                      d) all of the above.
8. Woman was made after Adam, the man,
- a) **to be a companion or friend or helper to him**
- b) to be a servant and a slave to him.
- c) to be his guide and leader
- d) None of the above.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Define the term “Hinduism”.
2. Define Religion.
3. In Atharva veda a woman described as What?
4. List out the religious scholars of women in Tamil Literature.
5. What is the meaning of “Islam”
6. When did the right of vote given to muslim women by God?
7. Define the term “Mehr”.
8. Who says this? “Wives, be submissive to your husbands”.
9. In which system can create a derided financial burden for poor Parents?
10. Mention any one of the New Testament writer.
11. Give the meaning of the term “Virtuous”
12. Give the examples among Biblical women who had roles outside the home.

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a short note on the position of women in Hinduism.
2. Write a short note on the rights and privileges of Muslim women.
3. Write a Paragraph of the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her children and to her husband?

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## WOMEN AND CASTEISM

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### WITH SPECIAL REFERNCE TO DALIT WOMEN'S PLIGHT

Dr. Devaramani Lysabai

*"There can be no civilization in which man and woman are not equal partners"*

*-- Vijayalakshmi Pandit*

#### **Introduction**

From times immemorial, woman along with man has formed an integral part of the social structure throughout the world. In Indian Society too she has played and continues to play an important role. Through her manifold roles in the society as a mother as a sister and as a wife she socializes, educates, loves, feeds and supports individuals of the family with devotion, affection, love, sincerity and obedience. These roles of a woman have contributed to the evolution of values which lead to all round progress of society at large. In spite of this, woman suffers and her sufferings are multifaceted. The main reason is being her 'CASTE' to which she belongs.

#### **India – A Caste Ridden Land**

India is a caste ridden land. Here caste has become coterminous with race in the definition. One hundred and million dalits or the members of the lower cadre of the caste ridden society are at the bottom of the nation - a population on par with that of Russia or Brazil. The sufferings of this lower stratum of the people are worse and the most worst is the plight of the women of this group.

Though woman is a measuring yard for assessing the cultures of the age, there are variations in her status according to the cultural milieu, family, structure and caste. She is strongly and traditionally influenced by the "Varma" or "Caste ethos".

#### **The status of dalit women**

Today the dalit women can be broadly classified into two groups

- (1) the urban and (2) the rural dalits. The urban women are educated, well placed as compared to those with rural area. The rural dalit women are, less educated and less fortunate .

## **I. Dalit women and family**

### **1. Her Identity**

The social oppression experienced by dalit woman is different from that of a non-dalit woman. They suffer because of the triple-headed monster of caste and gender. For a dalit woman, her identity is established as a “Dalit woman” and not as a “Woman”.

The authoritarian structures of religion, family and society do not permit the development of women’s autonomy. Mass media, literature and culture communicate patriarchal values and make the women believe themselves to be second class citizens and the dalit women as third rate citizens.

Family is the first institution where she learns the original lessons of discrimination and hierarchy. A dalit woman’s search for meaning in life gets diverted into producing food, drink and attending to household duties. Even the villages where dalits live do not have drinking water. Even today in some places they are denied access to public wells and taps as they are considered as untouchables.

#### **1) Introduction of Domestic Violence**

Domestic Violence is defined as acts of mental, emotional, financial and physical abuse of woman that may force her or her family members to seek support outside of the family. As the dalits are illiterates, wife battering, child abuse, abuse of the elderly women with filthy words are ugly realities to be faced by women.

#### **2) Absence of love**

Repeated beatings, biting, kicking and injuring the women leads to lack of love, respect and caring among the women.

#### **3) Emotional disturbances**

Denial of love, care and affection create emotional disturbances. When wife fails to respond to her husband’s demands, he takes out his frustration by beating her.

#### **4) Alcoholism and other vices**

The women of lower strata and lower income groups suffer from their husband’s drinking and beating them up under influence of alcohol. Alcoholism, gambling, drugs and such other habits of men have brought untold miseries on the women.

#### **5) Children’s plight**

Violence at home ranges from denying female children the opportunities of education and development, child marriages, compulsory marriages, harassment and humiliation of women.

“Right to live is not a natural thing for a woman”. It is a concession given and an act of mercy shown by men

## **II. Dalit women and society**

### **1) Violence outside the family**

Violence outside the family is worse. Raping and killing of dalit women are common. Custodial rapes have rocked even the floors of Parliament. Use of filthy words and abusive language is common in our society towards the dalit women. The caste and gender factors join hands to crush dalit women inhumanely.

Whatever and whenever be the fight, communal clashes between the upper castes and dalits and even between the dalits, the first victims are dalit women. After the communal riots, the men escape from the village, and the worst victims are the dalit women. They have to face the constant brutality and harassment of the police who as a rule have an anti dalit bias.

### **2) Sexual harassment**

Tribal girls who were working as farm labourers were harassed. When they protested against this, commissions were forcibly taken from their daily wages; they were beaten up and accused of indulging in “witch craft”. One local (CPI) MLA of a northern village tried to reduce two tribal girls and to justify his act, he questioned the character of those girls. Transferring the blame on a women’s questionable character seems to be a common factor in the villages and is easy as she belongs to the lowest strata of the society.

### **3) Holi celebrations**

Indian festivals of colour and gaiety, for many parts of our country are not a fun at all for the lower caste women in U.P. and Bihar. The powerful upper caste men march along with the village lanes on the day of Holi and sing obscene songs that target lower caste of women. The defenseless women were also raped at many a times.

### **4) Devadasis’ plight**

In Karnataka, Bellari District, devadasis of dalit community are brought near to the temple of Hanuman God on Holi. The people with political status like ‘Patil’, ‘Inamdar’, ‘Desai’ gather near the tank at the temple. The youngest Devadasi is gifted with a saree and a blouse that she has to change in front of everybody. People around her start playing holi with these devadasis. This tradition is called ‘okali’, only dalit devadasis are subjected to such a “treacherous ordeal”.

### **III Dalit women and Economic status**

#### **1) Daily wages labourers**

Most of the dalit women are coolies on daily wages. Though her work load is the same as that of men, she is paid less than men. About 80% of women who live in rural areas work in agriculture. They are forced to do menial and filthy jobs. Due to poverty they live in huts and are allowed to live only in the outskirts of the village where there are no facilities for drainage, toilets, washing or drinking water

#### **2) Liberalization and Globalization**

Mechanization, liberalization, globalization and development have only made the dalit women's life worse. The fertile land where food is grown is used to grow cash crops and build up industries and factories. So many dalit women are to migrate to unknown areas from their familiar places. Dalit women mostly depend on land and nature for her survival to collect firewood to graze her cattle, to collect grass, to collect some food materials such as green and vegetables and for medical herbs. But now she has lost everything, her skills are not wanted and she finds herself out of place that makes her life more miserable.

#### **3) Employment and discrimination**

Dalits occupy the fifth and lowest caste category. Majority of the dalits continue to perform their traditional or "polluting functions". Mostly these sanitary duties are performed by women. A lack of training and education as well as discrimination in seeking other forms of employment, have kept these traditions and their hereditary nature alive. Many of the members, for example, continue to work as leather workers, disposers of dead animals and manual scavengers. As a part of village customs, dalit women are made to render free services in times of death, marriages or village functions. The cleaning of the whole village, the carrying of fire wood that the women are asked to perform. In all these forms of labour, women are consistently paid less than men, compounding the dual discrimination of caste and gender.

### **IV Other burdens**

#### **1) Manual Scavenging**

According to Government Statistics, an estimated one million dalits are manual scavengers and a majority of them are women. They clear faces from public and private latrines and dispose of dead animals. Manual scavenging is a caste based. Occupation deemed too polluting and filthy for any one but dalits. Such as Bhangis in Gujarat, the Pakhis in Andhra Pradesh and the Sakkaliars in Tamilnadu.

Social discrimination against the scavengers is rampant. Most of them live in segregated rural resources. It is untouchability within the untouchables; yet nobody question it.

## **2) Bonded labour:**

Given the insignificant amount of remuneration in manual scavenging agricultural labour and other fields of dalit employment, it comes as little surprise that many families borrow money from their upper caste neighbours and go into bondage.

Bonded labour refers to work in slave like conditions in order to pay off a debt. Due to the high rates of interest their debts are seldom settled. Bonded labourers are frequently low caste, illiterate and extremely poor.

## **3) Dalits educational career and recognition**

Despite state assistance in primary education ie., free education dalits children face an alarming dropout rates. The reason being the loss of faith in education as an instrument for socio-economic changes and the discriminatory and abusive treatment faced by dalit children who often sit in the back of the class rooms.

Dalit women writers' plight is different. Her literacy outcome many a times is not noted by the dalit male writers. She is looked down upon her male competitors in the same field. This is the irony of the dalits.

## **V. Remedial measures**

Remedial measures to wipe out this plight can be suggested:

### **1. Role of Dalit Women**

Though one can come out with many remedies, the dalit woman herself should take initiative in raising her status. Confidence, bold actions, straight look and deeds and above all compassion to co-sisters and brothers will turn the later of half of 21<sup>st</sup> century as her century or of women in general.

### **2. Unity:**

The real strength of the women lies in their unity. They need to come together and organize themselves to fight for their rights.

### **3.Culture:**

An exposure to more information about their culture will make them to take pride in their culture, which in turn will bring break ups in the imposed culture of them keeps them slaves and inferior

#### **4. Political representative:**

State has to look into the fact that dalits should have their political representative at all levels, including judiciary. This will give them a platform and ultimately raise dalit women status.

#### **5. Non-Governmental Organization :**

NGOs are doing yeomen service in the upliftment of dalit women status. They are to come forward to motivate the dalits with awareness programmes and at all stages there should be an ongoing dialogue between the NGOs and dalits.

#### **6. Reservation :**

The Government must also fill all vacant scheduled caste reservation posts with dalit candidates and as recommended by the National Commission for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes provide for reservations in the judiciary and as well as the private sectors. When the constitution is revised in future there are chances of more enhancements of dalit rights.

**7. Upgrade their Skill :** Most home based women workers perform very low skill manual job which gives them a weak position in the labour market. One way to improve their situation is to upgrade their existing skill either in terms of speed, design, know-how or by introducing small machines etc.

**8. Training Programme :** The other possibility is to teach them new skills which have better market prospects. Women Training Programmes are to be arranged. The YWCA in Mumbai has done remarkable work in opening courses in non-traditional skills like carpentry, writing, masonry, plumbing etc. for women.

**9. Provision of credit and Self Employed:** An organization SEWA (Self Employed Women Association) has helped the women by the provision of credit, which is highly useful in organizing women and improving their business. It has helped the women to get out of the money lenders. Such attempts help can encourage women to start new enterprises and become self employed.

**10. Health Programmes :** An important health problem of the women is occupational health problems like back aches, body aches, loss of vision, respiratory diseases. NGOs are to establish community health programmes for the women to have health awareness.

**11. Loiter Children :** As the women who do scavengerial work leave the home at early hours, they just leave their children at home. Without proper access to school, they loiter and there are possibilities of these loitering children becoming juveniles. To bring up the future Indian leaders, the Government can establish social creche centres to aid these mothers.

**Conclusion :**

The persistence of caste based prejudices and the denial of access to land, education and political power have all contributed to an atmosphere of increasing intolerance and growing movements by dalits to claim their rights. These claims are increasingly met with large scale violence and attempts to further remove dalits from economic self sufficiency.

The closer look at victims of violence, bonded labour and other atrocities reveals that the dalit women share in common the lowest ranking in the caste order and this is the main reason for their outbursts. Hence nationally the government must act to uphold its own constitutional principles and work towards the uplifting of all citizens, regardless of caste.

***“ Wherever women are honoured , there the gods are pleased ”***

***-- The code of Manu***

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***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. The main reason for the sufferings of women is being her\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Caste

2. India is a \_\_\_\_\_ridden land.

**Ans :** Caste

3. The other definition of caste is\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** race

4. \_\_\_\_\_are at the bottom of the society.

**Ans :** Dalits

5. \_\_\_\_\_ is a measuring yard for assessing the cultures of the age.

**Ans:** Woman

6. Dalit women are considered as \_\_\_\_\_rate citizens.

**Ans :** third

***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Women are considered as \_\_\_\_\_class citizens

a) First                      b) **second**                      c)Third                      d) Fourth

2. \_\_\_\_\_ are the first victims whenever there is communal rights?

a) Modern women      b) working women      c) House wife

d) **Dalit Women.**

3. In which district the plight of the devadasis are worst?  
a) **Bellari**                      b) Nellore                      c) Salem  
d) Arcade
4. In which festival the lower caste women are targeted by upper caste males?  
a) Onam                      b) **Holi**                      c) Devali  
d) Raksha bhandan
5. Indian society is \_\_\_\_\_ dominated society.  
a) Female                      b) **male**                      c) Dalit                      d) none of the above

***III Answer in One Word***

1. Which is considered to be the first institution?
2. Why the dalit women are denied access in public wells and taps?
3. When do women loose their basic right to exist with dignity?
4. Write any one of the habits of men that have brought miseries on women.
5. What is the main occupation of the women in rural areas?

***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. What are the difficulties faced by the dalit women in the families?
2. Discuss the economic status of the dalit women.
3. Explain any seven remedial measures to foster an improvement in the life pattern of the dalit women.

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## WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

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**Mrs. S. Rohini Devi &  
Dr. (Mrs.) M. Iraivani**

*“ It is always uncomprehensible to a man that a woman should  
refuse an offer of marriage ”*

*-- Jane Austen*

### **Introduction**

At the dawn of the new millennium, human kind is experiencing a lot of revolutionary changes in the context of global information sharing and communication technology. Earlier women were confined to the house and looked after the household affairs only. But now they have stepped out of the threshold of the house and are working shoulder to shoulder with men in every sphere of life. Women are like rails, they carry the burden of the family but if they are moved, it means the society will be derailed and there will be chaos. The home is the primeval and eternal school where we learn to practice virtues, to restrain appetites, to cultivate affection and to love humanity. Woman is the inspiring force and genius of the home. Man and woman are made for one another and they are like two halves of humanity completing a perfect whole. To constitute a perfect human life, man alone in himself or woman alone in herself is not complete. Completeness requires harmonious relation and interdependence between the two sexes.

### **Marriage and Religion**

Marriage is a very important event in the life of women. It is not merely a contract between two parties but a spiritual union, a holy bond brought about by dispensation. Every religious tradition and culture encourage marriage as a responsible adult act. It is the most important social and religious occasion in a person's life. Marriage is considered sacred among the Hindus. Hinduism considers marriage as one of the most important rites to equip man or woman for life. It is meant to bring a strong bond between two individuals. Christian culture intends marriage to be a life time commitment between a man and a woman. It is ordained by God and the marriage partners are considered equal but with distinctly different responsibilities. In Islam also, marriage and husband and wife relationship are given great importance. But it gives supremacy to the husband. It permits a man to have more than one wife but the permission is on condition that he should treat all the wives equally.

In India, marriage is generally considered as holy and sacramental. Usually parents choose the life partners for their children. 'Love Marriages' are considered as anti-traditional and unacceptable in Hindu culture. While modern-day parents oppose love marriages, we find accounts of love marriages, even during the Vedic Age (1500 – 1200 B.C.). Women had considerable freedom to move about in the family and society. Girls were educated like boys and they had an effective voice in the selection of their partners. Marriage used to take place at the age of 16 or 17.

### **South Indian Marriage System**

In India, marriages of youths are arranged by their elders and they must marry within the caste connubium called 'Jaati'. South Indian marriage is called as alliance system. The major rites of weddings take three days while preliminary and successive rites may spread over years. The three day sequence, however, is often attended by scores, even hundreds, of guests and is sponsored by the kindred of both bride and groom. There should be a satisfactory agreement as to the size of the dowry to be given with the bride. As a subsequent ceremony the engagement to be held on the auspicious dates and hours for the various important rites are determined astrologically. It is especially important that the mother's eldest brother should attend for either he or a priest ties a turmeric string-bracelet on the right wrist of the niece or nephew to ward off evil influences. After the wedding only the bracelets are ritually removed. The wedding almost always takes place at the home of the bride. The bridegroom comes to the bride's house in a procession with his father and other relatives. Accompanied by a loudly playing band, the procession enters the bride's house. There the host pastes a mark of greeting and blessing on the groom's forehead and presents gifts to him. Then the groom and his party are feasted.

The following day the groom and his party come to the bride's house for wedding. Then the groom is taken to the wedding pavilion and seated facing east. On the pavilion itself various ritual paraphernalia – grain, grass and coconuts have been placed, including the makings of a fire-pieces of wood, camphor, a container of clarified butter – which the priest lights at the proper moment. Then the bride is led to the pavilion and seated next to the groom. The bride's father joins the couple's hands which are tied together with a scarf. The couple rises and circles the fire three times. It symbolizes her steadfastness in marriage. The priest chant mantras all during these rites and accompanied by nearby band or drummer. Then they play various simple games to foretell their future relationship. Wedding ceremony is followed by the exchange of gifts or money on both the sides to the couple and they bless them whole-heartedly.

### **Dowry System in Marriage**

The system of giving dowry to girls in marriage is an ancient Indian custom. It is infact, that portion of the parents' wealth which they wish to give to the daughter. Now-a-days it is very sad that this custom has been vitiated in our times and the system has become a menace, a social evil in our society. It plays a major role in aggravating bribery and corruption in India. Since people are so conscious of saving their income for dowry, the idea of giving for any good purpose is completely gone. The real solution can only come if proper educational facilities are given to their daughters so that they could refuse to marry a man who wanted a price for marrying. They need not merely academic education but social education. With the academic education helps them to get economic benefits, the social education helps them to live with self-respect.

### **Caste and Marriage**

Caste plays a very significant role in determining marriages. Character, talents, beauty and feeling stand nowhere before caste. Caste is so cruel factor that it can brutally break hearts and make people inhuman. On the other hand, if the couple is from the same caste, same background and religion, parents usually do not show much objection. They arrange the marriage according to their traditional custom which can be termed as "Arranged Love Marriage". The custom of child marriage is another menace to women. It was opposed by Gandhi who said, "It is irreligion, not religion, to give religious sanction to the brutal custom of child marriage". He considered this as an immoral and inhuman act. So a young person of whatever sex must be consulted in the matter of marriage.

### **Widow Remarriage**

According to the Hindu norms, the married state for a woman is considered fortunate and conversely widowhood is associated with great misfortune. Lifelong mourning is imposed on them. The signs of the married state have to be removed from the person of the widow. In many communities, this process is made specially painful. The main purpose of these restrictions on a widow is to make her unattractive. Even today the social norm is that a widow should look different from a married woman in every manner. Widows themselves avoid taking an active part in ceremonial occasions. Though the legislators have given widows the right to remarry – the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 – socially they do not easily remarry. If they do, they marry men who are either divorced or widowers themselves. On the other hand, if a widower wants to remarry, then an unmarried girl is sought. Such are the double standards prevailing in our society. Even among those who allow widow remarriage, many groups do not look upon it favourably. It is regrettable that though the social reformers tried to erase the system of 'Sati'

from society and The Widow Remarriage Act was passed, the societal attitude to this unfortunate group has not registered any appreciable change in all these decades. Immolation may have stopped, and cases of remarriage of child widows may have increased but, by and large, the condition of widows continue to be a blot on our society.

### **Conclusion**

Whatever may be the change, in a man's world, woman is still a person, just a sign and nothing more. But each woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet. Hence the barriers of caste, colour, religion, culture, ethnic origin, language and provincial loyalties must be broken down. There must be preparedness for change, alertness to seize opportunities as they arise in the changing world. Children are brought up without any gender disparity. Parents play a significant role in the life of a child. Hence home must be the guardian of her rights and privileges. Now-a-days social evils menacing women have been checked to some extent and the overall scenario gives some ground for optimism.

*Dear she !*

*Understand that  
MARRIAGE is a part of life  
It is not the ENTIRE LIFE*

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a very important event in the life of women.

**Ans:** Marriage

2. \_\_\_\_\_ are considered as anti-traditional and unacceptable in Hindu culture.

**Ans:** Love marriage

3. The mothers eldest brother ties a \_\_\_\_\_ on the right wrist of the bride groom.

**Ans:** turmeric string bracelet

4. \_\_\_\_\_ plays a very significant role in determining marriages.

**Ans:** Caste

5. In India ,marriage within the caste connubium is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** jaati

### ***II Choose the best answer***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ women were confined to the house and looked after the household affairs only.

- a) **Earlier women**    b) Western women    c) South Indian women    d) none of the above
2. Widow Remarriage Act was passed on \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) 1956    b)**1856**    c)1586    d)1568
3. \_\_\_\_\_ play a significant role in the life of a child.
- a) Sisters    b)Brothers    c) **Parents**    d) none of the above
4. South Indian marriage is called as \_\_\_\_\_
- a) **alliance system**    b) barter system    c)bi-lateral system    d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ religion is ordained by god and the marriage partners are considered equal but with distinctly different responsibilities.
- a) Hindu    b) **Christian**    c) Islam    d)Sikhs

### *III Answer in One Word*

1. Which religion permits to marry more than one wife.
2. What type of education helps women to live with self respect?
3. Which type of marriage was opposed by Gandhi?
4. Who says that, “It is irreligion, not religion, to give religious sanction to the brutal custom of child marriage”.
5. Who is a blot on our society?

### *IV Paragraph Questions*

1. Describe the Status of marriage and Religion.
2. Write a short note on South Indian marriages.
3. Explain about Widow Remarriage.

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## WOMEN AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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**Dr. (Mrs.) K. Muthamil Selvi &  
Mrs. R. Vijayapriya**

*“ Our women are not learned , but they are more pure .To every woman every man , save her husband, should be her son .To every man every woman , save his own wife, should be as his mother ”*

*-- Swami Vivekananda*

### **Introduction**

‘Family’ is one of the greatest blessings given by God. The unit of the family exists with its tender ties, its safe protection and sure provision. A man and a woman, leave their family and cleave together to form a new family. But the ties are not totally new. It is an extension of both the families thus forming an inescapable chain of continuity. Undisputably, man is the head of the family but without a supportive woman, he cannot make a successful family.

Women are quoted in the Indian context as a quiet, obedient and loving human being. She is projected as a person who spends her energy for the well being of her family. She is an embodiment of sacrifice in a male dominated society.

Woman has a multi-faceted role. At the same time she is the daughter, the sister, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and mother-in-law. Even though they are bestowed with so many roles, their advancement into the outer world came in a snail’s (dead slow) pace. Access to ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Education’ was deliberately restricted. Opportunity to know the development was denied. Books, which are the sources of culture and civilization were out of their reach. The status of women in our country was terribly disturbing.

### **Privileges of girl child**

Yet we have instances of women regarded high in the society. Girl child in the family was considered ‘Goddess Lakshmi’. Girl babies were named after the country eg. Gandhari after Gandhara, Mythili after Mithilai etc., They were also called after their father’s name eg., Janaka’s daughter was called Janaki and Dhruvpatha’s daughter Dhrauvpathi. This reveals the importance given to female community. There were also ages in history which considered women as a liability. Parents longed to have male issues. But things began to change after spread of education to women folks. Disparity between men and women began to vanish. Equality crept into all fields. Early marriage became outdated. Educated women took in handy

jobs. The role of daughters also began. Till then daughters played a passive role in the family. They were obedient to their parents. They were fully dependent on their family. But when educated, they asserted independence in their choices eg. choice in the field of education, dresses, friends, and movements .They gained more self-confidence, which provided them independence. As a result they were able to achieve a lot. They grew bold and outspoken and were no more shy. Belief in superstitions was slapped. They claimed equality with men. More than that, they began to ape the western cultures blindly. This dragged them into unfathomable depths, from which many struggle to writhe out. Practices like using drugs, dating etc., force them down to valleys of cultural darkness. The freedom earned through education should lead them to build a better society tomorrow, giving birth to many Indira Priyadharshinis, Kalpana Chawlas, Kiran Bedis etc.

On the other hand, the modern generations of sisters have a lighter burden to share with. The reason for this is the cut down in the size of the family. Family set up is changing day in and day out. Relationship is no longer stronger and thicker. The gap between the children of the family widens. In future, a question stands poised. How long will the family bond pull through?

### **Women at home**

Female race was considered as a toy of joy and a machine for bearing and rearing children. We are familiar with women who have undergone umpteen number of hardships. Even poor health of the wife, after delivering a dozen children, did not stop men from treating them harshly. When medical facilities were lacking, they succumbed to death in this process. Ida Scudder, the founder of the Vellore C.M.C. Hospital, personally witnessed the death of a pregnant muslim woman whose husband denied to take medical care offered to his dying wife by her physician father. Polygamy was the order of the society. Family disputes were settled by the village panchayats. The judgment was favourably tilted towards men because legal forum and hierarchy was occupied by men.

Women who had lost their husbands were burnt along with the deceased. Barren women were despised by the society. These women were disregarded during auspicious occasions. Even then, the society never expected her to be the bread-winner. Making livelihood was the responsibility of the man. So women were freed from this burden. At the same time, the wife had the privilege to manage the day to day affairs of the family. The general household duties like farming, taking care of the poultry were managed by the wife. They had no rightful share in the property of their parents. Yet they inherited a chunk of wealth in the form of ornaments and utensils.

### **Women at work**

As a result of considerable growth in women literacy, they took upon them another cross. They began to compete with men folk and entered almost all the fields of employment. Financial position of women rose up. Even their men began to feel proud of their earning spouses. Social inhibitions and clutches regarding women's education, employment and empowerment were all virtually broken. In a nutshell they had acquired 'independence'. Thus women had now another role to play. When they grew financially more independent, naturally she begins to question the old order.

Wives play a crucial role in the decision making process of the family. Their competence to lead the family has increased. Certain men view the uprising of women as a threat to their authority. Incompetent male partners are posed with a challenge. This leads to breaking up of families. Wives who long to be independent and who have strong will power, walk out of the family. Divorces are on the rise. Children stand orphaned. Male chauvinists will not be able to digest this vertical development of the female community.

Wives who know the secret of striking a balance between the success in the official world and family circle can lead a smooth life. They should cultivate good qualities to build happy homes without losing their identity and individuality. The criteria of selection of the life partner should be given extra care. Selection should not be based on beauty, material benefits or superstitious beliefs.

### **Joint Family System**

The basic unit of the society, called a family, was joint in nature. Brothers of the same family lived together with undivided wealth. As a logical consequence the authority flowed from a father to his elder son. All the women in the family had to co-exist in order to keep the marriage going. Infrastructure, property, wealth etc., were shared among the family members. The problems of longevity were well taken care of. Children were brought up with rich cultural heritage. Even the behavior of the women, was moulded to be quiet and adjustable. Daughters-in-law were expected to be humble and submissive.

### **Nuclear Family System**

The new trend of 'nuclear family' had crept into the society overthrowing the well established 'joint family' system. There is a feeling that this arrangement is more convenient. Even though many employed women direly need the support and assistance of the elders in taking care of their little ones, they are not willing to cope with the harmony of the joint families. The daughter-in-law willingly forgets the saying that 'it is in giving we receive'. The daughter-



in-law should accept the authority of the elders over the family. Even though she may occupy a higher social status, she should not be a cause to loosen the bonds of the family relationships. Moreover the selfish attitude of the women is also another cause for the division of the family. But she is ignorant that the more selfish she is, the more she loses. The daughter-in-law, who enters the new home has to work harder to establish better relationships with the other members.

### **Role of a Mother**

Words are few to explain the term 'mother'. A mother is synonymous to sacrifice. She is instrumental in shaping the personality of her children. Mother showers 'love' upon the family, especially upon her the children. In turn, the children shower 'love' on their family members. Only a mother can be the best model for a growing child. After the revolution in Russia, they decided to bring up the children using scientific methods. They separated the children from their families and brought them up in child care homes. But soon they were convinced that these homes were no substitute for the 'home'. So a mother is heavily responsible for the child's mental and physical health.

Mothers of adolescent children should be more flexible at the same time vigilant about their goings and comings. Adolescents are in the process of developing a sense of identity, with goals for them. They are confused in framing their identity. They tend to go into depression at this time. This depression manifests itself as lack of concentration, failing academic performance, disinterest in activities, lack of willingness to speak to anybody, increased food intake, excessive drowsiness, doing things aimlessly, irritability etc.

Mothers should find out the reason for such behaviour of the children. She should be a good listener of her children. She should deal with them very friendly. She must not curb the freedom that they child want to enjoy. She must not force her ideas and thoughts upon the child. She should learn not to compare the child with others or let it down before the friends. No punishment should be given in public. Criticism should not be subjective and personal.

Anger shown on them will complicate the matter further. The mother should be convinced with the activities of the child. She should not pressurize the child. It may be let to its own whims and fancies, which could prove to be more creative and useful. The nearness and warmth of the mother is expected by the child. So the mother should spend time with her children. She should be supportive during examinations, encouraging the children to take part in extra curricular activities etc. Today's children are the future pillars of the nation. So it is only in the hands of women to bring up their children to build a stronger India.

The women should realize that today's daughters-in-law are tomorrow's mothers-in-law. Once a daughter-in-law, now she completely forgets her past experience and looks herself as an

authoritative mother-in-law. As a mother-in-law, the woman can be more useful to the binding of the family relationship. She can enjoy and experience the love of the daughter-in-law as another daughter. But her ego doesn't allow this. Not only in times of ignorance but even today there are wide proofs of dowry harassment. The women, both the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law should resist against crimes against women under the pretext of dowry. The women have to 'make friends' with each other forgetting the 'Me' or 'I'. They can present small gifts to each other and win the in-laws over to their side. The mother-in-law should not feel threatened or insecure, thinking that the daughter-in-law is taking her son away. This fear is the root cause of all uneasiness and problems in the home. It is only in the hands of the women to shape their lives.

Concludingly, for a peaceful family relationship the women, who have a vital role to play, should be smarter and able to co-operate. They should work together for more conducive atmosphere in the family.

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### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was named after her father Dhruvpatha.

**Ans:** Darauvpathi

2. The basic unit of the society is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** a family

3. The new trend of family which had crept into the society is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** nuclear family

4. a mother is synonymous to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** sacrifice

5. Today's children are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the nation.

**Ans :** future pillars

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Girl child was considered \_\_\_\_\_

a) **goddess Lakshmi**   b) goddess Mythilai   c) goddess Gandhari   d) goddess Saraswathi

2. Making Livelihood was the responsibility of \_\_\_\_\_.

a) **the man**   b) the woman   c) Parents   d) none of the above

3. Authority of the family falls on the \_\_\_\_\_.

a) brother   b) **elder son**   c) younger son   d) none of the above

4. \_\_\_\_\_ is responsible for a child's mental and physical health.  
a) **mother**    b) grand mother    c) sister    d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ - shown on children will complicate matters.  
a) **anger**    b) love    c) sympathy    d) none of the above
6. Indian society is a \_\_\_\_\_-- society.  
a) **male dominated**    b) female dominated    c) neutral    d) none of the above

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who were named after the country? Give example.
2. Who were despised by the society?
3. Selection of a life partner should not be based on what?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a paragraph on the privileges of a girl child in the family.
2. Write a paragraph on the duties of the women at home.
3. Write a paragraph on the role of a mother in the family.

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## WOMEN AND CHILDCARE

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**Mrs. J. Amutha &**

**Mrs. M. Rajalakshmi**

*“ Men make roads; but it is the women who teach child read how to walk on them ”*

*-- French Proverb*

### **Introduction**

Mother is the representative of God on earth. Motherhood is the cherished an ideal of the life of a woman. The birth of a child immediately raises her status in the society. In fact, womanhood finds its sublimation in motherhood.

### **Birth of child**

The greatest responsibility of a woman is child bearing and child rearing. From the very beginning till and after the birth of the child, she has to be very careful, healthy and hygienic. She occupies a more prominent position in upbringing the child than the other members of the family because from the very moment of its conception, the infant is in emotional and mental interaction with its mother.

The average duration of pregnancy is 40 weeks. A baby born after this period weighs more than 2.5 kg. Any newborn with a birth weight of less than 2.5 kg is classified as a low weight baby and needs special care. The healthy child requires:

1. Breast feeding.
2. Adequate immunization.
3. Nutritious food.
4. Hygienic environment.
5. Love and affection from the parents.
6. Periodic weight checkup and deworming.

Infants considered to be in the high-risk category include those

1. born before 37 or after 42 weeks of gestation.
2. weighing less than 2500 grams.
3. who are disparate from expected size or development.
4. in poor condition at delivery.
5. born to infectious mothers.

### **Premature baby**

The majority of high-risk infants is either born prematurely or has low weight. They should be kept under close observation by the most efficient doctors and nurses. The mother can give them kangaroo care or skin-to-skin care. During the kangaroo care, the baby is placed on the mother's naked chest. The baby's head is turned sideways so that its ear is against the mother's heart. This process takes just for 10 minutes. Kangaroo care is the best thing the mother or father can do for the baby. For the premature babies, it lowers oxygen requirements, stabilizes heart-beat rates and gives them an overall sense of peace.

### **Breast Feeding**

A mother must give the baby the very best in everything. When it comes to nutrition, the best first food for the baby is breast milk. Breast milk is perfectly suited to nourish infants and it protects them from illness. Breast fed infants have lower rates of hospital treatment, ear infections, diarrhoea, rashes, allergies and other medical problems than bottle-fed babies. Furthermore, mother's milk produces antibodies to prevent diseases present in the environment. Breast feeding should begin within an hour after delivery. Breast fed babies do not require even a single drop of water even in hot weather in the first 3-4 months.

The primary benefit of breast milk is nutritional. Mother's milk contains just the right amount of fatty acids, lactose, water and amino acids for human digestion, brain development and growth. It is recommended that babies should be breast fed for 6-12 months. Waning food can be introduced when the baby is 4-6 months old, but the baby should drink breast milk for a year. As breast milk is easily digested, breast fed babies often eat more frequently than bottle-fed babies. To produce plenty of breast milk, the nursing mother needs a balanced diet that includes 500 extra calories a day and 6 to 8 glasses of fluid.

### **Vaccination**

Adequate immunization is very important in the growth and development of the child as it protects the child from different dangerous diseases. The mother is advised to give the following vaccines at the proper age. The recent immunization vaccines to be given to the child are given below.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Vaccine</b>
At birth	BCG Oral Polio Vaccine - 1 <sup>st</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 1 <sup>st</sup> dose.
6 weeks	DPT

	Oral Polio Vaccine - 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose.
10 weeks	DPT – 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose Oral Polio Vaccine - 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose.
14 weeks	DPT – 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose Oral Polio Vaccine - 4 <sup>th</sup> dose.
6-9 months	Oral Polio Vaccine - 5 <sup>th</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose.
9 months	Measles Vaccine
15 months	MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
18 months	DPT – 1 <sup>st</sup> booster dose. Oral Polio Vaccine - 6 <sup>th</sup> dose.
2 years	Typhoid Vaccine
5 years	DPT – 2 <sup>nd</sup> booster dose. Oral Polio Vaccine - 7 <sup>th</sup> dose. Typhoid Vaccine.
10 years	TT (Tetanus) - 3 <sup>rd</sup> booster dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - booster dose. Oral Typhoid.
15-16 years	TT – 4 <sup>th</sup> booster dose.

Apart from these, optional vaccines include Hepatitis A Vaccine and Chicken Pox Vaccine.

### **Food**

It is essential to give nutritious food to the growing child. Till three months, mother's milk is enough for the child. After three months, food like orange juice, vegetable soup, cooked mango, potato, and banana can be introduced. The child should also drink breast milk. Cow's milk (without adding water) can be given. Cooked rice with ghee and dhal can also be given. If the baby drinks mother's milk, then other types of food can be given thrice a day. If the baby does not drink mother's milk, then other food items can be given five times a day. After one year, any food cooked in our house (without addition of spices) can be given. Protein, fat, vitamin and mineral rich food items are essential for the growth of the child.

### **Affected Diseases**

Children are vulnerable to be affected by diseases like fever, cold, cough, diarrhea, breathing problem, etc. In ancient period, All ailments of children were treated in the

traditional medical method (Patti Vaithiyam). Cough and cold were cured by giving the boiled rice water without salt and adding 5 pieces of palm sugar. They tied the mixture of incense, turmeric powder, omum and camphor in a piece of cloth and tied in the baby's hand. The baby suffering from continuous diarrhoea was given the mixture of salt water and sugar in the ratio of 3:1. Betel nut, black tea, lemon juice and areca nut, added with water can be given for the cure of diarrhoea. But the traditional medical treatment is not followed now-a-days. It is not advisable in the modern age.

If the newborn baby suffers due to suffocation, the modern tool is used to remove the flum. For diarrhea, the baby is not to be given mother feeding (8 to 12 hrs) but to give water.

When the children grow, some of them suffer from problems like bed wetting, thumb sucking etc. 20% of children wet their bed at the age of 5 and 5% do so by the age of 10, it is usually due to a delay in the maturation of the part of the nervous system that controls bladder function. It sometimes may be due to either psychological problems or medical disorders. If there are repeated episodes of bed wetting after the age of 6, it is essential to consult a doctor.

Thumb sucking in children is an embarrassing factor to many parents. The child retreats to the practice of the habits of thumb sucking to relieve its frustration of hunger and when the child suffers from increased anxiety, the habit becomes his safety valve to release emotional pressure. Lack of love and affection from the parents towards the child plays a major role in making the child emotionally insecure and thus making him/her resort to habits like thumb sucking. If the habit is prevented before the permanent teeth eruption, it can be considered harmless.

### **Mother's duty**

It is the duty of the mother to give the highest quality of care to her child. She should be concerned not only with its physical health but also its mental, social and even societal health. When the child grows, the mother should develop its communicative skills, its capacity for love and affection, its ability to face problems arising out of frustrations and its ability to control aggressive impulses. It is the duty of the mother to mould the child's behavior and discipline him. As the child grows older, it has a tendency to imitate the behavior of people around it. So the parents' value systems and their behavior are very important in shaping the behavior of the child. The mother should also promote the child's social etiquettes, politeness and respect for others.

A mother gives her life-blood to her child. The entire happiness of the mother and her family lies in the child's health. When the mother knows how to rear the child healthily, then she finds pleasure in upbringing the child.

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***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the exclusive food for the new born babies.  
**Ans : Breast Milk**
2. The other name for skin to skin care is\_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : Kangaroo care**
3. The babies should be breast fed for\_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : 6 – 12 months**
4. The baby suffering from diarrhea can be given the mixture of salt, water and sugar in the ratio of\_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : 3:1**
5. \_\_\_\_\_ food can be introduced when the baby is 4 -6 months old.  
**Ans : Warming**
6. A healthy baby, born after 40 weeks period weighs more than \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : 2.5 kg**
7. \_\_\_\_\_ babies do not require even a single drop of water in the first 3 – 4 months.  
**Ans : Breast fed**
8. At the age of \_\_\_\_\_ , DPT second booster dose should be given to the child.  
**Ans : five**
9. \_\_\_\_\_ infants tend to be falter than breast-fed infants.  
**Ans : Bottle fed**

***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. The average duration of pregnancy is  
a) **40 weeks**                      b) 42 weeks                      c) 35 weeks                      d) 32 weeks
2. Any newborn baby with a birth weight of less than \_\_\_\_\_ is classified as a low weight baby.  
a) 3 Kg                              b) **2.5 Kg**                              c) 3.5 Kg                              d) 4 Kg.
3. Breast feeding should begin within  
a) Two hours                      b) **One hour**                              c) Three hours                      d) Four hours.



4. Typhoid vaccine should be given to the child after
  - a) **2 years**
  - b) 2 months
  - c) 8 months
  - d) none of the above.
5. A new born baby need to be nursed frequently, atleast
  - a) **every two hours**
  - b) every five hours
  - c) every four hours
  - d) none of the above.
6. The nursing mother needs \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) **a balanced diet**
  - b) money
  - c) exercise
  - d) all of these.
7. If the baby drinks mother's milk, other types of food can be given \_\_\_\_\_ a day.
  - a) **three times**
  - b) five times
  - c) two times
  - d)none of these.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who is the representative of God on earth?
2. What is the average duration of Pregnancy?
3. What is Kangaroo Care?
4. Mention the essential food items for the growth of the child.
5. What is the reason for Thumb sucking?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a note on birth of child.
2. Why is breast feeding essential for new born babies?
3. Write a paragraph on affected diseases of child.

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## WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. (Mrs.) P. Stella Muthu Rajam**

*“ Women create the world .....  
Let us create a worthy world for women ”*

### **Introduction**

Women and Environment are inseparables and they go hand in hand. Women play the major role than men, as the ambassadors of environmental issues. This is because the environment starts from the home. Therefore each woman can contribute significantly to protect her environment and it is her main duty too.

### **Tree Saving Movement**

This movement was formed in 1972. In fact different trees are useful in various aspects directly or indirectly to human beings and animals. Some of the trees are worshipped by our Indian women. Narmada Bachao Andolan founded this movement focusing forest conservation thereby protect trees from falling and cutting.

Trees occupy an important place in the life of man. They give us many good things and expect nothing in return. Trees add beauty and colour to environment otherwise colourless background

### **Value of Trees**

People in the world is aware of the recent occurrence on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 – a natural disaster ie, TSUNAMI. In Tamil Nadu most of the sea shore villages got affected. Nearly 11,000 people died in India, mostly in Tamil Nadu. Most of the fishermen lost their families, children, shelter, utensils, boats and nets. Pitchavaram a small coastal village in Cuddalore district has survived successfully without any damage by the natural disaster. In fact Pitchavaram mangroves absorbed Tsunami ie, for generations the Irula tribal people who lived in seaside forests were running their families by killing and selling snake skins. From 1972 onwards, they started fishing and worked on a program to restore coastal mangrove swamps.

On December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004, when the Tsunami struck, these mangroves in this wet land acted as a protector saving the people and their properties. These people specially women spend two hours everyday in the morning in planting mangrove saplings. They planted trees for the past 35 years. Now it saved them from the horrible Tsunami. This village located 100 m to 700 m from the sea has no human or property loss. At present Pitchavaram is covered with 900

hectares of mangrove forests and 3000 fishing families. These villagers are safer than the other affected coastal areas. The credit goes to the women of the Irula Community.

### **Green Belt Movement**

In 1977, the 64 year old Kenyan environmentalist Dr. Wangari Maathai founded this movement. In her 30 year career she became the first African woman to be awarded the 2004 Noble Peace Prize. Her movement is an environmental group that restored indigenous forests and assisted rural women by paying them to plant trees in their communities. Since now, they have planted over 30 million trees in Kenya. It provided work for thousands of women. Today she stands as a role model for a generation of Kenyans who are enjoying the fruits of her labour.

### **Women and work related health problems**

In addition to child-bearing, responsibilities for social reproduction, the care of family, maintenance of the household, the processing and cooking of food and related tasks fall on women in almost all societies around the world. In rural and remote town areas, fetching water is one among the most strenuous tasks carried out by women. Over a period of time, postural defects of neck, spine and pelvis may develop.

Deforestation and the depletion of natural resources, has added considerably to women's daily workload, both in terms of distance to be travelled and loads to be carried each time. Strenuous work of this nature or accidents while performing these tasks may result in miscarriages and other reproductive health problems. The toxicity of commonly used household cleaning agents also affects women disproportionately.

### **Women and Industry:**

Industries are symbols of great development prosperity but they have adverse effect on the environment and the people.

Major cities in Tamil Nadu face with modern toxic pollution problems from organic matter contained in industrial effluents. Many rivers and water bodies are becoming saturated with organic compounds from industrial effluents, posing a major threat to both human health and aquatic life.

Industrial emissions and Industrial accidents release toxic chemicals into the atmosphere causing long-term damage to health, and even death. For example MIC gas from the Bhopal tragedy had advance impacts on women's gynecological and reproductive health .MIC gas has altered women's menstruation cycles, spontaneous abortions, still births and foetal deaths. There was a serious damage to the reproductive system of women who were affected by the gas. Men are not willing to marry women from Bhopal. Married Women still give birth to unhealthy babies.

### **Women and Work related health problem**

Indoor Pollution is a common practice among village women to use biomass fuels. Such as firewood, dung, agricultural waste and coal for cooking. This is the principal cause of indoor pollution. The smoke from biomass fuels, contain noxious gases. Inhaling this smoke poses the risk of chronic respiratory disorders, including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD) 46 % of the women patients aged 12-83 years reported exposure to kitchen smoke from biomass fuels ( coal, dung and wood ) 66 % of this 46 % reported a history of cooking with biomass fuels.

This conventional and traditional practice is hard to change. Hence some awareness is required. Smokeless chulaho can be installed. By using this, women get fuel wood conservation and reduction in health hazards.

### **Women and Agriculture**

Pesticides are used in farming. These are absorbed into the ground water and persist as residues on land, enter the plants and thus affects the human body. These poisons get concentrated in body fat and in breast milk, making women and infants diseased. Therefore we need a healthy mind in the healthy body. All eatables in our day-to-day life are poisoned and polluted by the pesticides to some extent. Therefore they have less nutrient value. Hence kitchen gardens have to be maintained by cultivating vegetables for house hold needs. By providing seeds and saplings of good quality each and every family woman can own a kitchen garden. Moreover women can sprinkle cow-dung mixed with water in the front and backyard of their houses which destroy disease causing bacteria and save the family.

### **Women and Poor Quality Housing**

Crowded urban remote towns with poor quality housing lacking in basic amenities are a feature of many cities in Tamilnadu. For example, about 60 % of the cities population in Chennai and about 40 – 50 % of the population in Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai live in overcrowded urban settlements with limited access to water supply, poor drainage, sanitation and waste disposal facilities and exposure to garbage and sewage. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and unsafe drinking water represents a serious health threat. 30 – 75 % of the population are not covered by sanitation. This causes environmental pollution and also favours mosquito breeding.

Poor housing and overcrowding combine to make the population living in such settings vulnerable to communicable diseases, respiratory problems, like wheezing etc. While the quality of housing affects all inhabitants. Women's health is more likely to be adversely affected, as women spend longer periods of time in the household environment because of their responsibility for house-work and child care.

## Women and Waste Management

Waste is defined as something which is not put into proper usage at a given time. In major cities, 4 to 6 persons live in one room houses. As this increases waste generated also increases. This accumulated and improper disposal of domestic waste leads to environmental pollution and accelerates the spread of communicable disease like diarrhea, malaria and even plague. Every person generates 250-300 gms of waste per day.

Women's role at houses is to collect food scraps in a separate basket. Similarly yard wastes, soiled paper, box board, polythene bags etc., should be collected in another basket i.e., organic and inorganic wastes separately. Take care every day that these wastes are taken by the municipal garbage van. Such a practice keeps the environment clean and healthy.

## Conclusion

Women and the Environment are so complex and vast. Each woman's problem is unique. Remedies have to be specific for each woman have to be protected and taken care of as they are responsible for new generation.

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### *I Fill in the blanks*

1. Tree Saving Movement was formed in the year\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 1972

2. The Indian women who founded Tree Saving Movement was\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Narmada Bachao Andolan

3. \_\_\_\_\_coastal village in Tamil Nadu has survived successfully without any damage by the Tsunami.

**Ans :** Pitchavaram

4. The Pitchavaram villagers are safer, the credit goes to the women of the \_\_\_\_\_community.

**Ans :** Irula

5. The Green Belt Movement was founded by\_\_\_\_\_ Wangari Mathai.

**Ans :** Kenyan Environmentalist Dr

6. Green Belt Movement was formed in the year\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 1977

7. \_\_\_\_\_ can be installed to reduce health hazards in indoor air pollution and get fuel wood conservation.

**Ans :** Smokeless chulaho



## NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS FOR WOMEN

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. (Mrs.) M. Santhi

*“ Love your life...  
By educating yourself  
Love your life....  
By becoming strong mentally  
Love your life ....  
By loving yourself ”*

### **Introduction**

Nutrient requirement can be defined as the minimum amount of the absorbed nutrient that is necessary for maintaining the normal physiological functions of the body.

Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) is defined as the nutrient present in the diet which satisfies the daily requirement of nearly all individuals in a population .RDA of an individual depends on many factors like age,sex,physical work and physiological stress.

### **Factors**

#### **Age**

An adult requires more total calories than a child due to larger size of the body and increases in activity. A growing child requires more calories and protein per Kilogram of body weight than an adult.

#### **Sex**

Females require less calories than males.

#### **Physical works**

Sedentary workers require less calories and B-vitamins than hard working persons.

#### **Physiological stress**

During pregnancy and lactation period the requirement of nutrients are increased. Women need a wide range of nutrients to perform various functions in the body and to lead a healthy life.

### **I. Nutritional requirements for Adolescence**

In the life of boys and girls the period of transition from childhood to adulthood is called adolescence with accelerated physical, biochemical and emotional development. It is during this period that the final growth spurt occurs. There are many body changes which result due to the

influence of hormones. The hormones spurt of girls is faster than the boys. 22% of body fat is required to maintain regular ovulation. Greatest nutrient need for boys is between 10-13 years.

### **i) Proteins**

For most adolescents, eating to satisfy appetite offers a reasonably sensitive indicator of energy needs. Protein needs represent 12-14 % of energy intake. The protein intake usually exceeds 1 gm/kg. This meets growth needs and for the pubertal changes.

### **ii) Minerals**

Calcium and iron particularly needed during adolescence. About 150 mg of calcium must be retained each day to follow for the increase in bone mass. Iron needed for hemoglobin synthesis necessitated by considerable expansion of blood volume and for hemoglobin needed for muscle growth. The girls need to ensure adequate intake of iron as they lose 0.5mg/day by way of menstruation. During adolescence there is an increase in body mass corresponding to about 4 kg/year in female.

### **iii) Vitamins**

Folacin, B12 are essential for DNA and RNA synthesis and needed in higher amount when tissue synthesis is occurring rapidly.

Tissue growth takes place at this adolescent stage. So the requirement for B6 is increased to carry out amino acid metabolism. Pre-menstrual tension can be reduced if adolescent girls consume 100 mg/day Vitamin B6. Skeletal growth requires vitamin D while the structural and functional integrity of newly formed cells depends on the availability of vitamins A, C and E.

#### ***Recommended dietary allowances of adolescents***

Nutrients	Units	Years (Girls)	
		13-15	16-18
Body weight	kg	46.7	49.9
Energy	kcal	2060	2060
Protein	Gm	65	63
Fat	Gm	22	22
Calcium	Mg	600	500
Iron	Mg	28	30
Vitamin A	Mcg	600	600



## II. Nutritional requirements for adults/women:

During adulthood nutrients are required for the purpose of energy, for replacement of worn out tissues and maintenance of body functions.

### i) Energy

Energy requirements of an adult woman are based on reference woman. Reference woman is between 20-39 years of age, healthy and weights 50 kg. She may be engaged for 8 hours in general household work, in light industry (or) in other moderately active work. For those whose occupation entails heavy work, allowances have to be higher than for those who are either sedentary (or) engaged in moderate works.

### ii) Fat

20% of energy may be derived from fats. Invisible fat furnishes about 9 % energy and visible fat 10 %. Saturated fatty acids, cis-monosaturated fatty acids, proteins and cholesterol can increase essential fatty acid requirements.

### iii) Minerals

Iron requirement for woman is 2 mg higher than man. Iron loss through menstruation in women of reproductive age groups are 0.6 mg/day on an average, when spread over whole month calcium and phosphorous are essential for women. An adult needs atleast 350 ml of cow's milk per day.

### iv) Vitamins

Requirement of vitamin B is higher for moderate and heavy workers. In take of 20 mg of vitamin C may be sufficient to maintain ascorbic acid levels in adults.

#### *Recommended dietary allowances of adult women*

Nutrients	Units	Woman		
		Sedentary	Moderate	Heavy
Energy	kcal	1875	2225	2925
Protein	Gm	50	50	50
Calcium	Mg	400	400	400
Iron	Mg	30	30	30
Vitamin A- retinol	Mcg	600	600	600

### **III Nutritional requirements for Lactating woman**

Women who lose weight too rapidly fall below their ideal body weight during lactation need increased calories intake. They should be monitored for high calorie, low nutrient-dense foods in their diet and protein control.

#### **i) Protein**

During lactation period protein requirement has been computed on the basis of secretion of milk is 9.4 g protein per day during 0-6 months and 6.6 g during 6-24 months which correspond to 820 ml and 600 ml of milk respectively.

#### **ii) Fat**

The requirements of linoleic acid during lactation increases 5.7 in percentage. Insoluble fat requirement is 17.5% and soluble fat should be 45 g.

#### **iii) Calcium**

Increased amount of calcium was required during gestation for mineralization of the foetal skeleton is now diverted into mother's milk production. Both during pregnancy and lactation 1000 mg has been prescribed.

#### **iv) Iron**

The iron requirement during lactation remains the same as adult women of 30 mg/day.

#### **v) Vitamins**

##### **▪ Vitamin A**

Vitamin A can be achieved by including liver, fish liver oils, eggs yolk, green leafy vegetables.

##### **▪ Vitamin B**

The amount of vitamin B12 secreted in milk per day is 0.25-0.3 mg. An additional intake of 0.5 mg per day would cover the needs during lactation.

#### **vi) Fluid**

An increased intake of fluids is necessary for adequate milk production. Water, beverages such as juices, tea, coffee and milk all add to the fluid necessary to produce milk.

***Recommended dietary allowances of a lactating mother***

Nutrients	Units	Normal adult woman	Lacting Mother	
			0-6	6-12
Energy	Kcal/kg			
Sedentary		1875	+550	+400
Moderate		2225	+550	+400
Heavy		2925	+550	+400
Protein	Gm/kg	50	+25	+18
Fat	Gm	20	45	45
Calcium	Mg	400	1000	1000
Iron	Mg	30	30	30

#### **IV Nutritional requirements for Old women**

Old age is best defined as the age of retirement that is 60 years and above. Aging is a normal process begins at conception and ends only with death. Heredity and good nutrition may slow the ageing processes so that individual enjoys physical and mental vigour in his eighties.

After the age of 35 the basal metabolic rate decreases due to Reduced muscle mass and metabolically active tissue mass. Body protein level in healthy elderly is 30 - 40% less than that in young adults. Energy requirement decreases beyond the age of 30.

##### **i) Protein**

As people age there is a decrease in skeletal tissue mass. This Results in decrease in store of protein provided by skeletal muscle and may be inadequate to meet the needs for protein synthesis. Hence the dietary protein intake is more important to meet essential needs.

##### **ii) Carbohydrates**

Whole grain cereals and pulses should be included in the diet. It is necessary that at least 50% of calories are derived from carbohydrates.

### iii) Lipids

Emphasis should be placed on reducing the intake of saturated fat and choosing mono saturated or poly unsaturated fat sources.

### iv) Minerals

Calcium needs during old age decreases. Women over 50 years of age who are not receiving estrogens require more calcium as there is increased losses resulting in demineralization of bone. For women over fifty 1000mg/day is recommended to decrease the prevalence of fractures and to compensate age related bone loss. Milk is an important source of calcium for elderly persons. Iron, Sodium and Zinc are also essential for old age women.

### v) Vitamins

Elderly people are at risk for vitamin D deficiency due to decreased exposure to sunlight or decrease in renal mass. Prudent dietary supplementation with calcium and vitamin D improves bone density and may prevent fractures in a healthy elderly population. All the vitamin requirements remain the same as the adult requirement.

### vi) Water

It is essential for the older person as it is for the younger individual. The kidney can function more adequately where there is sufficient fluid and hence to eliminate the waste solids. Water can be consumed as such or in the form of butter milk, fruit juices, porridge and soups.

### vii) Fiber

The fiber of tender vegetables and fruits is essential for easy digestion. Fibre also helps in reducing cholesterol.

Thus the process of ageing brings about physiological, psychological and immunological changes with influence the nutritional status.

\*\*\*\*\*

### *I Fill in the Blanks*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the most important fatty acid for infants.  
**Ans :** Linoleic
2. The period of transition from childhood to adulthood is called \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** adolescence
3. \_\_\_\_\_ of body fat is required to maintain regular ovulation.  
**Ans :** 22%
4. \_\_\_\_\_ and B<sub>12</sub> are essential for DNA and RNA synthesis during the period of adolescence.  
**Ans :** Folacin
5. Pre menstrual tension can be reduced if adolescent girls consume \_\_\_\_\_ vitamin B<sub>6</sub> day.  
**Ans :** 100mg/day

6. For adult woman \_\_\_\_\_ is required for the replacement of worn out tissue.  
**Ans : protein**
7. Demineralisation of bone occurs in women over the age of \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : 50**
8. \_\_\_\_\_ food is essential for easy digestion during the old age.  
**Ans : Fibre**

***II Choose the Best Answer***

- Sedentary workers require less calories and  
a) vitamin C      b) **vitamin B**      c) vitamin D      d) vitamin E.
- Egg yolk is an supplementary diet for  
a) **vitamin A**      b) vitamin C      c) vitamin B      d) vitamin E.
- Milk is the best source of  
a) phosphorous      b) iron      c) **calcium**      d) magnesium.
- Iron requirement for woman is higher than man for about  
a) 3 mg      b) 4 mg      c) 5 mg      d) **2 mg.**
- The metabolic rate decreases due to reduced muscle mass and other metabolically active tissue mass after the age of  
a) 50      b) 60      c) **35**      d) 20.
- During pregnancy and lactation period, the requirement of nutrients are  
a) decreased      b) **increased**      c) normal      d) none of these.

***III Answer in One Word***

- Define Nutrient requirement
- Expand RDA
- What is adolescence?
- How much amount of Vitamin B12, secreted in milk per day?
- Define Old Age.

***IV Paragraph Questions***

- Write short notes on nutritional requirements for Adolescence.
- Explain the nutrients for Lactating women.
- Write a paragraph on nutrient requirements for an old age woman.

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## WOMEN AND HEALTH

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. (Mrs.) P. Stella Muthu Rajam &  
Miss. G. Sathiabama**

*“ Without woman the beginning of our life would be helpless , the  
middle without pleasure , and the end without consolation ”*

*-- De Jouy*

### **Introduction:**

“Health is a set of complete physical, mental and social well-being”. The women in India during the colonial and the post intrinsic socio-cultural forces set a limit and purposive intervention to improve health conditions. Thus the process got rooted in the historical and ecological conditions of the country.

Health is a vital resource without which effective living is impossible. Yet the greatest discrimination is visible in the health care available to women. This includes not only medical care but nutritional needs consonant with energy requirements. Indian society values only males and male children. But women and girl child comprise a major portion of the nations population as such it is the responsibility of the state to look after the health of women and girl child.

Common health problems faced by women today are discussed in two groups.

1. General Medical Problems
2. Gynaecological Problems

### **I. General Medical Problems:**

#### **1. Depression**

Depression an emotional and mental state of extreme sadness, disappointment and frustration that disturbs normal patterns of behaviour. It has a range of severity and is a very common disorder that affects more women than men. Symptoms of depressions include weepiness, inability to feel pleasure, forgetfulness, low self-esteem, changes in appetite, weight gain or loss, sleep disturbances and Insomnia, and Headaches. Married women often have worse mental health and higher rates of depressive illness than single women and married men.

#### **2. Anaemia**

A shortage of the oxygen-carrying pigment HAEMOGLOBIN in RED BLOOD CELLS. Haemoglobin is made in the body using VITAMINS B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>9</sub> (folic acid) and B<sub>12</sub> (cyanocobalamin) along with iron. Each red blood cell contains 200-300 molecules of haemoglobin , so vitamin B deficiency can cause anaemia. If a woman has less than 12 g of

haemoglobin per 100 mls of blood, she is considered anaemic. Anaemia is a common in women with a poor diet deficient in vitamins, those having heavy menstrual periods and in pregnancy . Blood loss from surgery, bone marrow disease , hereditary disorders such as sickle-cell anaemia, and the use of oral contraceptives may cause anaemia.

A Pregnant woman has around 3 extra pints of blood, so more of the critical vitamins are needed to make red blood cells and provide for the needs of the baby. Folic acid is required for correct development of the baby, and women with a multiple pregnancy are most likely to need supplements of iron and folic acid.

### **3. Back pain**

This result from poor seating in chairs that do not give sufficient support and is a common problem at work , in the home or car. It is also caused by bending and lifting incorrectly or by a repetitive strain.

### **4. Breast Cancer:**

The development of abnormal cells in the breast tissue, forming a lump or tumour. This is the most common type of cancer in women, and there are at least 15 different kinds, depending on the site of development. All have different rates of growth and varying tendencies to metastasize(spread to other areas). Breast cancer is a malignant growth of tissue.

It is normally found when a suspicious lump is detected, but 90 percent of all breast lumps are benign. Other signs of cancer are a change in breast size or shape, a swelling in the armpit or upper arm, nipple retraction, thickening, dimpling or ulceration of the skin, and a lump on the nipple.

### **5. Headache**

Pain felt within the head that is thought to be caused by dilation of intracranial arteries or pressure upon them. Common causes are stress, tiredness, fever accompanying an infection, dyspepsia, high blood pressure, rheumatic diseases and an excess of close work involving the eyes. Headache may indicate the presence of disease or disorder in the brain and also result from injury or concussion .Headaches can also arise as a side effect of some oral contraceptive pills. Many drugs are used to treat headaches, and the most common are paracetamo, codeine , aspirin and ibuprofen.

### **6. Irregular periods**

A menstrual cycle that varies in duration from the usual 28 days and may show no regular pattern. It may result from Hormone imbalances , stress, dieting , anaemia, thyroid gland disorder, emotional distress or serious illness including pelvic lesions and cancer.

## **7. Itching**

Irritation of the skin that is relieved by scratching. It can be caused by an allergic reaction, dry skin and genital problems. Conditions such as Haemorrhoids, Eczema, Pubic Lice, Thrush, athlete's foot, ringworm, Jaundice, Pruritus Vulvae, Dandruff and Genital Herpes can all cause itching. Treatment of each condition is required to stop the irritation.

## **8. Hair Loss**

Loss of hair that occurs as a result of several conditions. Alopecia is the most common reason, but it can also occur during pregnancy or the menopause because of fluctuating hormone levels. It can be due to hair damage caused by frequent use of harsh chemicals or hot air appliances (e.g. rollers, tongs). It can be an adverse reaction to a prescribed medicine or occur as part of the normal ageing process, stress anxiety or illness. Certain skin disorders, e.g. ringworm, can also cause patchy hair loss.

## **II. Gynecological Problems:**

The term reproductive health is often equated with one aspect of women's lives-motherhood. Complications associated with various maternal issues are major contributors to poor reproductive health among millions of women worldwide.

### **Pregnancy:**

The period of time from conception to delivery, which lasts approximately 280 days from the first day of the last menstrual period (LMP). Pregnancy constitutes for 9 months or 39-40 weeks and is divided into three trimesters. Signs of pregnancy are amenorrhoea or cessation of periods, morning sickness, increased breast size and later enlargement of the abdomen. In the first trimesters, the embryo implants, grows and develops. Hormone levels rise, and the blood supply to the pelvis increases, resulting in Chadwick's sign. The baby's heartbeat can be detected at 11 weeks' gestation. In the second trimester the size and shape of the uterus has changed, and there may be signs on the mother's skin such as pigment changes (chloasma) or stretch marks. The woman commonly has a faster heart rate, increased blood volume. The large size of the uterus by the third trimester can lead to discomfort and pressure on the other body organs. Indigestion, constipation, fatigue, heartburn and urinary frequency are common.

### **III. Common Problems of Adolescent girls:**

**Dysmenorrhoea:** Painful menstruation

**Vaginal discharge:** Increased fluid secretion is a normal physiological function meant for lubrication of vagina.



**Problems of menstruation:**

A normal menstruation period lasts for 2-6 days after every 28-30 days. There may be increase in frequency, duration or amount of blood flow. Increased menstruation is troublesome and requires medical consultation.

Infections: Pelvic Inflammatory Disease(PID) is the term used for infections of uterus, tubes and ovaries.

**AIDS:**

The Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome is a fatal illness caused by a retrovirus known as the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus(HIV) which breaks down the body's immune system, leaving the victim vulnerable to a host of life-threatening opportunistic infections, neurological disorders or unusual malignancies. The basic modes of transmission are sexual transmission, blood contact and maternal foetal transmission.

**Health aspects of family planning:**

Family planning refers to practices that help individuals as couples to attain certain objectives:

- a) to avoid unwanted births
- b) to bring about wanted births
- c) to regulate the intervals between pregnancies
- d) to determine the number of children in the family

**Menopause:**

This is the period before and including the end of menstruation. This normally occurs between the age of 45 and 55, but a premature menopause may happen earlier, before the age of 40. The ovaries stop producing eggs, menstrual flow ceases, and the woman is no longer able to have children. Generally the menopause arises gradually, with menstrual periods changing in frequency and level of flow. After periods have ceased for 12 months, the menopause is usually complete and the woman is said to be postmenopausal. There is a hormonal imbalance in the body during the menopause, with less oestrogen from the ovaries and a higher level of FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone) to compensate. This causes menstrual irregularities and other symptoms.

Many of these symptoms can be resolved by hormone replacement therapy, which is becoming increasingly popular. Birth control is necessary until periods have stopped for a year, and regular physical examinations should be carried out, e.g. Blood pressure, weights, breasts, pelvic organs and a cervical smear test. Breast self examination is important. Any bleeding after the menopause should be investigated to eliminate the possibility of cancer. The menopause can

occur after surgery to remove the ovaries, and in this case it may occupy a short time period and problem can be more severe.

### **Mental Health of Women:**

This cannot be considered an isolation from social, political and economic issues. The inferior status of women in Indian society can account for the excess of depression and anxiety experienced by them. A long term solution to her problems may require the woman to acquire self confidence and redefine her sense of 'self' through group support, contact with credible role models, education and economic independence.

### **Conclusion:**

Statistical data derived from health indicators tell us about the health problems of women and yet many questions pertaining to women's health remain unanswered. So, there needs to be further research and studies made by demographers, social scientist, activist and health professionals to improve women's health in India.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a malignant growth of tissue.  
**Ans : Breast Cancer**
2. \_\_\_\_\_ can also arise as a side effect of some oral contraceptive pills.  
**Ans : Headache**
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the most common reason for hair loss.  
**Ans : Alopecia**
4. Pregnancy constitutes for \_\_\_\_\_ months.  
**Ans : 9**
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the period before and including the end of menstruation.  
**Ans : Menopause**

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is required for correct development of the baby  
a) Iron            b) **Folic Acid**            c) vitamin B    d) none of the above
2. A pregnant woman has around \_\_\_\_\_ of blood.  
a) 1 extra pints                            b) 2 extra pinta            c) **3 extra pints**  
d) none of the above
3. A woman has less than \_\_\_\_\_ of haemoglobin per 100 mls of blood, she is considered anaemic.

- a) 6 g      b) 10 g      c) **12 g**      d) 5 g
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is painful menstruation  
 a) Vaginal discharge      b) **Dysmenorrhoea**  
 c) Pelvic inflammatory Disease      d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the term used for infections of uterus, tubes and ovaries.  
 a) Dysmenorrhoea      b) Human Immuno-deficiency Virus  
 c) **Pelvic inflammatory Disease**      d) none of the above

**III Answer in One Word**

1. What is health?
2. Mention the symptoms of depression.
3. Which vitamin deficiency can cause anaemia?
4. What are the common drugs used to treat headaches?
5. Mention any two signs of pregnancy.

**IV Paragraph Questions**

1. Explain any four of General Medical problems faced by women.
2. What are the Gynecological problems faced by women?
3. Write short notes on Menopause.

\*\*\*\*\*

*This is a book which doesn't  
 Demand Equality for women  
 This is a book which Empowers  
 Woman to Command a  
 Special Status,  
 Dignity and Respect  
 For her 'self'*

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# WOMENS STUDIES

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Published by  
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CELL  
THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE  
FOR WOMEN  
*(An Autonomous Institution, Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University and  
Reaccredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC& College with Potential for  
Excellence by UGC)*  
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Sivakasi

## FOREWORD

We live in an increasingly inter-linked world which demands a network of changes in every aspect of life. SFRC has galloped on victoriously, surging always ahead with its striking ,positive and tremendous transformation in imparting education to rural women.The prestigious honour of Autonomy Status has paved way for introducing need – based curriculum with fruitful insight that gives equal opportunity to match themselves with the academic pace of the global scenario. Therefore with an ambitious mission to foster holistic education and to highlight the multifaceted dimensions of women’s role in the society, *Women’s Studies* is proffered as *Value Added Courses*.

This book is the synergistic outcome of 22 members of our faculty where adequate information and the productive role of women in all walks of life is comprehensively dealt with .It is an outcome of an enduring , academic experience .The strenuous efforts and undying devotion of the contributors deserve special applause. Profound gratitude is extended to Mrs.P.Stella Muthu Rajam and Miss.G.Sathiabama for their expertise and commitment shared for editing the book.The vital contribution of the renowned *members of the management* who always chisel our goals to perfection is duly acknowledged.

*D.Sasireka*



## PREFACE

Today we boast of our prowess in Information Technology. Technology has become an integral part of the lives of our teenagers. They spend much time wired to the gadgets. A recent consumer survey has labeled children , born between 1985-1997 as technology babies .But on the flip side , the same technology is being used in India to fashion a future without or with a very few of them. India's child sex ratio spells disaster to our nation.

There are crimes against women which send shivers down the spine. Sex detection, sex selective abortions are rampant everywhere. Women are beaten, burnt alive, raped and maimed. Their sufferings begin even before their birth and continue throughout their life. This shatters their psyche and hinders their progress and they are unable to emerge as full fledged persons. Women are denied their basic and fundamental rights. They are abused and marginalized in all ways possible not only in India but every where. Their hands are tied and they are silent spectators. In short, justice is denied to women.

Education, stringent laws and economic progress have not made substantial dents on attitudes; younger generation should come out from their ignorance and negligence. They must fight against all odds and establish their justice everywhere. We are proud that India progresses in many ways. But it is to be noted with regret that female infanticide, dowry harassment and dowry death are increasing day by day.

Hence with louder voice and stronger force all must stand together to fight against the evils perpetuated against women and to create a society free from gender discrimination , Violence against women and inequalities.

With this noble vision, the paper on 'Women Studies' is introduced in our college . This book entitled 'Women studies' will empower and enhance the youngsters to change their secondary status and restore their glory. We are confident that this book will fulfill its aims and the objectives.

The Editorial Board owes its gratitude to the management for extending their patronage and support. We would like to thank our principal Dr.(Mrs) D.Sasireka for her guidance and encouragement in bringing out this book.

We express our sincere thanks to the contributors because without their help this book would not have been a reality. In equal measure we are deeply indebted Mrs.C.Krishna veni MCA.,Lecturer for the spontaneous gesture of help offered in computer work that alone helped us to achieve phenomenal success for the outcome of the publication. Finally our thanks are due to the Himalaya publishers who helped to bring out this book on time.

Sivakasi

**Editors**

**THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR  
WOMEN, (Autonomous) SIVAKASI.  
PART IV- Non Major Course  
SEMESTER V  
14UWS51-WOMEN'S STUDIES  
(For those admitted in June 2014 and later)**

**Contact hours per week :02**

**Total number of hours per semester :30**

**Number of Credits :02**

***Objectives:***

To enable the learners to

1. understand and develop a clear idea about the concept of Feminism
2. acquire knowledge about women and society
3. study about their responsibilities in the modern society
4. face the women's problems and find remedial measures
5. know the probabilities of chances for future success

**Unit-I (5hrs)**

Women's Study-Meaning-Importance of Women's studies-Definition of Feminism-kinds of Feminism-Move towards gender equality-Women and Gandhi.

**Unit-II (6hrs)**

Women and media-Women and Laws-Women and Employment

**Unit-III (6hrs)**

Women and Religion-Women in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity-Women and Casteism

**Unit-IV (6hrs)**

Women and Marriage - Family relationships-Child care

**Unit-V (6hrs)**

Women and Environment-Dietary requirements of Women- Women's Health

**Audio-Visual Aid- ( 1hour)**

***Text Book:***

Women's Studies-Faculty Members in SFRC-to be prepared and published by the Curriculum Cell.

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## WOMEN'S STUDIES

\*\*\*\*\*

**Miss.G.Sathiabama &  
Mrs.P.Stella Muthu Rajam**

*“ The factor of the Extra chromosome that nature has bestowed upon women makes them neither inferior to man nor superior, not even equal but only different ”*

*-- Indian Express (1987)*

Women's studies is basically an area of study about women's issues, their problems, solution to their problems and suggesting strategies for women's development, thereby integrating women into the mainstream life of any society be it a simple or complex, traditional or modern, small or large, and developed or under developed countries. Women's studies examine the world and the human beings from a feminist perspective.

Women's studies according to Boxer was founded to promote and sustain the educational strategy as a break through in consciousness and knowledge that would transform individuals, institutions, relationships and ultimately the whole of society.

Women's studies has had a genesis of its own in the late 1950s' only when the problems of gender inequality, discrimination and slavery were realized and found in a state of ripped emotions among the women activists and feminists.

It resembles sociology the genesis of which is associated with rapid industrialization, science and technology having crucial massacre of innocent people and epidemiology emerged in the context of speedy urbanization, causing health problem of sanitation and hygiene. More so women's studies has emerged not merely as a causal event but as a conscious effect of feminist movement.

The study of women provides the basis for critical examination both of existing disciplines and of the existing social practices they study. Women's study sharpens our awareness of the connections between ideas and behavior. It helps us to understand our past as well as our future.

Women's study also provides a basis for action in specific and practical ways for the individual, both in college and in later life.

It gives us an increased awareness of ourselves (Women and men) which may help us to understand our Personal past and future. These Personal issues – such as choosing a career, making decisions about human relationship, and planning our future touch us all in one way or the other. Women studies is not a “how to ” Course , but it does bring the issues and implications of our personal decisions into sharper focus.

### **Definition of Womens Studies**

Women’s studies is defined as “the study of women placing the own experiences of women as the center of the process ”.It focuses on women’s experiences in providing observations and assumptions for establishing women’s reality. The Directory of women’s studies defines it as that body of literature that embodies various concerns for women’s equality and development. Simply speaking women’s studies is a “ Scientific and systematic study of women’s /gender issues involved in the structure and functions of any society”.

Womens studies is that scientific knowledge that attempts to explore the power relations between men and women approved by the social structures of any society. In doing so , it brings out women’s status and position , culture , social , and religious images of women, their problems , the nature of women’s biology in reference to reality , as well as contradictions between the general perception about women and women’s reality. To put it shortly. Women’s studies is a science of women , on women , by women and for women.

In simple terms womens studies is a discipline of ‘women in society’.The ultimate aim of women’s studies is the empowerment of women individually and collectively .

### **Importance of Women Studies :**

Womens studies has originated with the recognition that women remain to be invisible in all areas of knowledge. From the early 1980’s feminists had attempted to explain the necessity and need for women’s studies. The setting up of women’s study programs and characterizing its activities had been entailed with a recognition of women’s invisibility in all areas of knowledge.

Spender states that the description and analysis of women’s omission as independent human beings has been the most significant contribution of feminism. In spite of the political and economic conditions being hostile, women’s studies had emerged as a formal area of study first in the United States of America during 1960’s and then slowly in the Great Britain between 1960 and 1970. Since then Women’s Studies courses were set up with in the context of higher education and adult education.

The University of Kent was the first university to offer a postgraduate course in women studies i.e, M.A. Women studies in 1980, followed gradually by other postgraduate courses and now there is a full postgraduate programme in women's studies in Britain. It is now established in various degrees in countries like North and South America , Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Arab world. "Such courses, addressed in any degree course had faced problems like under funding, opposition by men and prejudiced views against women's studies. It has gone through an intense and prolonged struggle within the university system , say Brunt and others.

***Take PRIDE in ....  
Being a woman,  
A creator of life,  
And individual,  
Never degrade yourself  
By hating your  
Existence as a woman!!!***

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ sharpens our awareness of the connections between ideas and behavior.  
**Ans :** Women's study
2. Women studies helps us to understand our past as well as \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** Future
3. Women studies is not a \_\_\_\_\_ Course.  
**Ans :** how to
4. The study of women placing the \_\_\_\_\_ as the centre of process.  
**Ans :** own experiences of women.
5. Women's studies is a discipline of \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** Women in society.

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Women's studies is a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Culture of women    b) history of women    c) **science of women**    d) none of the above

2. Women's studies had emerged as a formal area of study first in U.S.A during  
a) 1980's      b) **1960's**      c) 1970's      d) 1990's
3. Women's studies had emerged in Great Britain between  
a) **1960 & 1970**      b) 1950 & 1970      c) 1965 & 1975      d) 1975 & 1985

***III Answer in One Word***

1. In which country emerged formal area of study first in women studies?
2. In which year feminist had attempted to explain the necessity and need for women's studies.
3. Which University offered a post Graduate course in women studies?

***III Paragraph Questions***

1. What are the importance of Women studies ?

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## FEMINISM – METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. (Mrs) S. Manimekalai

*“ Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size ”*

*-- Virginia Woolf*

### Introduction

Feminism as an ideology, both preaching and practicing women’s liberation and equality added with attributes like Justice, Indiscrimination ,Development and Empowerment of women has closer affinity to the discipline of women’s studies ,hence otherwise called feminist study. feminists on the one hand reject the negative cultural images of women ,assignment of socially established roles and statuses between male and female, supremacy of masculine qualities over feminine qualities, demanding an evaluation between male and female on its own merits and on the other hand feminism attempts to replace ignorance and fantasy with knowledge and reality.

### Definition of feminism

Feminism “ encompasses a set of beliefs, values and attitudes that can take on the high valuation of women as human beings”.

Feminism values women’s autonomy and advocates the creation of conditions, which will be in favour of women’s independent control of their own destiny. Feminism provokes to work for replacing ignorance and fantasy knowledge and reality. Feminism recognizes the prevalence of women’s oppression along with other kinds of oppression and hence supports the liberation of the oppressed in racism , class privileges and indiscrimination against homosexuals.

According to **Michell** feminism in the 60’s and 70’s has above all been distinguished from and of its earlier expression by the deconstruction of any fixed meaning to the notion of “women”.

Feminism is based on concrete realities and levels of consciousness perceptions and actions both historically and culturally. John Desrochers defines feminism as “an awareness of women’s oppression and exploitation in society, at work and within the family , and conscious action by women and men to change this situation”.



## **Different kinds of feminism**

There are different kinds of feminism –

1. **Eco-Feminism** which is related to Ecology. This school of feminism sees nature as Mother Earth and every aspect of nature is viewed as feminist function.
2. **Marxist Feminism**, relating to feminism sees economic freedom and social equality of woman on par with man is the basic prerogative of this Feminism.
3. **Feminism relating to Post-Colonialism**, views the liberation of woman as the most important feature of the post-colonial period. It views man as the coloniser and woman as the colonized. The feminists of this school firmly believe that education is the only powerful instrument which can cut off the shackles of colonization and set woman free off the patriarchal oppression.
4. **Psychological Feminism**, probes into the woman's psyche and their experiences related to their physical body, sex and motherhood.

All these theories and ideas relating to women have strengthened feminism. All these concepts of feminism redress the imbalance that was effected in the society between men and women. This is reflected in the works of feminist women writers. All the feminist women started handling the theme of female exploitation in the patriarchal society. They started voicing the helpless cry of female exploitation because it reduced a human being to the level of vegetable existence and she had to single handedly carry on a desperate battle against the established inhumanism of male autocracy until her feminine identity is crushed under the pressure of imperial and patriarchal ideologies.

## **Female oppressions and Feminism in India**

Manu, the founder of the patriarchal structure in Indian Society, declared that woman can be subjected to corporal punishment, that they can be enslaved by their father, husband and son throughout their life. According to Manu, the avenues of education, learning and knowledge which promote the growth of an individual should be blocked for them in all possible ways. In this view, since women are the property of their men folk, they can have no right over the material property of their family.

The first phase of feminism starts with woman's awareness of her being oppressed. Breaking herself out of the darkness of her own ignorance, she must become aware how she is being exploited as daughter, wife and mother.

## **Female Infanticide**

Female oppression starts from the moment, the girl child sets her foot on the earth. Killing of female infants is widespread among the Hindu Communities as girl-children are considered to be a burden and shame. The Atharva Veda says, “the birth of a girl, grant it elsewhere, here grant a boy”(VI,23). The wish for a boy has assumed a human and grotesque form in female infanticide and in modern times the scientific methods of identifying the sex of the foetus has become a threat to the birth of a girl.

## **Female oppression as daughters**

The resentment of the grand parents, the father and even the mother is what a girl faces in the Indian Society. It is only a long sad and gruesome stage of discrimination between a teenage girl and a teenage boy. “The double standards start operating from the stage of adolescence, binding girl indoors and encouraging boys to develop outdoor activities. A spirit of competition, exploration and challenge is inculcated among boys and they are taught to assert their supremacy over the world in general. Girls on the contrary, are discouraged from showing aggressive modes of behavior and instead, feminine virtues of physical beauty, modesty, tolerance, patience and self-effacement are frequently demanded from them.

In Indian Society, the efforts of most of the parents are to find a suitable match of their choice for their daughters. A girl in the caste ridden Indian Society has no freedom to choose her life partner. Marriages outside one’s caste is even now considered a problematic issue. The common opinion is that only marriages arranged by the parents within one’s caste can give security to a girl after marriage in case her husband deserts her.

Brought up under restrictive circumstances, the ideal of daughterhood is to obey her parents in the choice of marriage. The traditional feminine virtues of mute acceptance and self-sacrifice are instilled in her so that she could be an attractive commodity in the marriage market. Every daughter is groomed to be the object of sale in the marriage business.

## **Female oppression as wives**

A woman’s market value in the marriage business depends upon her financial value, and not upon the value of individuality. So, after marriage she becomes a faceless entity, only the image of wife of a man and what the society expects of a wife. As she is made a mere decorative object, she is reduced to insignificance. She turns from subject to object, from consumer to be consumed. She is sought to be turned into a state of eternal bondage in the name of marriage.

In the Indian marriage system, the colonial attitude of the male spouse turns marriage into a oppressor-victim ambit. In the Indian cultural system, a wife automatically becomes a silently-

suffering, self-sacrificing woman who suppresses her desires and drudges for the delights of her dominating husband. In most of the Indian marriages, the husband is not a loving man empathizing with his wife, but a typical colonizer - a cold hearted, insensitive, arrogant autocrat dictating rules. On the other hand, the Indian wife is not a full fledged individual, but a nameless entity, a mere appendage added to her husband's name. Thus in the Indian cultural set-up, marriage is the realm in which women are ruthlessly exploited. In the name of marriage, every Indian woman becomes a weak, helpless, voiceless wife living with her husband under the yoke of marriage.

### **Female oppression as mother**

Most often motherhood is considered as the most "treasured source of any woman's identity". As a mother, a woman is more than the bearer of children. She is responsible for childcare. She has to take care of the various tasks that the family requires like catering to the daily needs of her husband and the children, maintaining the house, making and providing food for the entire family. On the role of motherhood, the idea that a mother is also an individual, who has a choice to her free will, is totally ignored or forgotten. This self-sacrificing mother is not well protected and cared for in her old age. In the old age of motherhood, the son takes up the role of the dictator and the mother is expected to follow the rule of mute-obedience to the laws laid by her son.

So motherhood becomes a process through which every woman learns "patience, self-sacrifice and the willingness to tirelessly perform the household chores. Mother hold ingrains fear, pain and the implicit obedience to male dominance, first to the husband, then to the son.

### **Conclusion**

Male dominance and unquestioned female suppression was prevalent in the Indian society in the earlier times and that was reflected in the articles of the writers belonging to that period. Woman was considered as "passive, docile, dependent and helpless". But with growing opportunities of education and employment, urbanization and industrialization, Indian women have become aware of their self worth, acquired self confidence and assured themselves of independence and individuality. They have started revolting against the oppressive patriarchy and have started redefining their roles in the society. Women is not required to find her total fulfillment in submissive domesticity, but can assert her identity in the world outside, widespread with countless opportunities of education and employment.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Eco feminism is related to \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans:** ecology
2. Post colonial feminism views woman as the colonized and the man as the \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** colonizer
3. \_\_\_\_\_ was the founder of the patriarchal structure in the Indian society.  
**Ans :** Manu
4. According to Manu, the avenues of education and knowledge should be blocked for \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** women
5. Killing of female infants is called \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** female infanticide

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Marxist feminism feels \_\_\_\_\_ freedom as the basic prerogative of women.  
a) social    b) political    c) **economic**    d) all these.
2. Feminism as a \_\_\_\_\_ -  
a) Biology    b) **ideology**    c) Sociology    d) none of the above
3. Eco feminism sees nature as  
a) God    b) **Mother Earth**    c) Angel    d) Nature
4. Psychological feminism probes into the woman's  
a) beauty    b) mind    c) **psyche**    d) soul
5. Among the Hindu Communities, girl children are often considered to be a  
a) blessing    b) gift    c) **burden**    d) boon

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Define Feminism.
2. What is female Infanticide?
3. In which stage double standards starts?
4. Which one is the only powerful instrument that can set woman free from the patriarchal oppression

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a paragraph about the different kinds of feminism.
2. Write a paragraph about the female oppression as wives.

### ***V Essay Questions***

1. Write an essay about the different levels of female oppression in the Indian society.

## MOVE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs. Emmi Gordon

*“ Woman is the companion of man ,gifted with equal mental capacities, she has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man , and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him ”*

*-- Mahatma Gandhi*

### Introduction

Almighty created women to groom the whole personality of man and enable him to lead a successful life, from the inception to inhabitation. she cares him, teaches him, knowledge and culture, shapes his character, provides life to his imagination, nurtures him, supports him, add colours to his personality, shoulders his burdens as her's, frees him from mental stresses and worries, soothes him and above all loves him in spite of his real being.

The Famous social reformer Swami Vivekananda strongly believed that, “it is only in the hands of educated and pious women (mother) the great men are born”.

*“all men rule over women*

*we*

*Romans rule over men*

*and*

*our wives rule over us!”*

hats off to Romans ! The Romans held women in greatest honour as the words of Cato and Censor quoted above!

### Gender Inequality

The bias precipitated over human beings by dividing them as male and female is known as gender divide or gender inequality.

1. The fundamentals of gender inequality lie in the unequal access to economic, social and political opportunities available for both men and women.
2. Sex role behavior patters dictated by earlier societies, where home ie, “private domain” was identified with females and productive outside work ie, “public domain” was identified with males.
3. But now productive economic activity is open to women, but she has to take dual role.

## **Key issues of Gender Inequality**

There are two key issues that have pervasive impact on the creation of gender inequality:

- a) Norms of patriarchy
- b) Modernization

### **a) Norms of patriarchy**

Patriarchal attitudes are known to affect the status of women in all societies in the contemporary world. The patriarchal system was developed among the institutions and traditions which were inspired by beliefs in male dominance and female inferiority. Patriarchy has been rooted in society, since the advent of agrarian system.

### **b) Modernization**

Modernization transformed home based family units, economic activity into an efficient, organised surplus generating process. Economic growth and industrialization may encourage women to direct their productive efforts away from the home. But unfortunately, they may not qualify for employment in proper sectors because of their education and equate with men in scoring economic contributions in the society.

## **Women in Vedic period**

To begin with Aryans, the society was founded on the institutions of home and family. The Rig Vedic expression “the wife is the home” shows how much domestic life was woven around the woman. Rig Veda, the Aryans has no desire for a daughter, while in Atharva veda the birth of a daughter is even deprecated. In Upanishads certain rituals are prescribed to have a learned daughter. Women were educated both in the spiritual as well as temporal subjects. They were given training in religious lore, historical tradition, mythology, fine arts as well as in military.

The Manusmriti prescribes duties and obligations of a woman. For Manu, woman is a perpetual minor and has to lead whole of her life under the guardianship of either the father, the husband, the brother or the son.

## **Women in Epic Period**

In the epic age the woman was considered to be a true friend of man. They embodied in themselves extreme love, devotion and selfless service to their family. Muslims adherence to *pardha* and polygamy also influenced Hindus. The women were considered inferior to men and so began to be ill treated.

## **Women of Today**

In the era followed, the customs of polygamy, the *pardha*, the denial of woman's right over property, child marriage, *sati pratha* etc. all these practices made her a very weak

personality. Due to this, she herself became rooted to the idea that she was weak, helpless, subordinate and inferior. Hence woman themselves became great perpetrators of tyranny on the women over whom they could exercise their sadism. As a result dowry demands, widowhood misery, dominance through the mother-in-law and subservient daughter-in-law were initiated and began to engulf women. It takes a long journey to shed and forget those evils on the society of women.

### **Rationale for Women Rights**

Our constitution safeguards the rights of women from all kinds of violence and discriminations against her, both physical as well as psychological tortures. The constitutional rights have to be practiced and framed with the aim of improving the status, enforcing the provisions, counteract or lessen the figures of victimization due to various harassments. Some of the few constitutional provisions and their nature are:

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Provisions of the IPC</b>	<b>Nature of the offence criminalised</b>
1.	The Special Marriages Act, 1964	entitling widows and divorced women to marry
2.	The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	prohibiting the acceptance of marriage dowry
3.	The Act Of Prohibiting Child Marriage	prohibiting the marriage at child hood
4.	The Equal Wages Act	enlighten women workers to receive the same wage as received by male workers
5.	Article 39(1)	the right to an adequate means of livelihood to men and women equally
6.	Article 39(d)	equal pay for equal work for both men and women
7.	Article 498A	protection against harassment of her husband or from husband's family members.

### **Ways to achieve Gender Equality**

Empowerment is a multidimensional process which enables individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to transact or to be

given away by some one. It is a strong feeling of self and has to be acquired, exercised, sustained, preserved and enriched. Some of the advisable strategies to achieve Gender Equality are:

- Removing sex bias in curriculum
- Emphasizing higher education and encouraging women to take professional course
- Overcoming social taboos and traditional beliefs
- Encouraging to take careers seriously and consciously
- Sensitizing women to laws related to property, marriage, divorce, minimum wages, maternity leave benefit etc.
- Making them aware of possibilities of self employment.
- Educating their parents on the importance of making women economically self sufficient
- Including Gender Equality components in the curriculum
- Community services and social service must concentrate on legal rights, drudgery reduction, combating atrocities and violence's committed to women

The realization of mission is to concentrate and get connected with health care, environmental safety, promotion of population, education activities, family welfare, citizenship roles and responsibilities. The empowerment mechanism should also concentrate on necessary financial and service support, advancement into higher position of power, better consciousness of their rights, self reliance, self respect and dignity among women.

### **Strategies to attain Gender Equality**

Education is the only noble way to enlighten soul, uplift self, enhance knowledge and skill, encourage to be independent and thus ultimately empower her to glory. Educating a woman is educating a family as a whole.

Higher education especially professional education is necessary to enroll her to take challenging career. It alone gives independent and instrumental initiativeness to face the world and tackle the situations ahead.

Career choice and career decisions should be taken after careful analysis and assessment, otherwise it may also end in distress, stress and lack of commitment and satisfaction. She should makeup her mind and exercise her thoughts to meet criticism and humiliation if exists.

The emergence of women on the economic scenario as entrepreneur is a significant development in the emancipation of women for securing a place in the society.



Entrepreneurship refers to the skill of discovering new economic opportunities, managing the business, taking risks and introducing innovations. A woman entrepreneur is a person who is willing to take risks with the unknown because of the adventurous spirit she possesses.

### **Conclusion**

In order to uplift and safeguard women from the wide of variety of harassment in family, profession, and society, our government has taken large steps by providing constitutional law. But to the worst result, women are still suffering and shame to mention, they were badly tortured by government servants themselves.

On the positive side, various private organizations like Self Help Groups rise to the occasion and to take care of women and give them a better status in the society.

Above all, the very psychology of women **herself** need to be changed from its mere root, she must realize her potentials, her skills, her strength and herself come out to meet the world bravely. It is a mandatory duty of none but herself ! She has to portrait, carve, mould her own hood into a beautiful sculpture of her own self (esteem) and thus strive hard for her upliftment. Social and political reforms may support her in her mission of empowerment.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Women are blessed with stable \_\_\_\_\_ than men.

**Ans :** mind and heart

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ prescribes duties and obligations for women.

**Ans :** manusmriti

3. Muslims adherence to pardha and \_\_\_\_\_ also influenced Hindus, after epic age.

**Ans :** polygamy

4. Educating a woman is educating a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** family as a Whole.

5. In the epic age the woman was considered to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of man.

**Ans :** true friend.

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. As per the words of Cato and Censor, Women are held in greatest honour by

a) Indians      b) **Romans**      c) Italians      d) Russians

2. Females are identified with home which is called as

a) **private domain**                      b) public domain  
c) secret domain                      d) none of the above.

3. "The wife is the home" is the expression of
  - a) **rig**
  - b) yasur
  - c) sama
  - d) adharva.
4. Woman was considered to be a true friend of man, during
  - a) Rig age
  - b) Upanishad age
  - c) **Epic age**
  - d) none of these.
5. Education is the only noble way to
  - a) **enlighten soul**
  - b) uplift self
  - c) enhance knowledge and skill
  - d) all the above.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who was the famous social reformer in India?
2. What is gender inequality?
3. Which practices are made weak personality of woman?
4. What is power in Gender equality?
5. Which one of the act gives protection against harassment of husband or from his family?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Discuss about gender inequality with its key issues.
2. Suggest various strategies to attain gender equality.

### ***IV Essay Questions***

1. Summarise your views on gender inequality.

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## WOMEN AND GANDHIJI

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs.PitchaiKani Prabhakaran

*“ To call woman the weaker sex is a libel, it is man’s injustice to woman , It by strength is meant brute strength , then indeed, is woman less brute than man , It by strength is meant moral power , then , woman is immeasurately man’s superior.”*

*-- Mahatma Gandhi*

### Introduction

No leader in history commanded such whole hearted devotion and respect from women not only in his own country, but also in other parts of the world as Mahatma Gandhi commanded. He was a passionate lover of humanity and a passionate advocate of women’s right and equality. He worked hard through out his life for women’s welfare and equal rights. Since Gandhi set a good example by practicing what he preached, and being a harsh and merciless critic of himself, he began reforms in his own house and radically changed his attitude and treatment towards his wife Kausturiba and with that change began his work for the emancipation and social uplift of womankind as a whole. In all his writings and speeches, he spoke fearlessly against enforced widowhood, purdah system, devadasi system, early child marriages, dowry system, the economic bondage of women and marital slavery of women.

### Women and Gandhiji

Gandhi paid equal attention and gave equal place to girls and women in his own institutions and programmes of work. There was always an atmosphere of freedom and self confidence in the girls and women who lived with him or under his care in Sabarmathi and Sevagram ashrams.

### Gandhi on Women’s Education

Gandhi was a strong supporter of compulsory education for both boys and girls from 7 to 14 years. He was traditional in his approach to the social roles of women; he wanted them to be mothers and home makers and did not prefer women going outside the home to earn their livelihood .So he felt that a separate educational curriculum should be adapted to the special needs of girls in order to prepare them to be mothers and home makers.

Moreover, a separate curriculum for women may result in perpetuating the subordinate position of women. However ,Gandhi suggested that women’s educational programmes should

be planned with the different vocations of the sexes in mind but that access to different branches of knowledge should not be restricted to either sex. He also insisted that women's educational should prepare them for the real challenges of their daily life.

### **Weaker sex**

Writing in *Young India*, Gandhi observed as follows: "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel. It is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior. If the non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman".

According to Gandhi woman is the personification of self-sacrifice. But, unfortunately, she does not realize what a tremendous and extraordinary courage she has over man. Being the incarnation of Ahimsa, she will occupy her proud and legitimate place by the side of man, as his mother, maker and silent leader. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

### **Role of woman in society**

Gandhi made the following observation in *Harijan*, "Modern women have circumvented men in various ways in her unconsciously subtle ways, as men have vainly, equally, unconsciously struggled to thwart women in gaining ascendancy over them. They must not ape the manners and customs of the west, which may be suited to its environment. Women's role must be the strong controlling, purifying and conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is bad and degrading. The modern girls love adventure and we must really admire and appreciate the spirit of adventure. But the modern girl dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun but to attract attention".

Regarding the married life he wrote - "Married life is intended to promote mutual good and it is meant also to serve humanity--- the idea that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical". An ideal husband and wife are equal shares of each other's virtues, joys and sorrows and Gandhi places before us Sita as an ideal wife and Rama as an ideal husband.

### **Women and untouchability**

Gandhiji gave the following message to women all over India and declared "I want you, above everything else to uproot untouchability from your hearts and serve the Harijan boys and girls, as you would serve your own children. You should love them as your own brothers and sisters, children of the same mother India....."

### **Women and devadasi system**

Gandhi asked every Indian to ponder over the fate of thousands of sisters who are destined to a life of shame and disgrace for the unlawful and immoral actions on the part of some persons who easily exploit the ignorance and innocence of some women in the name of religion.

Gandhi is of the opinion that the majority of men, who support Devadasi are married men and therefore commit a double sin against their wives.

The sight of many women under Purdah system pained and humiliated him deeply. Gandhiji is of the opinion that great wrong and injustice are perpetuated by men to the women of India by clinging to this barbarous custom.

Even in the twentieth century we hear reports of dowry deaths. In 1936, Gandhiji wrote in Harijan – “The system of dowry has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by the parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste, so long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil of dowry has to be eradicated”.

Gandhi in his message to the women quoted as follows – “The real ornament of woman is her character. Metals and stones can never be real ornaments. No man or woman is entitled for the possession of wealth unless she or he has given a fair share of it to the poor and helpless”

Gandhi’s suggestions in safeguarding her honour and purity, in his own words is – “when a woman is assaulted, she may not stop to think in terms of himsa or ahimsa. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method that comes to her mind. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and if need be die in her heroic efforts”.

All these sayings by Gandhi on behalf of women definitely evoke a response in every well wishers of humanity. These ideas are primarily meant for women. They touch each and every part of her life and serve as a guide to her in times of stress and strain.

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### ***I Fill in the blanks***

1. According to Gandhiji “Equality of sexes does not mean equality of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** occupation

2. “To call women the weaker sex is a \_\_\_\_\_” according to Gandhiji.

**Ans:** libel

3. Gandhiji called \_\_\_\_\_system as a barbarous custom.

**Ans:** Purdah

4. According to Gandhiji the real ornament of woman is \_\_\_\_\_

**Ans:** her character

**II Choose the best answer**

1. According to Gandhi woman is the personification of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) self-confidence    b) self-reliance    c) **self-sacrifice**    d) none
2. \_\_\_\_\_ life is intended to promote mutual good and it is also to serve humanity.  
a) School life    b) college life    c) **married life**    d) none
3. \_\_\_\_\_ husband and wife are equal shares of each others virtues, joys and sorrows.  
a) Lovable    b) **ideal**    c) Spiritual    d) none

**III Answer in one Word**

1. Who was a passionate lover of humanity?
2. Who will paid equal attention and equal place to women?
3. Who were the ideal couple according to Gandhi?
4. Which system is barbarous custom in India opposed by Gandhiji?
5. Which one is the primary duty of women according to Gandhiji?

**IV Paragraph Question**

1. Write a note on Gandhiji on women's education.
2. Describe the views of Gandhiji on role of women in society.

**V Essay question**

1. Explain the concepts of Gandhiji on women.

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## WOMEN AND MEDIA

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Mrs.S.Arul Micheal Selvi &

Mrs.L.Sujatha

*“ The tongue of women is their sword; they take care  
not to let it rust ”*

*--Chinese Proverb*

### Introduction

Media is a Latin word which denotes the significant means of mass communication- especially cinema, television, radio and press collectively. Modern media includes computers and mobile phones.

Media has the following features

- Has an important role to safeguard the elements of a democratic society
- Shares the thoughts of millions and millions of mass

### Definition

Media can be defined as the procedure or process for attaining an objective. Nowadays media has achieved complete freedom. So naturally the motive of media turns to money making. Media remind the words of Mme Jeanne Roland,

**“O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!”**

### Good Media

A good media should have any one of the following aesthetics:

- Principle of good taste.
- Principle of sensibility.
- Principle of refinement.
- Principle of cultured efflorescence.
- Principle of discrimination.
- Principle of artistic presentation.

### Impact of Media on Women

Women are portrayed as Gods in this world. Women’s day is celebrated all over the world in honour of acknowledging their talents. Today women acquire more self confidence to achieve their great ambitions. How are women inculcated through media-Good or Worse?

This can be dealt under three stages

- Women and Media in the past
- Women and Media at present
- Women and Media in the future

### **Women and Media in the past**

Only scriptures, dramas and literature acted as media in the past. During Shakespeare's time his famous lady characters – Viola and Portia were first enacted on the stage by young handsome boys. Slowly the female characters entered the stage during the reign of King Charles II.

The following table reveals the portrayal of women by the media in the past:

S.No	Women Characters	Aesthetic of Good Media
1	Vasuki and Nalayini	Principle of sensibility
2	Meera and Andal	Principle of cultured efflorescence
3	Avaiyar	Principle of elegance and Principle of artistic presentation

On the otherhand, Manushastra desired women. It degrades women and is against the remarriage of women. Some male writers in the past exhibited their dominance over women through their literary work. For example, Milton says "Men are only for dominance and women are only for obedience". These are some stains in the impact of media on women in the past.

### **Women and Media at present**

At present the impact of media on women is partly good and partly worse. The Media at present which expose women are:

- a. Cinema
- b. Television
- c. Radio
- d. Press
- e. Computers and
- f. Mobile phone.



## **a. Cinema**

The impact of Cinema is very powerful. Cinema can be divided into two categories:

- i. Cinema before Millennium and
- ii. Cinema after Millennium.

The exposure of women in cinema before Millennium is 48% good and 52% bad .They indirectly cause some ill-feelings on women.

The exposure of women in Cinema after Millennium is only 15% good and 85% bad. The new modern millennium cinema deviates a lot from our culture.

Majority of the films have directly dealt with the blatant sexism and vulgarism under the name of modern trend .They exhibit 99% vulgarism and only 1% goodness. The Cinema after Millennium gives more importance to the physical body features of women than their appreciable talent.

Even since film censorship came into being as result of the 1918 act, censorship has been one of the most controversial problems. There have been many criticisms against the film censorship. The film censorship enquiry committee recommended that kissing as well as nudity could be allowed only if they are relevant and necessary story. Women's Organizations and movements have raised their voice against this type of permission. Women are facing a big challenge from this type of media. They have organized processions and protect demonstrations against Kissing, nudity and raping scenes.

## **b. Television**

Television is the fastest and effective visual media which reaches people in the very reception of their houses. Television programmes and advertisements inculcate women in both good and bad ways.

There are many television interview programmes which reveals many challenging women like Kiran Bedi, Saniya Mirza, Vijayalakshmi, Mallika Badrinath, etc. These programmes provide inspiration to others. Some satellite channels broadcast effective speech of some women scholars, which are very useful.

There are many advertisements which depict homely women and good career-holding women. Such advertisement are helpful to other women to know about new products and new courses offered to women.

On the other hand, in television serials, women characters are mostly bounded to sentiments. All serials portray women either as traditional or highly protesting type in an exaggerated manner. In advertisements, women are exploited a lot in twenty to thirty seconds.

### **c. Radio**

Radio is one of the portable audio media which reaches even the rural people. This media have not neglected the principles of good media. The main aim of the All India Radio to serve the public in general and women in particular by providing information, education and entertainment.

### **d .Press**

Press is one of the powerful media in the society. Press means “provide”. Mr.M.Chalapathi Rao in his book “The press in India” termed press as “reforming and crusading zeal”. The press should have the qualities of a good media.

The journals and newspapers of this period has not been free from the blatant sexism and subtle distortions. Mainly it focused on four landmark issues-dowry deaths, rape, sex determination tests and Sati.

While an issue like dowry death first came to media’s attention in early 1979 and continued sporadically in the news up to 1984,amendments to the dowry law were passed by the Parliament. The Sati controversy was also confined in the latter half of 1987.In this way, the press clearly put forth the things that happen to women and help them to provide justice.

Some special magazines and journals were published for women. These magazines and journals got an enriched popularity among the readers. They explored the highlights of women, their problem and also gave counseling to tackle their problem.

At the same time, cheap, mere journals and magazines expose women badly. The articles in such magazines kindle only the sexual feelings of the readers.

In spite of some black marks, the press dealt with new trends and inventions. Even though its attention is towards new technologies, it exploits women badly to some extent.

### **e. Computer**

Computer is one among the effective media. It acts as the fastest link between the people who live in opposite poles. The bad exposure of women happens in this media through internet. In internet, lot of useful information as well as vulgar and blatant sexual scenes are incorporated. Even the Government tries to abolish the computer centers which encourage such vulgarity, this crime continues.

Computers possess the qualities of good media. But it is mislead by others and used in wrong ways.

## **f. Mobile phones**

Nowadays mobile phones with camera are becoming popular. SMS messages are full of vulgar words which portray women badly. Indecent vulgar pictures are available in mobile phone. Some bad guys use mobile phones with camera in wrong ways.

### **Women and Media in the future**

In future, the bad exposure of women cannot be totally eradicated but to certain degrees. All media should concentrate in the welfare of women. They should give hands in rising up the women community. According to La Martine's words,

**“There is a woman at the beginning of all great things”**, the media should uplift women in all aspects.

### **Conclusion:**

Media is to open up the large masses in society to new information, new thought, new attitudes and new aspiration, which lead them to new achievements. The media is the device that can spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes quickly and widely.

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### ***I Fill in the blanks:***

1. Media can be defined as the \_\_\_\_\_ for attaining an objective.

**Ans:** Procedure or Process

2. At present, the motive of media turns to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Ans:** money making

3. Some male writers in the past exhibited their \_\_\_\_\_ over women through their literary work.

**Ans:** dominance

4. Press means \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** Provide

5. All media should concentrate in the \_\_\_\_\_ of women.

**Ans:** Welfare

### ***II Choose the best answer***

1. Modern media includes \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - a) Radio
  - b) television
  - c) cinema

- d) **computers and mobile phones**
2. Vasuki and Nalayini were portrayed by the media in the past with regard to
- Principle of refinement
  - Principle of sensibility**
  - Principle of elegance
  - Principle of artistic presentation
3. The exposure of women in cinema after millennium is
- only 15% good and 85% bad**
  - only 48% good and 52% bad
  - only 18% good and 82% bad
  - only 28% good and 72% bad
4. The Government tries to \_\_\_\_\_ which use internet in a wrong way.
- establish computer centers
  - nationalize all computer centers
  - abolish the computer centers**
  - collect special tax from computer centers
5. Pick out the correct statement below:
- Some good guys use mobile phones with camera in wrong ways.
  - In future, the bad exposure of women cannot be totally eradicated but to certain degrees.**
  - Television and press had never portrayed women badly.
  - All media need not concentrate in the welfare of women.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

- Define Media
- Who says “ Men are only for dominance and women are only for obedience”?
- Which media is the fastest and effective visual media.?
- Mention the main aim of the All India radio.
- which media is one among the effective media?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

- Discuss about the exposure of women by cinema.
- Explain about the exploitation of women by press.

### ***V Essay Question***

- Discuss about the portrayal of women in the past and at present by the media.

## WOMEN AND LAWS

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**Mrs. K. Gogapriya**

*“The book of female logic is blotted all over with tears ,  
and justice in their courts is forever in a passion ”  
-- William Thackeray*

### **Introduction:**

In India women are deprived of social, economic and political independence. They are made dependent on the male members of her family. All decisions for her are taken by men only. Her legitimate rights are denied in many a case. For no fault of hers she has been suppressed and oppressed in every walk of life especially whenever she was subjected to rape, kidnapping, adultery, sexual harassment, indecent assault and unmarried motherhood.

Her modesty has been outraged within and outside the four walls of her house and at work place. The lack of education and awareness of her legal and constitutional rights and the lack of means and support has made her submit passively. Law alone cannot tackle the problem of women. Social awareness can be brought by educating the people at different levels of the need of such laws.

Let us see the myth behind the Law and the reality.

### **1. Child Marriage Restrain act of 1929 (Popularly known as Sarada Act)**

To Prevent child marriages this act fixed the minimum for males 18 years and for female now 15 years by the Hindu marriage succession act of 1955. Only the special marriage act of 1954 fixes the minimum age at 21 and 18 years for males and females respectively. While penalising the performance of child marriage is necessary, the benefit of such legislation is greatly offset by the fact that the marriage itself is held valid. Parties to the marriage are punishable and the marriage itself is not void.

### **2. Widow Remarriage**

The social reformers like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had succeeded in passing the widow remarriage act of 1856 with the co-operatives of the British Government in India. On the outset the law ensures the widow to remarry which would be of an appreciable attempt.

Though the law granted freedom to widow to remarry it precisely prevented them from remarrying since it implied loss of property.

### **3. Rape**

Rape is the most under reported crime in this country. According to law (sect 375 of crpc) a man is said to commit 'rape' if he has sexual intercourse with a woman in circumstances falling under any of the following.

#### Description:

- 1) Against her will.
- 2) Without her consent
- 3) With her consent :When her consent has been obtained by pulling her in fear of death or hurt ,with her consent; when the man knows that he is not her husband
- 4) With or without her consent when she is under 16 years of age.

### **4.Abortion**

There are certain types of social legislation ,which seek to protect interests and benefits of special concern to women. The Suppression of Immoral and Traffic in women and Girls of 1956 better known as SITA Act is interested to protect the helpless women and girls from a typical mode of exploitation not altogether unknown in the country.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy act 1971 may also be mentioned in the context of social legislation relative to women. It provides that a pregnancy may be terminated where the length of pregnancy does not exceed twenty weeks, if two medical practitioners of the opinion that the continuation of pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant women or grave injury to her physical or mental health.

### **5. SATI**

The commission of SATI (prevention) act 1987 provides for the more effective prevention of the commission of Sati and its glorification and for matters connected here with or incidental there to.

This act was passed after tremendous pressure from the progressive sections on the event of Roop Kanwar's forced SATI on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1987. This newly formed SATI committee had collected Rs.30 lakhs and was planning to erect a monument where Roop Kanwar was publicly murdered.

### **6.Divorce**

- a) Divorce of Hindu:

The Hindu marriage is considered as sacrament and so once entered into cannot be dissolved. The passing of Hindu marriage act of 1955 starts a new tradition with its provision for divorce. The new act permits dissolution of marriage on grounds of adultery, Change of religion, junacy,

incurable diseases, desertion and others, in sort when the purpose and aim of marriage which is joint living and companionship cannot be released.

As the Hindu family law based on the age old Manu Smiriti which says marriage a sacred union that means divorce is impossible in Hindu society. Yet the custom which dominates the society makes woman from depriving this opportunity.

#### **b)Divorce of Islam:**

The Islamic marriage has the character of a contract and hence it allows divorce to both parties through on different conditions. The husband can divorce his wife without even assigning reason and without resorting to the court. He had only uttered the word “Talaq” or divorce three times.

The Islamic religion expected women to observe fidelity towards her husband. When this obligation of martial union was not fulfilled the husband could divorce his unchaste wife. Even after divorce she had to wait for three-menstrual period to ascertain whether she was pregnant.

#### **7. Eve-Teasing**

Eve-teasing has been defined as follows:

When a man by words either spoken or by signs and or visible representation or by gesture does any act in public place, or signs, recites to litter any indecent words or songs or ballet in any public place to the annoyance of any woman.

The offence of Eve-teasing in-different wordings included in Indian penal code diction 350,354 and 509.Yet eve-teasing is on the rise that amounts to death. We have witnessed Sarika Shah’s case.

#### **8. Property right**

Woman had no property right on the joint family property till 1989.She had only limited interest in the joint family property. On 25.3.89 the Tamil Nadu government introduced an amendment giving co- parcenary right to daughters in par with the son which is of a land mark in the status of woman.

It gives women full ownership in the property inherited or acquired by her. The widow, the mother and the daughter now not only inherit property along with the son but also take an equal share with him. Section 14 of the act gives women the right to acquire absolute ownership of property. The Hindu Succession Act 1956 provides equal share to women in the properties of their father.

## 9. Dowry

Dowry means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly.

Technically, dowry is what is given to the son-in-law or to his parents on demand either in cash or kind. Today marriages are fixed on the amount of dowry that is promised by the bride's family to prevent this culture the government has enacted the dowry prohibition act in 1961 and the same has been amended in 1984.

### Conclusion:

Legal provision relating to women and the actual situation in which they find themselves, it is clear that something more than legislation is required. The Indian Legal System also does not take into account the reality of the social conditions either by incorporating them in the various enactments made from time to time. The legal system, which means the courts, lawyers, police, bureaucracy continuous to be male dominated and therefore the laws have functioned contrary to their declared objectives.

The execution of laws is more important than making them

-Thomas Jefferson

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### *I Fill in the Blanks*

1. The Islamic husband can divorce his wife by uttering the word \_\_\_\_\_ three times.

**Ans :** Talaq

2. Women had no property right on the joint family property till \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 1989

3. Presents/gifts given to bridegroom without demand is not \_\_\_\_\_ under Dowry Prohibition Act.

**Ans :** dowry

4. Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 fixed the minimum age of marriage for females at 15 and it is \_\_\_\_\_ under special marriage Act , 1954.

**Ans :** 18

5. Daughters have equal right as sons to their \_\_\_\_\_ property.

**Ans :** Parent's



## ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. The medical Termination of Pregnancy Act  
a) 1773                      b) **1971**                      c)1974                      d)1975
2. The Hindu family law based on  
a) Vedas                      b) **Manu Smiriti**                      c)Upanishads                      d)None of the above
3. Under which act provides equal property share to women  
a) **Hindu Succession Act 1956**                      b) Hindu minority act  
c)Hindu women rights to property act                      d) Maintenance Act.
4. Hindu Marriage Succession Act of 1955 fix the minimum age for female  
a) 12 yrs                      b) 10yrs                      c)**15yrs**                      d) 16 yrs
5. Who was the social reformers of widow remarriage?  
a) **Iswar Chandra Vidyasager**                      b) Mahatma Gandhi  
c)Rajaram Mohan Roy                      d) Rokmani devi

## ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Expand SITA.
2. Which case is the witness of Eve - teasing?
3. What is Dowry?
4. Which law states that rape is an offence?
5. Who was forced to SATI on 1987?

## ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. State Divorce of Hindu and Islam Religions.
2. Describe about the child marriage Restrain Act and Widow Remarriage Act.

## ***V Essay Questions***

1. Mention about the various laws related to women issues.

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## WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mrs. M. Uma Rani &**

**Mrs. T. Palaneeswari**

*“ You are a woman; by serving you must worship, and by serving you must rule”*

*-- Rabindranath Tagore*

### **I. Introduction**

Work is worship- the striving force at the back of every woman. The ability behind everyone is their empowerment. To view the empowerment of human resource, men and women are twin eyes. The society can march towards development only when it accepts the women participation, grants responsibility and utilize her ability. The prosperity of a society lies on the employability of women.

### **II. Objectives of the study**

The aim of this article is

- To limelight the life style of women workforce in India.
- To grant view on emerging careers for educated women.
- To bring to light the problems of working women
- To inform that the progress of the society lies in the empowerment of women.

### **III. Life style of women workforce in India**

In India working women lead a life of dual responsibilities, if they are married and have a family. They still have traditional roles to fulfill and prefer a career to avoid domestic drudgery.

With the majority of working women the family takes precedence over their job. They prefer to stay in joint families where their children can be taken care of while they are at work. When they come back in the evenings from relatively modern surroundings of their work spots, their personalities undergo a change to accommodate the demands of their time and attention by different family members whose predominant feelings are of having been neglected.

These women often do their shopping on the way from office. They reserve their weekends for heavy house –work which will help them to cope with the rest of the week with relatively less tension. Weekends are also reserved for spending time with their spouses and

children, for entertainment, family duties, visits, etc.. Actually speaking they hardly have time for personal needs.

Despite the freedom and confidence of their jobs and pay packets, working women still prefer to leave the financial decision making and budgeting to their husbands. They are unwilling to compromise on their dual burdens and prefer job with flexible timings. They are not unduly fashion conscious, but take pride in graceful clothing. Indian working women are managing their double role admirably.

#### **IV. Women employment in India**

There are four categories of working women in India. Some work while they are waiting for matrimony. A majority work because they are qualified, wants a second income and a different kind of life for part of the day. A small section consists of career women. A sizable of women is bread winners.

A casual traveller to any part of the country can see women working hard, but they are working in the informal sector. An estimation of national commission on self employed women states that 94% of workforce is in the informal sector.

Within the organised sector where women are in decision making capacities (Indian Administrative Services, Indian Foreign Services and Indian Police Services) were 311 in 1985, the figure crawled up to 430 in 1992,501 in 1996 and reached 645 in 2000.

Economic liberalisation and new freedom mantra have thrown open a new world of market opportunities for women .There is virtually no field of enterprise that women cannot enter.

#### **V. Emerging careers for educated women**

Education bears an important relationship to the occupation of women. The education grants her not only higher occupational prestige and earnings but also aids her in entering areas of male domain.

1. **Journalism:** Suits the women with a flair for writing, an ability to express ideas concisely and curiosity about people and events around them.
2. **Public relations:** Attracts imaginative and ambitious young women to do the task of image building on the products and services.
3. **Advertising:** Offers exciting and challenging career to hard working women, where there are technical and ground duty branches.
4. **Civil airlines:** Becoming pilot is an expensive exercise for professional training, yet once employed, they are paid handsomely.

5. ***Building and construction:*** Organised sector attracts architects and provides more job options at all levels.
6. ***Engineering and technology:*** Discipline options for women are computers information technology, environmental engineering, leather technology, food instrumentation engineering, rubber and plastics and so on.
7. ***Dairy technology and food processing:*** Provides ample opportunities to women with an academic background in chemistry, biotechnology and dairy technology.
8. ***Cost accountant:*** Fascinates women who have love for numbers, logical approach, innovative, mind persistence, determination and an ability to get along with people.
9. ***Chartered accountant:*** Enterprising chartered accountants with initiative have the challenging option for setting up highly productive private practice.
10. ***I.T. enabled services:*** Includes employment in call centres, technical support centres, medical transcription, data processing in banks, accounting and financial services, companies, stock exchanges, mutual funds, etc. and graphic information systems, content publishing, creation of web pages, multimedia and multimedia data bases.
11. ***Managerial consultants:*** Qualified MBA's with some years of experience are successfully setting up their own consultancy services in a range of management areas such as finance ,marketing ,market research, personal service.
12. ***Entrepreneurship:*** Women with impressive qualifications and entrepreneurial spirit setup efficiently run home based business, create and market innovative products and services.
  - ***Creative art and craft:*** Talented and more inclined towards art and crafts making use of their skills to create various gift items.
  - ***Fashion designing:*** Aptitude for designing and tailoring clothes can turn their spare room into an exclusive boutique.
  - ***Gardening and animal care:*** Operating plant nursery to sell ornamental plants, bouquets and animal care unit for breeding pet animals and food for those pets.
  - ***Teaching:*** Running tuition centres, coaching to appear for competitive examinations, operating play schools and crèches
  - ***Catering service:*** Aptitude in culinary skills can setup catering services for variety of food items, from pickles and sauce to specialized items like chocolates and cakes and even complete meals.

- ***Creative writing and assistance in publishing:*** Women with language skills can write articles for journals and magazines .They can edit manuscripts or proof read for grammatical and typographical errors for book and magazines publishers.

## **VI. Problems of working women**

Though women are marching forward day by day, they have many problems due to gender bias, sexual discrimination, their double role at home and due to their delicate physical status. The problem experienced by working women are as follows:

1. ***In farm sector, development in technology:*** The machines used in farms and in unorganised sector are designed to be operated by men and are not fit for the convenient operation by women workers.
2. ***Male bias in government programmes:*** The government programmes are male oriented but not women centric (eg) rescue measures undertaken in Tsunami hit areas deny employment opportunities to women.
3. ***Discrimination against women:*** Women are predominantly employed in the labour intensive, unskilled jobs in the unorganised sector.
4. ***Threat to job security:*** Contract, casual, temporary, part time piece rated jobs and home based works are increasingly replacing permanent jobs.
5. ***Sexual harassment:*** A large number of working women face sexual harassment and threat of violence at work place and it is high when they work in night shift.
6. ***Unhealthy environment:*** Unhealthy environment cause a lot of physical discomfort and mental stress resulting in :

Reproductive hazards (pregnancy outcomes such as abortion)

- a. Physical exertion (physical fatigue )
  - b. Effects of noise on birth weight of children, menstrual disturbances and infertility
  - c. Effects of chemicals such as exposure to pesticides (in agriculture) and causing spontaneous abortion.
7. ***Other Problems:*** Working women also face some additional problems at home and society as they play multiple roles. They are:
- a. Reduced entertainment and social activities
  - b. Lack of attention to house hold and family members
  - c. Posting of husband and wife at different places
  - d. Inconvenient working hour(night duty)
  - e. Family members' misunderstanding results in psychological torture

- f. Inadequate child care facilities in work place and at home cause great anxiety and emotional strain.
- g. Looking down by the society, is still to be faced by working women.

## **VII. Employment empowers women**

After independence before 1990, women remains a commodity well decorated individually well placed in the showcase of the social showroom, a figure to be embraced, and an article to satisfy the passions of men. Male chauvinism has not allowed to her to come out of the shell and have her individual status.

The nineties are undoubtedly the decade of the women. There is no avenue she has not trodden on, no obstacle she has not overcome and no job still taboo for her. Today's woman has scaled very peak, both literally and figuratively. Most women pursue a career not only for financial reason but also for the challenge and satisfaction a job provides. Transformation in the social scene has enable the women to rightly take their place as contributing partners in the work place, pouring into the economy an immense flow of brain power and energy.

- As women receive greater education and training, they will be better employed and earn more money.
- As women earn more money, as has been repeatedly shown, they spend it in further the education and health of their children.
- As women raise economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household and village, and will have greater voice.
- As women gain influence and consciousness, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements –gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes-and command attention of police and courts when attacked.
- As women's economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry.
- As son preference declines and acceptance of violence declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters and age of marriage will rise.
- For every year beyond fourth grade that girls go to school, family size shrinks 20 %, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20 %.
- As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive and will give birth to healthier babies.

Employment of women is essential to the development of good family and good society and ultimately a good nation. Women employment assures stability of the society. Acceptance of

the commitment, dedication and achievements of women will pave way to the progress and development of our nation.

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***I. Fill in the blanks:***

1. To view the empowerment of \_\_\_\_\_ men and women are twin eyes.

**Ans :** human resource

2. Women prefer a \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid domestic drudgery.

**Ans :** career

3. Education bears an important relationship to the \_\_\_\_\_ of women.

**Ans :** occupation

4. Organised sector attracts \_\_\_\_\_ and provides more job options at all levels.

**Ans :** architects

5. \_\_\_\_\_ provides ample opportunities to women with an academic background in chemistry, biotechnology.

**Ans :** Food processing

***II. Choose the best answer:***

1. Working women hardly have time for

a. shopping      b. family duties      c. **personal needs**      d. visits

2. An estimation of national commission on self employed women states that 94% of workforce is in the \_\_\_\_\_.

a. **informal sector.**      b. farm sector      c. organised sector      d. technical sector

3. Aptitude in \_\_\_\_\_ can setup catering services

a. language skills      b. **culinary skills**      c. aptitude for image building      d. academic background in engineering.

4. Women who have love for numbers may choose their career as \_\_\_\_\_.

a. managerial consultant      b. public relations      c. entrepreneurship      d. **cost accountants.**

5. Unhealthy environment cause a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.

a. sexual harassment      b. threat to job security      c. **physical discomfort and mental stress**      d. reduced social activities.

***III. Answer in ONE sentence:***

1. Why is the employment of women essential?

2. What are the I.T. enabled services?

3. What are the careers to suit women with creativity?
4. What are the discipline options for women in engineering and technology?
5. Mention the effect on women workforce in farm sector due to development in technology.
6. State any one physical discomfort faced by women due to unhealthy environment.
7. Write down the problem to working women due to night shift.

#### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Describe briefly the life style of women workforce in India.
2. What are the emerging carriers for educated women?
3. Narrate the problems of working women.
4. Explain how employment empowers women.

#### ***V Essay Questions***

1. Employment of women is essential for the development of our nation – Discuss.

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## WOMEN AND RELIGION

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Mrs.C.Krishnaveni

*“ The especial genius of women.T believe is to be electrical in movement ,  
intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency ”*

*-- Margaret Fuller*

### Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary defines religion as, “the belief in the existence of God or Goddesses, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them”. Historically the worlds major religions have been instrumental in limiting women’s roles in society, many people view religions as inherently hostile to these recent shifts in development and population policies .For some people, the affirmation of women’s inherent inferiority is so integral to the dominant teachings of the world religions, that the religions themselves appear irreconcilable with all attempts to reach gender equity within society.

The religious sanctioning of women’s systematic subjugation cannot be disregarded . Yet any understanding of religions role in the lives of women is incomplete if religion is understood only as oppressive. Throughout history and the contemporary world, the religious belief that men and women are fully and equally human , has led men and women to dedicate their lives to transforming social and religious structures to be more egalitarian.

Our own religious tradition is egalitarian because it affirms that women and men are fully equal and equally human. This egalitarian core is expressed differently within each of the world’s religious traditions, though there are some similarities. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the egalitarian core is expressed in terms of their equal creation. Each of these traditions affirm that because both women and men are made in the image of God, they are equal and thus are to be treated in social relations with the same dignity afforded all human beings. In Hinduism and Buddhism , the egalitarian core affirms that both men and women are able to reach liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

Religious endorsement of patriarchal social institutions is thus not an inherent part of the tradition , but represents a later addition to and distortion of its fundamental core.Indeed closer examination of the religious traditions reveals that their egalitarian cores also provide resources to undermine patriarchal family structures.

Finally, it is often necessary to reconstruct and reformulate religious practices and traditions to bring them in line with the egalitarian vision at the center of the religious tradition. Moreover , since the empowerment of women in all spheres of life is necessary to address world population issues , religious voices also have something constructive to add the discussions about these issues.

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## WOMEN IN HINDUISM

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Dr. (Mrs) P.N.Kamala,

*“ In the vedas and upanishadas, women taught the highest truths and received the same veneration as men ”*

*-- Swami Vivekananda*

### Introduction

The term ‘Hinduism’ was coined by the British to denote the sanskaritized Vedic tradition along with the Saivite, Vaishnavite traditions and the folk traditions. An attempt is made here to reveal how the religious status of women was high once upon a time in the above mentioned traditions and how it was derogated when patriarchy dominated over those traditions. Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Epics and Puranas and Tamil literature form the primary sources.

### I Procreation-Women

The ancient Terracotta female figures which were recovered from the Indus sites were considered to be the representatives of the Mother Goddess. From the Indus to the Nile, range of the culture of the Mother Goddess extended without break.

According to the Vedic tradition ‘Atti’ was the Mother Goddess. She gave birth to the universe, five elements, living and non-living beings.

The Tamil Society worshipped ‘Kotravai’ as their Mother Goddess. It was believed that she gave them victory in the wars. The worship of ‘Karaka’ or ‘Kumba’ symbolizes the worship of the Mother Goddess .

Women were considered to be the cause of the procreation and were highly revered by the society. Mother Goddess had the central position and along with her, women also occupied the central position in the society.

#### a) High religious status of women

During the Vedic period, both boys and girls had equal opportunity for education. Both observed the Brahmacharya discipline. Upanayana Samskara was performed for both boys and girls. After Upanayana, the girls could stop their education and get married. The marriage age was 16-17. But if a girl wanted to continue her studies, then she could become a ‘Brahmavadini’.

Wife had religious rights to perform sacrifices along with her husband and so she was called as ‘Sahadharmini’. In Tamil Society also, women had high religious status. In ritual

performances for Rain Goddess and Fertility Goddess, womenfolk occupied an important place. 'Devaraatti' was the priestess who performed the rituals. 'Kattuvichi' through 'Kazhangu' (a seed) fixed the auspicious time for the rituals to be performed.

## **II Procreation-Men**

When the miracle of birth was discovered and when man found his role in procreation, the man's position was changed from the marginal to the central laying the foundation to patrilineal society. Man began to realize his power over women in procreation and began to develop a cult of god of power.

In Cilappatikaram, the festival for the Vedic God Indra is pictured elaborately. He was said to be the Rain God as well as the God who could prevent the occurrence of Tsunami and avoid disaster. When Poompuhar was destroyed by Tsunami, during the period of Manimekalai, an epic in Tamil, the Chola King Killivalavan was blamed for not celebrating the festival for God Indra.

The worship of Indra vanished and the people began to worship the Male Gods Vishnu, Siva and Muruga. The job of procreation was entrusted to Male Gods. The Male Gods were born without the union of women. Muruga was born to Siva through his sacred eye. Brahma, the creator was born in the nuptial chord of Vishnu. Ayyappa was born to Siva and Vishnu(Mohini)

Mother Goddess, who were once the creators of the universe and the society, became powerless deities without any identity and were side-lined into the folk tradition. In Chidambaram, Thillakali's hands are tied up shows that the women are in bondage to men. Ellaiamma, the folk deity who was once upon a time was a saviour Goddess of the village, was now given a place in the outskirts of the village.

### **a) Inequality due to Birth**

In ancient days, there was divisions among the people according to the professions they do. But later on, Purushasukta was introduced into the Rig Veda and Varnashrama came into practice. The four divisions of the society gave way to caste system. Women were considered as the fourth caste. Endogamy made caste more and more rigid. It was said that 'Karma' decides the caste and the birth of a male or female. Menstruation of women had a negative value. Based on purity and impurity, inequality due to birth was imposed on women by the patriarchy society. Thus both caste system and patriarchy degraded women

### **b) The derogated religious status of women**

According to 'Swadharma', women's duty was to perform household duties, nurture their children and serve their husbands. She gets salvation in this world and in after life only through her husband. This is being taught to women from their childhood.

Though the Goddess for learning and wealth are women, educational rights and property rights were denied to them. Yagnavalkya denied Upanayana to girls. Moreover woman had no rights to give her daughter in marriage. She had no rights to perform funeral rites for her parents. While performing sacrifices, the husband was the 'Adhikari' and the wife was only an 'Upakari'. She was considered as an object to be protected during her childhood by her father, after marriage by her husband, and after his death by her son.

A male child was preferred to a female child. A son was inevitable to escape hell. A barren wife is abused and is an unfortunate being according to Sathapatha Brahmaanaa. A pregnant woman's prayer was, '.....protect my son who is to be born, let my offspring be man and not woman'. The son was the perpetuator of the patrilineal family(gotra) tradition.

In Atharva Veda, a woman is described as a property. This led to the Devadasi system. With the temple culture and feudalism, the Devadasi system came into being. Women are sold to the temples or given as gifts to the temples. In Cilappathikaram, Madhavi was sold for 1008 coins of gold. Manimekalai states that 120 Devadasis from Indra's land(North) came along with Chitrapathi to Poompuhar. Later on, the Devadasis who were connected with the temples were connected with the kings and upper class men.

Widow remarriage was not allowed. She was compelled to lead an ascetic life. Her head was tonsured. The sacred texts were interpolated to subjugate women. For instance, originally during the Vedic period, the widow was not required to commit 'Sati'. She was only expected to lie on her husband's funeral pyre before it was lit and her husband's brother would lift her up as a symbolic gesture. But later on, the texts were changed ('Agre' to 'Agne') to accommodate immolation of the widow. When Thirumalai Nayak died, his 200 wives entered the funeral pyre along with him and committed Sati.

Thus the seeds for the fall of women were sown during the post Vedic period.

### **c) Women-Bhakthi Age-Tamil Literature**

In Tamil tradition, one could find Avvai, Karaikkal Ammai and Andal as religious scholars. Both Karaikkal Ammai and Andal are accepted respectively as a Nayanmar and an Aazhwar, yet their songs are never recited in the temples.

Thiru Kayilaya Gnaana Ula composed by Ceraman Perumal Nayanar depicts the ladies belonging to 7 stages of life(Pethai, Pethumbai etc.) as Erotic ladies. They were used to distract even God who was going in procession around the town. Later on, the Ula literature was connected with Kings and it paved the way to expose women only as objects of sex.

#### **d) Various Myths through Epics and Puranas**

In order to socialize women and internationalize feminine qualities for women, various myths were created through Epics and Puranas.

##### **1) Urthvathaandava-Biological determinism**

The myth 'Urthvathaandava' emphasizes biological determinism. During Siva-Sakthi dance, sakti did not raise her foot to remove the Kundalam, as Siva using 'Lalaatikala Karana', because her female modesty prevented her from doing so. The divine competition of Siva and Sakti ended on the note that Siva, the male is the winner.

##### **2) Draupathi-Reductionism**

In Mahabharata, Draupathi had become the wife of five brothers i.e., Pandavas, as per the words of Kunthi. Because Draupathi laughed at Duryodhana, he took revenge upon her. The proverb 'Pombalai Criccha Pochu' denotes the laughter of Draupathi. When Yudhishtira gambled with Sakuni, he used Draupathi as a stake. In the royal court, she was assaulted, eve teased and put to shame by Duchadana. The first eve-teasing case is thus revealed in Mahabharata. In this epic, the philosophy of surrender is taught through Draupathi, a woman and she became the victim.

Thus, Draupathi was reduced to Nature (fruit) and she was treated as a lifeless, mindless object.

##### **3) Sita-Essentialism**

In Ramayana, Sita had to go through fire-ordeal. Then again, Rama sent her out of mere suspicion and she had to suffer in silence and at last was drowned into Mother Earth. Thus Sita becomes the symbol of patience, obedience etc.

Thus myths and puranas made women feel that they subordinates, objects of utility and had to preserve their feminine qualities. This kind of socialization process and internationalization process for women through myths continued for several hundreds of years and it became a historical process.

#### **III Ardhanarisvara-solution**

How to reconcile the oppositions in the human nature? The Indian Myth of 'Ardhanarisvara' solves these contradictions.

'The Ardhanarisvara form symbolizes the union and concord of the spirit and its energy' (Rudrasamhita). The concept of Ardhanarisvara has its basis in the Purusa-Prakriti doctrine of Sankya philosophers. The Saiva tantric religions also represent the stage of reaching unity within the duality. It is conceived as the interplay of opposites resulting in a vibrant quiescence. The essential nature of Ardhanarisvara has is, thus, reconciliation of the opposites, both in cosmic

and human consciousness. The myth of collective thinking was relegated to a story of quarelling spouses i.e., Siva-Sakti-Urthvathaandava.

Excessive growth of masculinity of femininity in any individual be man or woman is abnormal. Competition becomes aggression, dispute becomes war, love becomes possession, affinity becomes fundamentalism, self assertion becomes dominance, governance becomes control, norms becomes strictures, sacrifice becomes victimization and humility turns to slavery. The consciousness of man and woman, should be a well- balanced human consciousness and Ardhanarisvara becomes a symbol for it.

#### **4. Conclusion**

From the Vedas , Upanishads, Smritis, Epics and Puranas and Tamil Literature, it is understood that the high religious status of women was degraded with the advent of patriarchy. In order to restore humanity , through educations women’s consciousness should be raised so that they could overcome their inferiority complexity. Men should be gender sensitized so that they would think that “Anatomy is not woman’s destiny.” For both ,Ardhanariswara sets up an example for leading a peaceful and a happy life.

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#### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. In ancient times Tamil Society worshipped \_\_\_\_\_ as their Mother Goddess.

**Ans :** Kotravai

2. Ellaiamman, the folk deity was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the village.

**Ans :** Saviour Goddess

3. In Mahabhrata \_\_\_\_\_ was reduced to nature and she was treated as a lifeless, mindless object.

**Ans :** Draupathi

4. The symbol of patience and obedience in the epic Ramayana is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Sita

5. In Chidambaram, \_\_\_\_\_ hands are tied up which shows that the women are in bondage to men.

**Ans :** Thillakaali’s

#### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. During the vedic period, the wife was called as ‘Sahadharmini’ for

- a) they were considered as superior beings
- b) they had composed Vedic hymns

- c) they had equal rights in property  
**d) they had religious rights to perform sacrifices**
2. Caste System was made more and more rigid by  
 a) exogamy                      b) patriarchy                      c) swadharna  
**d) endogamy.**
3. ‘Pombalai Cirichaa Pochu’ – This tamil proverb denotes the laughter of  
 a) kunthi                      b) **draupadi**                      c) kargi                      d)peypedir
4. According to Vedic tradition the Mother Goddess who gave birth to the Universe, five elements, living and non-living beings is  
 a) Renuka                      b) **Atiti**                      c) Sakthi                      d)Dhanu
5. who considered woman as an object to be protected during childhood by her father, after marriage by her husband and after his death by her son  
 a) Jamadhakkini                      b) **Yaagnavalkya**                      c) Janaka                      d)Indra

### **III**

#### **III Answer in One Word**

1. Define the term “Hindusim”.
2. Define Religion.
3. Which Goddess gave victory in the wars?
4. Which one is decided as the caste and the birth of male or female?
5. In Atharva veda a woman described as What?
6. List out the religious scholars of women in Tamil Litrature.

#### **IV Paragraph Questions**

1. Mention the various myths through Epics and Puranas.
2. Mention the practices and rituals that led to the derogation of women

#### **V Essay Questions**

1. Describe the position of women in Hinduism in an essay form.

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## WOMEN IN ISLAM

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr.(Mrs) Hasan Fathima Badrudeen,**

*“A handsome woman is a jewel , but a good woman is a treasure”  
--Saadi*

### **Introduction**

Islam is an Arabic term meaning “submission” to the will of one God, Allah. The Arabic root “s-l-m” means “to be in peace, to be an integral whole”. The Holy Quran pictures the males’ attitude towards the females in the following verse: “And when a daughter is announced to one of them, his face becomes dark and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the people, because of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in dust? Now surely evil is what they judge (16:58,59). Thus female infanticide was a common phenomenon in Arabia. To know whether the pregnant woman bore male or female, her belly would be cut open by the cruel males with a knife. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him 570 A.D. to 632 A.D.) brought immense relief to the females as he gave a deathblow to all the tyrannical customs chaining them. This article aims at elucidating the rights and privileges granted to women by Islam, Muslim women’s present position and their progress towards higher ideals.

### **The Qur’an**

Religion provides tools with which women may create a degree of spiritual, political and personal autonomy. It also forms part of women’s conditioning towards conformity to self restrictive roles and behaviour. In order to understand how religious symbols promote creativity or oppression for women, we must consider the social and cultural arrangements. The explorations reveal that religion provides women with a critical perspective on and alternatives to the conditioning they receive as members of their societies.

### **The rights and privileges of Muslim women**

Today people think that women are liberated and that the women’s liberation movement began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet (Hadith or Sunnah) are the sources from which every Muslim woman derives her rights and duties.

### **Human rights**

Islam, Fourteen centuries ago, made women equally accountable to God in glorifying and worshipping Him-setting no limits on her moral progress. Islam established woman’s equality in

her humanity with men. Men and women both came from the same essence they are equal in their humanity. Women cannot be by nature evil or then men would be evil also. Similarly, neither gender can be superior because it would be a contradiction of equality.

### **Civil Rights**

First, she is free to choose her religion .The Qur'an states : “there is no compulsion in religion .Right has been made distinct from error” women are encouraged in Islam to contribute their opinions and ideas. A muslim woman chooses her husband and keeps her name after marriage. A muslim woman's testimony is valid in legal disputes.

### **Social Rights**

The Prophet (PHUB) said: “ seeking knowledge is a mandate for every muslim (male and female)” .Men and women both have the capacity for learning and understanding. Muslim women must acquire the appropriate education to perform this duty in accordance with their own natural talents and interests. While maintenance of a home, providing support to her husband and bearing, raising and teaching of children are among the first and very highly regarded roles for a woman, if she has the skills to work outside the home for the good of the community, she may do as long as her family obligations are met.

### **Political Rights**

A right given to Muslim women by God 1400 years ago is the right of vote. On any public matter, a woman may voice her opinion and participate in politics. Qur'an established the right of women to select their leader and publicly declare so. Finally, Islam does not forbid a woman from holding important positions in government.

### **Economic Rights**

The Islamic Shariah recognizes the full property rights of women before and after marriage. The muslim woman has the privilege to earn money, the right to own property. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her earnings including her husband.

### **Rights of a wife**

To foster the love and security that come with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first of the wife's rights is to receive mahr, a gift from the husband which is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage.

The second right of a wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth she may have ,her husband is obligated to provide her with food, Shelter and clothing. He is not forced, however to spend beyond his capability and his wife is not entitled to make unreasonable demands.

A wife's right also extend beyond material needs .She has the right to kind treatment.

### **Role and status of woman in society**

The Qur'an effectively ended the cruel Pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide. When the female buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed. Parents are duty bound to support to show kindness and justice to their daughters. Prophet Muhammad said "Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, Allah will enter him into Paradise".

She is equal to man in bearing personal and common responsibilities and in receiving rewards for her deeds. She is acknowledged as an independent personality, in possession of human qualities and worthy of spiritual aspirations. She is equal to man in the pursuit of education and knowledge. When Islam enjoins the seeking of knowledge upon Muslims, it makes no distinction between man and woman.

She is entitled to freedom of expression as much as man is. Her sound opinions are taken into consideration and cannot be disregarded just because she happens to belong to the female sex. Historical records show that women participated in public life with the early Muslims, especially in times of emergencies. Women used to accompany the Muslim armies engaged in battles to nurse the wounded, prepare supplies, serve the warriors and so on.

Islam grants woman equal rights to contract, to enterprise, to earn and possess independently. Her life, her property, her honour are as sacred as those of man. If she commits any offence, her penalty is no less or more than of man's in a similar case.

Man is the person solely responsible for the complete maintenance of his wife, his family and any other needy relations. It is his duty by law to assume all financial responsibilities and maintain his dependent adequately.

### **Present day Muslim women**

One will be sore over the pitiable position of many Muslim women today. They are strong neither in the knowledge of the world nor in that of the religion. Many don't know their own rights and privileges bestowed upon them by God; they are exploited by unscrupulous males. Celluloid world and the T.V. influence their dress regulations, family life and social life. Yet there are very many among them who are not only better educated but also are sound in family and social life. A good percentage of them are employed also. By virtue of their religious education and worldly knowledge, they take care to choose jobs in institutions meant for only women. They run their families with good understanding and are source of comfort to their spouses. But at the same time, Muslim men are to be warned here that they are answerable to God for keeping the women ignorant of enormous rights granted to them and exploiting them which is a sin against God and a travesty of Islamic faith. To understand Islam, the life and

practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace on him) along with those of his blessed companions must be studied.

Women must be given dowry by men (mehr) at the time of marriage. The males should not demand dowries from females. Demanding dowry is a great sin in Islam. The men and women who demand dowry from females for their sons act from purely materialistic motive and spoil the conjugal bliss of the young couple. The practice of dowry ruins poor girls' marital prospects and paves the way for debauchery.

### **Conclusion**

What Islam has established for woman is that which suits her nature , gives her full security and protects her against disgraceful circumstances and uncertain channels of life.; but the Islamic practices cannot be said to conform in many aspects with the true principles of Islam. Muslim women's struggle for Constitutional rights has been a continual issue throughout the twentieth century. Women in Islam too have roles to play for the development of the family, society, industry and nation. Obeying the commandments of God and enjoying the rights and privileges bestowed upon them by God, Muslim women can live with dignity and respect at all times discharging all functions.

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### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. Islam is an Arabic term meaning \_\_\_\_\_ to the will of one God, Allah.

**Ans :** Submission

2. A Muslim women free to choose her \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** religion

3. Demanding dowry is a great \_\_\_\_\_ in Islam.

**Ans :** sin

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Muslim women have roles to play for the development of

a) **the family**                      b) Society                      c) Industry                      d) all the above

2. Islam is an \_\_\_\_\_ term

a) English                      b) **arabic**  
c) Western                      d) Greek

3. In Islam , the males should not demand \_\_\_\_\_ from females

a) **Dowry**                                      b) freedom  
c) love    d) Rights

***III Answer in One Word***

1. What is the meaning of “Islam”
2. When did the Liberation movement began?.
3. When did the right of vote given to muslim women by God?
4. Define the term “Mehr”.
5. Who says this “Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, allah will enter him into Paradise”.

***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. What are the role and status of woman in society.
2. Describe the present day Muslim women.

***V Essay Questions***

1. Write the rights and privileges of Muslim women.

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## WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY

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Mrs. M. Ruby Dhavomani

*“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness”*

*-- Proverb*

### **Introduction**

Down through the centuries women have often been illtreated and given a low role in society. In countries where the dowry system is still birth of a girl child can create a dreaded financial burden for poor parents. Often a bride becomes behaves like a slave to her husband. Let us see what the bible teaches us about the role and nature of women.

### **Man’s companion**

In the book of Genesis that the woman was made after Adam the man, to be a companion or friend or helper to man. The word ‘helper’ does not mean that in any way she is slave of man. The Bible clearly shows us that the man is to care for the woman as he cares for his own body. Paul, one of the New Testament writers, puts it this way: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up. In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. This command says that the first requirement of a man is to care for his wife, to love her, to treat her with kindness and tenderness. The man is to provide for the wife as he provides for his own body.

God gave a specific command to man when he created woman, which is often ignored by many people. “For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24)

### **Caring for each other**

In return for the care and protection given by the husband, the wife is to help the husband in everyway that is lawful. She is to give herself to him as he gives himself to her. She is to submit to him as the authority in the home. “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. The role of the wife is to make the life of the husband more enjoyable and easier. He cares for her and in return she is to care for him. She is to encourage him, defend him and lift him up in the eyes of all her relatives and friends. She is to honour his decisions and abide by them. This does not mean that she may not voice her opinion or suggest council to him But it does not mean that his decision is final. To

obey her husband is no more demeaning for a wife than is obedience by the church to Christ Jesus.

Many in our days are wondering, what should be the role of a woman in today's world? Often the questions become emotional and there is a lot of shouting and demonstrating over women's rights.

In all the whole Bible, one of the most beautiful passages about women is Proverbs 31: 10-31. In verse 10, we read : "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies". There are numerous meanings for the word "virtuous", depending on the context in which it is used. It can mean "force, strength (of mind or body) and power". The woman described in this passage as virtuous is in everyway an excellent woman."A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband".

The description of the virtuous women in proverbs 31 describes the wife of a man who has risen in popularity, authority and government. She is described as a wise woman, as an efficient and godly matron in her domestic responsibilities and as a woman professing godliness and adorned with good works (1 Tim.2:9,10)

"Women's liberation". The phrase "Women's liberation" has different meanings to different people. What is meant by the terms, 'liberation, 'liberty' and 'freedom'? 'Freedom' is usually taken to mean the absolute right or privilege to act and express oneself as one pleases. This definition, however, cannot be correct, because such absolute freedom would soon violate the freedom of someone else.

According to the Scriptures, freedom is the release from one's sinful nature in order to be free to exercise one's will within the prescribed limits of God's will. Virtuous women reveals a truly liberated woman.

The description of the ideal Christian woman pictures her in five basic relationships. These relationships are interwoven constantly throughout this passage.

### **To God**

First, we see the ideal Christian or virtuous woman in her relationship to god. This speaks of her as one who has a reverential trust and fear of Almighty god. "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

The Christian woman needs to totally yield her life to God and His plans for her. She must be filled with the Holy Spirit, who is her guide and her strength. She should be regular in her devotional time. She cannot be an ideal Christian woman unless she takes time with God in daily devotion.

### **To her Husband**

Second, we see the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her husband. She is submissive to his loving leadership. She is dependable in carrying out her responsibilities as mother and wife. She is loyal and trustworthy. “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life”. (Pro. 31:11,12). She should be an industrious woman, ready to help wherever she can. “She can earn money by doing suitable works.

Further more, this woman helps in the prosperity and honour of her husband. “Her husband is respected at the city gates, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land”. Sitting at the city gate in ancient times indicated that the person held a position of honors and leadership. This woman enables him to contribute his share in public affairs with the result that he has a great reputation among the leaders of the city.

The woman referred to here is, of course, a married woman. The fact that she is married and has children, however, does not mean that she has lost her individuality or that she has no freedom. Such a woman is active and leads a meaningful life. Her husband can trust her and have full confidence in her.

Both men and women have their own place in the orderly plan of god. If either one steps out of the proper place, there will be nothing but confusion and trouble. Headship, of course, belongs to the man. But headship is not dictatorship. It is leadership through love and a good example.

### **To her children**

Third, we see the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her children. She provides food for her household. “She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

She also provides clothing for her family. She avoids extremes in dress- She is neither overdressed nor underdressed.

The Apostle Peter gave an important admonition to Christian women in this regard. “Wives, be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair, and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self. Thus a woman must depend on her inner, spiritual beauty and not on the outer, artificial beauty, the world emphasizes. She controls her children by godly wisdom. “She speaks with



wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness”.

She sees her children as being loaned to her from God. She trains them in the ways of the Lord so that they might become what God wants them to be for His purposes. “Her children arise and call her blessed, her husband also and he praises her”.

### **To other people**

Fourth, we see the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to other people “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hand to the needy”. By helping the poor and uplifting the needy, she is a good neighbour.

The woman with these qualities is sympathetic and charitable. She loves to extend to others the blessings which have rewarded her efforts. She knows the truth that he who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and the Lord will reward him in turn. This woman has no fear of poverty because God promises grace for our needs when we help others. This woman is like the Good Samaritan who found a person lying by the side of the road, wounded and robbed. He had compassion on him, cleaned his wounds and took him to an inn to be cared for.

### **To her work**

Fifth, we see the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her work. She is industrious as well as hard working but not lazy. Whether in the home or out of it, whether working by herself or for some one else, in whatever she does, she is worker, not a shirker. Thus the ideal Christian woman is diligent in her work, finding pleasure in whatever she does. Her activity is not a matter of compulsion but of compassion.

### **Conclusion**

Is a woman’s place in the home alone? Is that really where she can find her God-given role? The answer depends on whether or not she is married, whether she has children who need her care and whether or not her husband is able to provide for the basic needs of the home. Women like Ruth\*, Deborah\*, Abigail\* and Anna\* are among many Biblical women who had roles out side the home.

Yet nothing should diminish the honour of the woman who choose to marry, have children, manage the home and use it as a place of Christian hospitality. But this is to say that a woman must ‘stay at home’ and honour her husband as head of the house because she, as a woman, is less intelligent and capable than a man. Individual intelligence and competence have nothing to do with it. It is a matter of God’s design for families.

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### ***I Fill in the blanks***

1. The word \_\_\_\_\_ does not mean that a woman is a servant of man.

**Ans:** “helper”

2. A virtuous woman is a \_\_\_\_\_ to her husband.

**Ans :** crown

3. The ideal Christian woman controls her children by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** godly wisdom

4. A \_\_\_\_\_ woman’s price is far above rubies.

**Ans :** virtuous

5. A woman must depend upon her inner \_\_\_\_\_ beauty.

**Ans :** spiritual

### ***II Choose the best answer***

1. Children are

- a) gifts from God                      b) blessing from God  
c) **loan from God**                      d) all the above

2. According to the scriptures, freedom is

- a) **release from one’s sinful nature.** b) doing what one pleases.  
c) not obeying the authority.              d) none of the above.

3. The good Samaritan found a person lying by the side of the road

- a) he wounded and robbed him.                      b) he left place silently  
c) **he cleaned his wound and took him to an inn.** d) none of the above.

4. An ideal Christian woman is

- a) Authoritative and arrogant      b) **Industrious and hard working**  
c) Selfish and greedy                      d) Love and care.

5. Beauty should not come from outward ornament but from

- a) **inner self, a gentle and quiet spirit.** b) artificial beauty  
c) fine clothes                                      d) all of the above.

6. Woman was made after Adam, the man,

- a) **to be a companion or friend or helper to him**  
b) to be a servant and a slave to him.  
c) to be his guide and leader  
d) None of the above.

***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who says this? “Wives, be submissive to your husbands”.
2. In which system can create a derided financial burden for poor Parents?
3. Mention any one of the New Testament writer.
4. Give the meaning of the term “Virtuous”
5. Give the examples among Biblical women who had roles out side the home.

***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. How does the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her husband?
2. Write a paragraph of the relationship between a virtuous woman and God.

***V Essay Question***

1. Write a Paragraph of the ideal Christian woman in her relationship to her children.

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## WOMEN AND CASTEISM

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### WITH SPECIAL REFERNCE TO DALIT WOMEN'S PLIGHT

Dr. Devaramani Lysabai

*"There can be no civilization in which man and woman are not equal partners"*

*-- Vijayalakshmi Pandit*

#### **Introduction**

From times immemorial, woman along with man has formed an integral part of the social structure throughout the world. In Indian Society too she has played and continues to play an important role. Through her manifold roles in the society as a mother as a sister and as a wife she socializes, educates, loves, feeds and supports individuals of the family with devotion, affection, love, sincerity and obedience. These roles of a woman have contributed to the evolution of values which lead to all round progress of society at large. In spite of this, woman suffers and her sufferings are multifaceted. The main reason is being her 'CASTE' to which she belongs.

#### **India – A Caste Ridden Land**

India is a caste ridden land. Here caste has become coterminous with race in the definition. One hundred and million dalits or the members of the lower cadre of the caste ridden society are at the bottom of the nation - a population on par with that of Russia or Brazil. The sufferings of this lower stratum of the people are worse and the most worst is the plight of the women of this group.

Though woman is a measuring yard for assessing the cultures of the age, there are variations in her status according to the cultural milieu, family, structure and caste. She is strongly and traditionally influenced by the "Varma" or "Caste ethos".

#### **The status of dalit women**

Today the dalit women can be broadly classified into two groups

- (1) the urban and (2) the rural dalits. The urban women are educated, well placed as compared to those with rural area. The rural dalit women are, less educated and less fortunate .

## **I. Dalit women and family**

### **1. Her Identity**

The social oppression experienced by dalit woman is different from that of a non-dalit woman. They suffer because of the triple-headed monster of caste and gender. For a dalit woman, her identity is established as a “Dalit woman” and not as a “Woman”.

The authoritarian structures of religion, family and society do not permit the development of women’s autonomy. Mass media, literature and culture communicate patriarchal values and make the women believe themselves to be second class citizens and the dalit women as third rate citizens.

Family is the first institution where she learns the original lessons of discrimination and hierarchy. A dalit woman’s search for meaning in life gets diverted into producing food, drink and attending to household duties. Even the villages where dalits live do not have drinking water. Even today in some places they are denied access to public wells and taps as they are considered as untouchables.

#### **1) Introduction of Domestic Violence**

Domestic Violence is defined as acts of mental, emotional, financial and physical abuse of woman that may force her or her family members to seek support outside of the family. As the dalits are illiterates, wife battering, child abuse, abuse of the elderly women with filthy words are ugly realities to be faced by women.

#### **2) Absence of love**

Repeated beatings, biting, kicking and injuring the women leads to lack of love, respect and caring among the women.

#### **3) Emotional disturbances**

Denial of love, care and affection create emotional disturbances. When wife fails to respond to her husband’s demands, he takes out his frustration by beating her.

#### **4) Alcoholism and other vices**

The women of lower strata and lower income groups suffer from their husband’s drinking and beating them up under influence of alcohol. Alcoholism, gambling, drugs and such other habits of men have brought untold miseries on the women.

#### **5) Children’s plight**

Violence at home ranges from denying female children the opportunities of education and development, child marriages, compulsory marriages, harassment and humiliation of women.

“Right to live is not a natural thing for a woman”. It is a concession given and an act of mercy shown by men

## **II. Dalit women and society**

### **1) Violence outside the family**

Violence outside the family is worse. Raping and killing of dalit women are common. Custodial rapes have rocked even the floors of Parliament. Use of filthy words and abusive language is common in our society towards the dalit women. The caste and gender factors join hands to crush dalit women inhumanely.

Whatever and whenever be the fight, communal clashes between the upper castes and dalits and even between the dalits, the first victims are dalit women. After the communal riots, the men escape from the village, and the worst victims are the dalit women. They have to face the constant brutality and harassment of the police who as a rule have an anti dalit bias.

### **2) Sexual harassment**

Tribal girls who were working as farm labourers were harassed. When they protested against this, commissions were forcibly taken from their daily wages; they were beaten up and accused of indulging in “witch craft”. One local (CPI) MLA of a northern village tried to reduce two tribal girls and to justify his act, he questioned the character of those girls. Transferring the blame on a women’s questionable character seems to be a common factor in the villages and is easy as she belongs to the lowest strata of the society.

### **3) Holi celebrations**

Indian festivals of colour and gaiety, for many parts of our country are not a fun at all for the lower caste women in U.P. and Bihar. The powerful upper caste men march along with the village lanes on the day of Holi and sing obscene songs that target lower caste of women. The defenseless women were also raped at many a times.

### **4) Devadasis’ plight**

In Karnataka, Bellari District, devadasis of dalit community are brought near to the temple of Hanuman God on Holi. The people with political status like ‘Patil’, ‘Inamdar’, ‘Desai’ gather near the tank at the temple. The youngest Devadasi is gifted with a saree and a blouse that she has to change in front of everybody. People around her start playing holi with these devadasis. This tradition is called ‘okali’, only dalit devadasis are subjected to such a “treacherous ordeal”.

### **III. Dalit women and Economic status**

#### **1) Daily wages labourers**

Most of the dalit women are coolies on daily wages. Though her work load is the same as that of men, she is paid less than men. About 80% of women who live in rural areas work in agriculture. They are forced to do menial and filthy jobs. Due to poverty they live in huts and are allowed to live only in the outskirts of the village where there are no facilities for drainage, toilets, washing or drinking water

#### **2) Liberalization and Globalization**

Mechanization, liberalization, globalization and development have only made the dalit women's life worse. The fertile land where food is grown is used to grow cash crops and build up industries and factories. So many dalit women are to migrate to unknown areas from their familiar places. Dalit women mostly depend on land and nature for her survival to collect firewood to graze her cattle, to collect grass, to collect some food materials such as green and vegetables and for medical herbs. But now she has lost everything, her skills are not wanted and she finds herself out of place that makes her life more miserable.

#### **3) Employment and discrimination**

Dalits occupy the fifth and lowest caste category. Majority of the dalits continue to perform their traditional or "polluting functions". Mostly these sanitary duties are performed by women. A lack of training and education as well as discrimination in seeking other forms of employment, have kept these traditions and their hereditary nature alive. Many of the members, for example, continue to work as leather workers, disposers of dead animals and manual scavengers. As a part of village customs, dalit women are made to render free services in times of death, marriages or village functions. The cleaning of the whole village, the carrying of fire wood that the women are asked to perform. In all these forms of labour, women are consistently paid less than men, compounding the dual discrimination of caste and gender.

### **IV. Other burdens**

#### **1) Manual Scavenging**

According to Government Statistics, an estimated one million dalits are manual scavengers and a majority of them are women. They clear faces from public and private latrines and dispose of dead animals. Manual scavenging is a caste based. Occupation deemed too polluting and filthy for any one but dalits. Such as Bhangis in Gujarat, the Pakhis in Andhra Pradesh and the Sakkaliars in Tamilnadu.

Social discrimination against the scavengers is rampant. Most of them live in segregated rural resources. It is untouchability within the untouchables; yet nobody question it.

## **2) Bonded labour:**

Given the insignificant amount of remuneration in manual scavenging agricultural labour and other fields of dalit employment, it comes as little surprise that many families borrow money from their upper caste neighbours and go into bondage.

Bonded labour refers to work in slave like conditions in order to pay off a debt. Due to the high rates of interest their debts are seldom settled. Bonded labourers are frequently low caste, illiterate and extremely poor.

## **3) Dalits educational career and recognition**

Despite state assistance in primary education ie., free education dalits children face an alarming dropout rates. The reason being the loss of faith in education as an instrument for socio-economic changes and the discriminatory and abusive treatment faced by dalit children who often sit in the back of the class rooms.

Dalit women writers' plight is different. Her literacy outcome many a times is not noted by the dalit male writers. She is looked down upon her male competitors in the same field. This is the irony of the dalits.

## **V. Remedial measures**

Remedial measures to wipe out this plight can be suggested:

### **1. Role of Dalit Women**

Though one can come out with many remedies, the dalit woman herself should take initiative in raising her status. Confidence, bold actions, straight look and deeds and above all compassion to co-sisters and brothers will turn the later of half of 21<sup>st</sup> century as her century or of women in general.

### **2. Unity:**

The real strength of the women lies in their unity. They need to come together and organize themselves to fight for their rights.

### **3.Culture:**

An exposure to more information about their culture will make them to take pride in their culture, which in turn will bring break ups in the imposed culture of them keeps them slaves and inferior



#### **4. Political representative:**

State has to look into the fact that dalits should have their political representative at all levels, including judiciary. This will give them a platform and ultimately raise dalit women status.

#### **5. Non-Governmental Organization :**

NGOs are doing yeomen service in the upliftment of dalit women status. They are to come forward to motivate the dalits with awareness programmes and at all stages there should be an ongoing dialogue between the NGOs and dalits.

#### **6. Reservation :**

The Government must also fill all vacant scheduled caste reservation posts with dalit candidates and as recommended by the National Commission for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes provide for reservations in the judiciary and as well as the private sectors. When the constitution is revised in future there are chances of more enhancements of dalit rights.

**7. Upgrade their Skill :** Most home based women workers perform very low skill manual job which gives them a weak position in the labour market. One way to improve their situation is to upgrade their existing skill either in terms of speed, design, know-how or by introducing small machines etc.

**8. Training Programme :** The other possibility is to teach them new skills which have better market prospects. Women Training Programmes are to be arranged. The YWCA in Mumbai has done remarkable work in opening courses in non-traditional skills like carpentry, writing, masonry, plumbing etc. for women.

**9. Provision of credit and Self Employed:** An organization SEWA (Self Employed Women Association) has helped the women by the provision of credit, which is highly useful in organizing women and improving their business. It has helped the women to get out of the money lenders. Such attempts help can encourage women to start new enterprises and become self employed.

**10. Health Programmes :** An important health problem of the women is occupational health problems like back aches, body aches, loss of vision, respiratory diseases. NGOs are to establish community health programmes for the women to have health awareness.

**11. Loiter Children :** As the women who do scavengerial work leave the home at early hours, they just leave their children at home. Without proper access to school, they loiter and there are possibilities of these loitering children becoming juveniles. To bring up the future Indian leaders, the Government can establish social creche centres to aid these mothers.

## Conclusion :

The persistence of caste based prejudices and the denial of access to land, education and political power have all contributed to an atmosphere of increasing intolerance and growing movements by dalits to claim their rights. These claims are increasingly met with large scale violence and attempts to further remove dalits from economic self sufficiency.

The closer look at victims of violence, bonded labour and other atrocities reveals that the dalit women share in common the lowest ranking in the caste order and this is the main reason for their outbursts. Hence nationally the government must act to uphold its own constitutional principles and work towards the uplifting of all citizens, regardless of caste.

*“ Wherever women are honoured , there the gods are pleased ”*

*-- The code of Manu*

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## *I Fill in the Blanks*

1. The main reason for the sufferings of women is being her\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Caste

2. India is a \_\_\_\_\_ridden land.

**Ans :** Caste

3. The other definition of caste is\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** race

4. \_\_\_\_\_are at the bottom of the society.

**Ans :** Dalits

5. \_\_\_\_\_ is a measuring yard for assessing the cultures of the age.

**Ans:** Woman

6. Dalit women are considered as \_\_\_\_\_rate citizens.

**Ans :** third

## *II Choose the Best Answer*

1. Women are considered as \_\_\_\_\_class citizens

a) First                      b) **second**                      c)Third                      d) Fourth

2. \_\_\_\_\_ are the first victims whenever there is communal rights?

a) Modern women      b) working women      c) House wife

d) **Dalit Women.**

3. In which district the plight of the devadasis are worst?
  - a) **Bellari**
  - b) Nellore
  - c) Salem
  - d) Arcade
4. In which festival the lower caste women are targeted by upper caste males?
  - a) Onam
  - b) **Holi**
  - c) Devali
  - d) Raksha bhandan
5. Indian society is \_\_\_\_\_ dominated society.
  - a) Female
  - b) **male**
  - c) Dalit
  - d) none of the above

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Which is considered to be the first institution?
2. Why the dalit women are denied access in public wells and taps?
3. When do women loose their basic right to exist with dignity?
4. Write any one of the habits of men that have brought miseries on women.
5. What is the main occupation of the women in rural areas?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. What are the difficulties faced by the dalit women in the families?
2. Discuss the economic status of the dalit women

### ***V Essay Questions***

1. Suggest some remedial measures to foster an improvement in the life pattern of the dalit women.

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## WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

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**Ms. S. Rohini Devi &  
Ms. Iraivani**

*“ It is always uncomprehensible to a man that a woman should  
refuse an offer of marriage ”*

*-- Jane Austen*

### **Introduction**

At the dawn of the new millennium, human kind is experiencing a lot of revolutionary changes in the context of global information sharing and communication technology. Earlier women were confined to the house and looked after the household affairs only. But now they have stepped out of the threshold of the house and are working shoulder to shoulder with men in every sphere of life. Women are like rails, they carry the burden of the family but if they are moved, it means the society will be derailed and there will be chaos. The home is the primeval and eternal school where we learn to practice virtues, to restrain appetites, to cultivate affection and to love humanity. Woman is the inspiring force and genius of the home. Man and woman are made for one another and they are like two halves of humanity completing a perfect whole. To constitute a perfect human life, man alone in himself or woman alone in herself is not complete. Completeness requires harmonious relation and interdependence between the two sexes.

### **Marriage and Religion**

Marriage is a very important event in the life of women. It is not merely a contract between two parties but a spiritual union, a holy bond brought about by dispensation. Every religious tradition and culture encourage marriage as a responsible adult act. It is the most important social and religious occasion in a person's life. Marriage is considered sacred among the Hindus. Hinduism considers marriage as one of the most important rites to equip man or woman for life. It is meant to bring a strong bond between two individuals. Christian culture intends marriage to be a life time commitment between a man and a woman. It is ordained by God and the marriage partners are considered equal but with distinctly different responsibilities. In Islam also, marriage and husband and wife relationship are given great importance. But it gives supremacy to the husband. It permits a man to have more than one wife but the permission is on condition that he should treat all the wives equally.

In India, marriage is generally considered as holy and sacramental. Usually parents choose the life partners for their children. 'Love Marriages' are considered as anti-traditional and unacceptable in Hindu culture. While modern-day parents oppose love marriages, we find accounts of love marriages, even during the Vedic Age (1500 – 1200 B.C.). Women had considerable freedom to move about in the family and society. Girls were educated like boys and they had an effective voice in the selection of their partners. Marriage used to take place at the age of 16 or 17.

### **South Indian Marriage System**

In India, marriages of youths are arranged by their elders and they must marry within the caste connubium called 'Jaati'. South Indian marriage is called as alliance system. The major rites of weddings take three days while preliminary and successive rites may spread over years. The three day sequence, however, is often attended by scores, even hundreds, of guests and is sponsored by the kindred of both bride and groom. There should be a satisfactory agreement as to the size of the dowry to be given with the bride. As a subsequent ceremony the engagement to be held on the auspicious dates and hours for the various important rites are determined astrologically. It is especially important that the mother's eldest brother should attend for either he or a priest ties a turmeric string-bracelet on the right wrist of the niece or nephew to ward off evil influences. After the wedding only the bracelets are ritually removed. The wedding almost always takes place at the home of the bride. The bridegroom comes to the bride's house in a procession with his father and other relatives. Accompanied by a loudly playing band, the procession enters the bride's house. There the host pastes a mark of greeting and blessing on the groom's forehead and presents gifts to him. Then the groom and his party are feasted.

The following day the groom and his party come to the bride's house for wedding. Then the groom is taken to the wedding pavilion and seated facing east. On the pavilion itself various ritual paraphernalia – grain, grass and coconuts have been placed, including the makings of a fire-pieces of wood, camphor, a container of clarified butter – which the priest lights at the proper moment. Then the bride is led to the pavilion and seated next to the groom. The bride's father joins the couple's hands which are tied together with a scarf. The couple rises and circles the fire three times. It symbolizes her steadfastness in marriage. The priest chant mantras all during these rites and accompanied by nearby band or drummer. Then they play various simple games to foretell their future relationship. Wedding ceremony is followed by the exchange of gifts or money on both the sides to the couple and they bless them whole-heartedly.

### **Dowry System in Marriage**

The system of giving dowry to girls in marriage is an ancient Indian custom. It is infact, that portion of the parents' wealth which they wish to give to the daughter. Now-a-days it is very sad that this custom has been vitiated in our times and the system has become a menace, a social evil in our society. It plays a major role in aggravating bribery and corruption in India. Since people are so conscious of saving their income for dowry, the idea of giving for any good purpose is completely gone. The real solution can only come if proper educational facilities are given to their daughters so that they could refuse to marry a man who wanted a price for marrying. They need not merely academic education but social education. With the academic education helps them to get economic benefits, the social education helps them to live with self-respect.

### **Caste and Marriage**

Caste plays a very significant role in determining marriages. Character, talents, beauty and feeling stand nowhere before caste. Caste is so cruel factor that it can brutally break hearts and make people inhuman. On the other hand, if the couple is from the same caste, same background and religion, parents usually do not show much objection. They arrange the marriage according to their traditional custom which can be termed as "Arranged Love Marriage". The custom of child marriage is another menace to women. It was opposed by Gandhi who said, "It is irreligion, not religion, to give religious sanction to the brutal custom of child marriage". He considered this as an immoral and inhuman act. So a young person of whatever sex must be consulted in the matter of marriage.

### **Widow Remarriage**

According to the Hindu norms, the married state for a woman is considered fortunate and conversely widowhood is associated with great misfortune. Lifelong mourning is imposed on them. The signs of the married state have to be removed from the person of the widow. In many communities, this process is made specially painful. The main purpose of these restrictions on a widow is to make her unattractive. Even today the social norm is that a widow should look different from a married woman in every manner. Widows themselves avoid taking an active part in ceremonial occasions. Though the legislators have given widows the right to remarry – the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 – socially they do not easily remarry. If they do, they marry men who are either divorced or widowers themselves. On the other hand, if a widower wants to remarry, then an unmarried girl is sought. Such are the double standards prevailing in our society. Even among those who allow widow remarriage, many groups do not look upon it favourably. It is regrettable that though the social reformers tried to erase the system of 'Sati'

from society and The Widow Remarriage Act was passed, the societal attitude to this unfortunate group has not registered any appreciable change in all these decades. Immolation may have stopped, and cases of remarriage of child widows may have increased but, by and large, the condition of widows continue to be a blot on our society.

### **Conclusion**

Whatever may be the change, in a man's world, woman is still a person, just a sign and nothing more. But each woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet. Hence the barriers of caste, colour, religion, culture, ethnic origin, language and provincial loyalties must be broken down. There must be preparedness for change, alertness to seize opportunities as they arise in the changing world. Children are brought up without any gender disparity. Parents play a significant role in the life of a child. Hence home must be the guardian of her rights and privileges. Now-a-days social evils menacing women have been checked to some extent and the overall scenario gives some ground for optimism.

*Dear she !*

*Understand that  
MARRIAGE is a part of life  
It is not the ENTIRE LIFE*

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a very important event in the life of women.

**Ans:** Marriage

2. \_\_\_\_\_ are considered as anti-traditional and unacceptable in Hindu culture.

**Ans:** Love marriage

3. The mothers eldest brother ties a \_\_\_\_\_ on the right wrist of the bride groom.

**Ans:** turmeric string bracelet

4. \_\_\_\_\_ plays a very significant role in determining marriages.

**Ans:** Caste

5. In India ,marriage within the caste connubium is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** jaati.

## ***II Choose the best answer***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ women were confined to the house and looked after the household affairs only.  
a) **Earlier women**    b) Western women    c) South Indian women    d) none of the above
2. Widow Remarriage Act was passed on \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) 1956    b) **1856**    c) 1586    d) 1568
3. \_\_\_\_\_ play a significant role in the life of a child.  
a) Sisters    b) Brothers    c) **Parents**    d) none of the above
4. South Indian marriage is called as \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) **alliance system**    b) barter system    c) bi-lateral system    d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ religion is ordained by god and the marriage partners are considered equal but with distinctly different responsibilities.  
a) Hindu    b) **Christian**    c) Islam    d) Sikhs

## ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Which religion permits to marry more than one wife.
2. What type of education helps women to live with self respect?
3. Which type of marriage was opposed by Gandhi?
4. Who says that, "It is irreligion, not religion, to give religious sanction to the brutal custom of child marriage".
5. Who is a blot on our society?

## ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Status of women through ages.
2. South Indian marriages.
3. Widow Remarriage.

## ***V Essay Questions***

1. Write an essay on the customs of the Indian Marriages.
- .....



## WOMEN AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mrs. K. Muthamil Selvi &**

**Ms. R. Vijaya Priya**

*“ Our women are not learned , but they are more pure .To every woman every man , save her husband, should be her son .To every man every woman , save his own wife, should be as his mother ”*

*-- Swami Vivekananda*

### **Introduction**

‘Family’ is one of the greatest blessings given by God. The unit of the family exists with its tender ties, its safe protection and sure provision. A man and a woman, leave their family and cleave together to form a new family. But the ties are not totally new. It is an extension of both the families thus forming an inescapable chain of continuity. Undisputably, man is the head of the family but without a supportive woman, he cannot make a successful family.

Women are quoted in the Indian context as a quiet, obedient and loving human being. She is projected as a person who spends her energy for the well being of her family. She is an embodiment of sacrifice in a male dominated society.

Woman has a multi-faceted role. At the same time she is the daughter, the sister, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and mother-in-law. Even though they are bestowed with so many roles, their advancement into the outer world came in a snail’s (dead slow) pace. Access to ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Education’ was deliberately restricted. Opportunity to know the development was denied. Books, which are the sources of culture and civilization were out of their reach. The status of women in our country was terribly disturbing.

### **Privileges of girl child**

Yet we have instances of women regarded high in the society. Girl child in the family was considered ‘Goddess Lakshmi’. Girl babies were named after the country eg. Gandhari after Gandhara, Mythili after Mithilai etc., They were also called after their father’s name eg., Janaka’s daughter was called Janaki and Dhruvpatha’s daughter Dhrauvpathi. This reveals the importance given to female community. There were also ages in history which considered women as a liability. Parents longed to have male issues. But things began to change after spread of education to women folks. Disparity between men and women began to vanish. Equality crept into all fields. Early marriage became outdated. Educated women took in handy

jobs. The role of daughters also began. Till then daughters played a passive role in the family. They were obedient to their parents. They were fully dependent on their family. But when educated, they asserted independence in their choices eg. choice in the field of education, dresses, friends, and movements .They gained more self-confidence, which provided them independence. As a result they were able to achieve a lot. They grew bold and outspoken and were no more shy. Belief in superstitions was slapped. They claimed equality with men. More than that, they began to ape the western cultures blindly. This dragged them into unfathomable depths, from which many struggle to writhe out. Practices like using drugs, dating etc., force them down to valleys of cultural darkness. The freedom earned through education should lead them to build a better society tomorrow, giving birth to many Indira Priyadarshinis, Kalpana Chawlas, Kiran Bedis etc.

On the other hand, the modern generations of sisters have a lighter burden to share with. The reason for this is the cut down in the size of the family. Family set up is changing day in and day out. Relationship is no longer stronger and thicker. The gap between the children of the family widens. In future, a question stands poised. How long will the family bond pull through?

### **Women at home**

Female race was considered as a toy of joy and a machine for bearing and rearing children. We are familiar with women who have undergone umpteen number of hardships. Even poor health of the wife, after delivering a dozen children, did not stop men from treating them harshly. When medical facilities were lacking, they succumbed to death in this process. Ida Scudder, the founder of the Vellore C.M.C. Hospital, personally witnessed the death of a pregnant muslim woman whose husband denied to take medical care offered to his dying wife by her physician father. Polygamy was the order of the society. Family disputes were settled by the village panchayats. The judgment was favourably tilted towards men because legal forum and hierarchy was occupied by men.

Women who had lost their husbands were burnt along with the deceased. Barren women were despised by the society. These women were disregarded during auspicious occasions. Even then, the society never expected her to be the bread-winner. Making livelihood was the responsibility of the man. So women were freed from this burden. At the same time, the wife had the privilege to manage the day to day affairs of the family. The general household duties like farming, taking care of the poultry were managed by the wife. They had no rightful share in the property of their parents. Yet they inherited a chunk of wealth in the form of ornaments and utensils.

### **Women at work**

As a result of considerable growth in women literacy, they took upon them another cross. They began to compete with men folk and entered almost all the fields of employment. Financial position of women rose up. Even their men began to feel proud of their earning spouses. Social inhibitions and clutches regarding women's education, employment and empowerment were all virtually broken. In a nutshell they had acquired 'independence'. Thus women had now another role to play. When they grew financially more independent, naturally she begins to question the old order.

Wives play a crucial role in the decision making process of the family. Their competence to lead the family has increased. Certain men view the uprising of women as a threat to their authority. Incompetent male partners are posed with a challenge. This leads to breaking up of families. Wives who long to be independent and who have strong will power, walk out of the family. Divorces are on the rise. Children stand orphaned. Male chauvinists will not be able to digest this vertical development of the female community.

Wives who know the secret of striking a balance between the success in the official world and family circle can lead a smooth life. They should cultivate good qualities to build happy homes without losing their identity and individuality. The criteria of selection of the life partner should be given extra care. Selection should not be based on beauty, material benefits or superstitious beliefs.

### **Joint Family System**

The basic unit of the society, called a family, was joint in nature. Brothers of the same family lived together with undivided wealth. As a logical consequence the authority flowed from a father to his elder son. All the women in the family had to co-exist in order to keep the marriage going. Infrastructure, property, wealth etc., were shared among the family members. The problems of longevity were well taken care of. Children were brought up with rich cultural heritage. Even the behavior of the women, was moulded to be quiet and adjustable. Daughters-in-law were expected to be humble and submissive.

### **Nuclear Family System**

The new trend of 'nuclear family' had crept into the society overthrowing the well established 'joint family' system. There is a feeling that this arrangement is more convenient. Even though many employed women direly need the support and assistance of the elders in taking care of their little ones, they are not willing to cope with the harmony of the joint families. The daughter-in-law willingly forgets the saying that 'it is in giving we receive'. The daughter-

in-law should accept the authority of the elders over the family. Even though she may occupy a higher social status, she should not be a cause to loosen the bonds of the family relationships. Moreover the selfish attitude of the women is also another cause for the division of the family. But she is ignorant that the more selfish she is, the more she loses. The daughter-in-law, who enters the new home has to work harder to establish better relationships with the other members.

### **Role of a Mother**

Words are few to explain the term 'mother'. A mother is synonymous to sacrifice. She is instrumental in shaping the personality of her children. Mother showers 'love' upon the family, especially upon her the children. In turn, the children shower 'love' on their family members. Only a mother can be the best model for a growing child. After the revolution in Russia, they decided to bring up the children using scientific methods. They separated the children from their families and brought them up in child care homes. But soon they were convinced that these homes were no substitute for the 'home'. So a mother is heavily responsible for the child's mental and physical health.

Mothers of adolescent children should be more flexible at the same time vigilant about their goings and comings. Adolescents are in the process of developing a sense of identity, with goals for them. They are confused in framing their identity. They tend to go into depression at this time. This depression manifests itself as lack of concentration, failing academic performance, disinterest in activities, lack of willingness to speak to anybody, increased food intake, excessive drowsiness, doing things aimlessly, irritability etc.

Mothers should find out the reason for such behaviour of the children. She should be a good listener of her children. She should deal with them very friendly. She must not curb the freedom that they child want to enjoy. She must not force her ideas and thoughts upon the child. She should learn not to compare the child with others or let it down before the friends. No punishment should be given in public. Criticism should not be subjective and personal.

Anger shown on them will complicate the matter further. The mother should be convinced with the activities of the child. She should not pressurize the child. It may be let to its own whims and fancies, which could prove to be more creative and useful. The nearness and warmth of the mother is expected by the child. So the mother should spend time with her children. She should be supportive during examinations, encouraging the children to take part in extra curricular activities etc. Today's children are the future pillars of the nation. So it is only in the hands of women to bring up their children to build a stronger India.

The women should realize that today's daughters-in-law are tomorrow's mothers-in-law. Once a daughter-in-law, now she completely forgets her past experience and looks herself as an

authoritative mother-in-law. As a mother-in-law, the woman can be more useful to the binding of the family relationship. She can enjoy and experience the love of the daughter-in-law as another daughter. But her ego doesn't allow this. Not only in times of ignorance but even today there are wide proofs of dowry harassment. The women, both the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law should resist against crimes against women under the pretext of dowry. The women have to 'make friends' with each other forgetting the 'Me' or 'I'. They can present small gifts to each other and win the in-laws over to their side. The mother-in-law should not feel threatened or insecure, thinking that the daughter-in-law is taking her son away. This fear is the root cause of all uneasiness and problems in the home. It is only in the hands of the women to shape their lives.

Concludingly, for a peaceful family relationship the women, who have a vital role to play, should be smarter and able to co-operate. They should work together for more conducive atmosphere in the family.

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### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was named after her father Dhruvpatha.

**Ans:** Darauvpathi

2. The basic unit of the society is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** a family

3. The new trend of family which had crept into the society is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** nuclear family

4. a mother is synonymous to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** sacrifice

5. Today's children are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the nation.

**Ans :** future pillars

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. Girl child was considered \_\_\_\_\_

a) **goddess Lakshmi** b) goddess Mythilai c) goddess Gandhari d) goddess Saraswathi

2. Making Livelihood was the responsibility of \_\_\_\_\_.

a) **the man** b) the woman c) Parents d) none of the above

3. Authority of the family falls on the \_\_\_\_\_.

a) brother b) **elder son** c) younger son d) none of the above

4. \_\_\_\_\_ is responsible for a child's mental and physical health.  
a) **mother**    b) grand mother    c) sister    d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ - shown on children will complicate matters.  
a) **anger**    b) love    c) sympathy    d) none of the above
6. Indian society is a \_\_\_\_\_-- society.  
a) **male dominated**    b) female dominated    c) neutral    d) none of the above

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who were named after the country? Give example.
2. Who were despised by the society?
3. Selection of a life partner should not be based on what?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a paragraph on the privileges of a girl child in the family.
2. Write a paragraph on the duties of the women at home.
3. Write a paragraph on the joys of the joint family system.

### ***V Essay Questions***

1. Discuss the role of a mother in the family.

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## WOMEN AND CHILDCARE

\*\*\*\*\*

**J. Amutha &  
M. Rajalakshmi**

*“ Men make roads; but it is the women who teach child read how to walk on them ”*

*-- French Proverb*

### **Introduction**

Mother is the representative of God on earth. Motherhood is the cherished an ideal of the life of a woman. The birth of a child immediately raises her status in the society. In fact, womanhood finds its sublimation in motherhood.

### **Birth of child**

The greatest responsibility of a woman is child bearing and child rearing. From the very beginning till and after the birth of the child, she has to be very careful, healthy and hygienic. She occupies a more prominent position in upbringing the child than the other members of the family because from the very moment of its conception, the infant is in emotional and mental interaction with its mother.

The average duration of pregnancy is 40 weeks. A baby born after this period weighs more than 2.5 kg. Any newborn with a birth weight of less than 2.5 kg is classified as a low weight baby and needs special care. The healthy child requires:

1. Breast feeding.
2. Adequate immunization.
3. Nutritious food.
4. Hygienic environment.
5. Love and affection from the parents.
6. Periodic weight checkup and deworming.

Infants considered to be in the high-risk category include those

1. born before 37 or after 42 weeks of gestation.
2. weighing less than 2500 grams.
3. who are disparate from expected size or development.
4. in poor condition at delivery.
5. born to infectious mothers.

### **Premature baby**

The majority of high-risk infants is either born prematurely or has low weight. They should be kept under close observation by the most efficient doctors and nurses. The mother can give them kangaroo care or skin-to-skin care. During the kangaroo care, the baby is placed on the mother's naked chest. The baby's head is turned sideways so that its ear is against the mother's heart. This process takes just for 10 minutes. Kangaroo care is the best thing the mother or father can do for the baby. For the premature babies, it lowers oxygen requirements, stabilizes heart-beat rates and gives them an overall sense of peace.

### **Breast Feeding**

A mother must give the baby the very best in everything. When it comes to nutrition, the best first food for the baby is breast milk. Breast milk is perfectly suited to nourish infants and it protects them from illness. Breast fed infants have lower rates of hospital treatment, ear infections, diarrhoea, rashes, allergies and other medical problems than bottle-fed babies. Furthermore, mother's milk produces antibodies to prevent diseases present in the environment. Breast feeding should begin within an hour after delivery. Breast fed babies do not require even a single drop of water even in hot weather in the first 3-4 months.

The primary benefit of breast milk is nutritional. Mother's milk contains just the right amount of fatty acids, lactose, water and amino acids for human digestion, brain development and growth. It is recommended that babies should be breast fed for 6-12 months. Waning food can be introduced when the baby is 4-6 months old, but the baby should drink breast milk for a year. As breast milk is easily digested, breast fed babies often eat more frequently than bottle-fed babies. To produce plenty of breast milk, the nursing mother needs a balanced diet that includes 500 extra calories a day and 6 to 8 glasses of fluid.

### **Vaccination**

Adequate immunization is very important in the growth and development of the child as it protects the child from different dangerous diseases. The mother is advised to give the following vaccines at the proper age. The recent immunization vaccines to be given to the child are given below.



Age	Vaccine
At birth	BCG Oral Polio Vaccine - 1 <sup>st</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 1 <sup>st</sup> dose.
6 weeks	DPT Oral Polio Vaccine - 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose.
10 weeks	DPT – 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose Oral Polio Vaccine - 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose.
14 weeks	DPT – 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose Oral Polio Vaccine - 4 <sup>th</sup> dose.
6-9 months	Oral Polio Vaccine - 5 <sup>th</sup> dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose.
9 months	Measles Vaccine
15 months	MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
18 months	DPT – 1 <sup>st</sup> booster dose. Oral Polio Vaccine - 6 <sup>th</sup> dose.
2 years	Typhoid Vaccine
5 years	DPT – 2 <sup>nd</sup> booster dose. Oral Polio Vaccine - 7 <sup>th</sup> dose. Typhoid Vaccine.
10 years	TT (Tetanus) - 3 <sup>rd</sup> booster dose. Hepatitis B Vaccine - booster dose. Oral Typhoid.
15-16 years	TT – 4 <sup>th</sup> booster dose.

Apart from these, optional vaccines include Hepatitis A Vaccine and Chicken Pox Vaccine.

### Food

It is essential to give nutritious food to the growing child. Till three months, mother's milk is enough for the child. After three months, food like orange juice, vegetable soup, cooked mango, potato, and banana can be introduced. The child should also drink breast milk. Cow's milk (without adding water) can be given. Cooked rice with ghee and dhal can also be given. If the baby drinks mother's milk, then other types of food can be given thrice a day. If the

baby does not drink mother's milk, then other food items can be given five times a day. After one year, any food cooked in our house (without addition of spices) can be given. Protein, fat, vitamin and mineral rich food items are essential for the growth of the child.

### **Affected Diseases**

Children are vulnerable to be affected by diseases like fever, cold, cough, diarrhea, breathing problem, etc. In ancient period, All ailments of children were treated in the traditional medical method (Patti Vaithiyam). Cough and cold were cured by giving the boiled rice water without salt and adding 5 pieces of palm sugar. They tied the mixture of incense, turmeric powder, omum and camphor in a piece of cloth and tied in the baby's hand. The baby suffering from continuous diarrhoea was given the mixture of salt water and sugar in the ratio of 3:1. Betel nut, black tea, lemon juice and areca nut, added with water can be given for the cure of diarrhoea. But the traditional medical treatment is not followed now-a-days. It is not advisable in the modern age.

If the newborn baby suffers due to suffocation, the modern tool is used to remove the flum. For diarrhea, the baby is not to be given mother feeding (8 to 12 hrs) but to give water.

When the children grow, some of them suffer from problems like bed wetting, thumb sucking etc. 20% of children wet their bed at the age of 5 and 5% do so by the age of 10, it is usually due to a delay in the maturation of the part of the nervous system that controls bladder function. It sometimes may be due to either psychological problems or medical disorders. If there are repeated episodes of bed wetting after the age of 6, it is essential to consult a doctor.

Thumb sucking in children is an embarrassing factor to many parents. The child retreats to the practice of the habits of thumb sucking to relieve its frustration of hunger and when the child suffers from increased anxiety, the habit becomes his safety valve to release emotional pressure. Lack of love and affection from the parents towards the child plays a major role in making the child emotionally insecure and thus making him/her resort to habits like thumb sucking. If the habit is prevented before the permanent teeth eruption, it can be considered harmless.

### **Mother's duty**

It is the duty of the mother to give the highest quality of care to her child. She should be concerned not only with its physical health but also its mental, social and even societal health. When the child grows, the mother should develop its communicative skills, its capacity for love and affection, its ability to face problems arising out of frustrations and its ability to control aggressive impulses. It is the duty of the mother to mould the child's behavior and

discipline him. As the child grows older, it has a tendency to imitate the behavior of people around it. So the parents' value systems and their behavior are very important in shaping the behavior of the child. The mother should also promote the child's social etiquettes, politeness and respect for others.

A mother gives her life-blood to her child. The entire happiness of the mother and her family lies in the child's health. When the mother knows how to rear the child healthily, then she finds pleasure in upbringing the child.

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***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the exclusive food for the new born babies.

**Ans :** Breast Milk

2. The other name for skin to skin care is\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Kangaroo care

3. The babies should be breast fed for\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 6 – 12 months

4. The baby suffering from diarrhea can be given the mixture of salt, water and sugar in the ratio of\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 3:1

5. \_\_\_\_\_ food can be introduced when the baby is 4 -6 months old.

**Ans :** Warming

6. A healthy baby, born after 40 weeks period weighs more than \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 2.5 kg

7. \_\_\_\_\_ babies do not require even a single drop of water in the first 3 – 4 months.

**Ans :** Breast fed

8. At the age of \_\_\_\_\_ , DPT second booster dose should be given to the child.

**Ans :** five

9. \_\_\_\_\_ infants tend to be falter than breast-fed infants.

**Ans :** Bottle fed

***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. The average duration of pregnancy is

- a) **40 weeks**                      b) 42 weeks                      c) 35 weeks                      d) 32 weeks

2. Any newborn baby with a birth weight of less than \_\_\_\_\_ is classified as a low weight baby.
  - a) 3 Kg
  - b) **2.5 Kg**
  - c) 3.5 Kg
  - d) 4 Kg.
3. Breast feeding should begin within
  - a) Two hours
  - b) **One hour**
  - c) Three hours
  - d) Four hours.
4. Typhoid vaccine should be given to the child after
  - a) **2 years**
  - b) 2 months
  - c) 8 months
  - d) none of the above.
5. A new born baby need to be nursed frequently, atleast
  - a) **every two hours**
  - b) every five hours
  - c) every four hours
  - d) none of the above.
6. The nursing mother needs \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) **a balanced diet**
  - b) money
  - c) exercise
  - d) all of these.
7. If the baby drinks mother's milk, other types of food can be given \_\_\_\_\_ a day.
  - a) **three times**
  - b) five times
  - c) two times
  - d) none of these.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. Who is the representative of God on earth?
2. What is the average duration of Pregnancy?
3. What is Kangaroo Care?
4. Mention the essential food items for the growth of the child.
5. What is the reason for Thumb sucking?

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Write a note on "high risk infants".
2. Why is breast feeding essential for new born babies?

### ***V Essay Questions***

1. Write an essay on the topic, "women and child care".

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## WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mrs. P. Stella Muthu Rajam**

*“ Women create the world .....  
Let us create a worthy world for women ”*

### **Introduction**

Women and Environment are inseparables and they go hand in hand. Women play the major role than men, as the ambassadors of environmental issues. This is because the environment starts from the home. Therefore each woman can contribute significantly to protect her environment and it is her main duty too.

### **Tree Saving Movement**

This movement was formed in 1972. In fact different trees are useful in various aspects directly or indirectly to human beings and animals. Some of the trees are worshipped by our Indian women. Narmada Bachao Andolan founded this movement focusing forest conservation thereby protect trees from falling and cutting.

Trees occupy an important place in the life of man. They give us many good things and expect nothing in return. Trees add beauty and colour to environment otherwise colourless background

### **Value of Trees**

People in the world is aware of the recent occurrence on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 – a natural disaster ie, TSUNAMI. In Tamil Nadu most of the sea shore villages got affected. Nearly 11,000 people died in India, mostly in Tamil Nadu. Most of the fishermen lost their families, children, shelter, utensils, boats and nets. Pitchavaram a small coastal village in Cuddalore district has survived successfully without any damage by the natural disaster. In fact Pitchavaram mangroves absorbed Tsunami ie, for generations the Irula tribal people who lived in seaside forests were running their families by killing and selling snake skins. From 1972 onwards, they started fishing and worked on a program to restore coastal mangrove swamps.

On December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004, when the Tsunami struck, these mangroves in this wet land acted as a protector saving the people and their properties. These people specially women spend two hours everyday in the morning in planting mangrove saplings. They planted trees for the past 35 years. Now it saved them from the horrible Tsunami. This village located 100 m to 700 m from the sea has no human or property loss. At present Pitchavaram is covered with 900

hectares of mangrove forests and 3000 fishing families. These villagers are safer than the other affected coastal areas. The credit goes to the women of the Irula Community.

### **Green Belt Movement**

In 1977, the 64 year old Kenyan environmentalist Dr. Wangari Maathai founded this movement. In her 30 year career she became the first African woman to be awarded the 2004 Noble Peace Prize. Her movement is an environmental group that restored indigenous forests and assisted rural women by paying them to plant trees in their communities. Since now, they have planted over 30 million trees in Kenya. It provided work for thousands of women. Today she stands as a role model for a generation of Kenyans who are enjoying the fruits of her labour.

### **Women and work related health problems**

In addition to child-bearing, responsibilities for social reproduction, the care of family, maintenance of the household, the processing and cooking of food and related tasks fall on women in almost all societies around the world. In rural and remote town areas, fetching water is one among the most strenuous tasks carried out by women. Over a period of time, postural defects of neck, spine and pelvis may develop.

Deforestation and the depletion of natural resources, has added considerably to women's daily workload, both in terms of distance to be travelled and loads to be carried each time. Strenuous work of this nature or accidents while performing these tasks may result in miscarriages and other reproductive health problems. The toxicity of commonly used household cleaning agents also affects women disproportionately.

### **Women and Industry:**

Industries are symbols of great development prosperity but they have adverse effect on the environment and the people.

Major cities in Tamil Nadu face with modern toxic pollution problems from organic matter contained in industrial effluents. Many rivers and water bodies are becoming saturated with organic compounds from industrial effluents, posing a major threat to both human health and aquatic life.

Industrial emissions and Industrial accidents release toxic chemicals into the atmosphere causing long-term damage to health, and even death. For example MIC gas from the Bhopal tragedy had advance impacts on women's gynecological and reproductive health .MIC gas has altered women's menstruation cycles, spontaneous abortions, still births and foetal deaths. There was a serious damage to the reproductive system of women who were affected by the gas. Men are not willing to marry women from Bhopal. Married Women still give birth to unhealthy babies.

### **Women and Work related health problem**

Indoor Pollution is a common practice among village women to use biomass fuels. Such as firewood, dung, agricultural waste and coal for cooking. This is the principal cause of indoor pollution. The smoke from biomass fuels, contain noxious gases. Inhaling this smoke poses the risk of chronic respiratory disorders, including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD) 46 % of the women patients aged 12-83 years reported exposure to kitchen smoke from biomass fuels ( coal, dung and wood ) 66 % of this 46 % reported a history of cooking with biomass fuels.

This conventional and traditional practice is hard to change. Hence some awareness is required. Smokeless chulaho can be installed. By using this, women get fuel wood conservation and reduction in health hazards.

### **Women and Agriculture**

Pesticides are used in farming. These are absorbed into the ground water and persist as residues on land, enter the plants and thus affects the human body. These poisons get concentrated in body fat and in breast milk, making women and infants diseased. Therefore we need a healthy mind in the healthy body. All eatables in our day-to-day life are poisoned and polluted by the pesticides to some extent. Therefore they have less nutrient value. Hence kitchen gardens have to be maintained by cultivating vegetables for house hold needs. By providing seeds and saplings of good quality each and every family woman can own a kitchen garden. Moreover women can sprinkle cow-dung mixed with water in the front and backyard of their houses which destroy disease causing bacteria and save the family.

### **Women and Poor Quality Housing**

Crowded urban remote towns with poor quality housing lacking in basic amenities are a feature of many cities in TamilNadu. For example, about 60 % of the cities population in Chennai and about 40 – 50 % of the population in Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai live in overcrowded urban settlements with limited access to water supply, poor drainage, sanitation and waste disposal facilities and exposure to garbage and sewage. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and unsafe drinking water represents a serious health threat. 30 – 75 % of the population are not covered by sanitation. This causes environmental pollution and also favours mosquito breeding.

Poor housing and overcrowding combine to make the population living in such settings vulnerable to communicable diseases, respiratory problems, like wheezing etc. While the quality of housing affects all inhabitants. Women's health is more likely to be adversely affected, as

women spend longer periods of time in the household environment because of their responsibility for house-work and child care.

### **Women and Waste Management**

Waste is defined as something which is not put into proper usage at a given time. In major cities, 4 to 6 persons live in one room houses. As this increases waste generated also increases. This accumulated and improper disposal of domestic waste leads to environmental pollution and accelerates the spread of communicable disease like diarrhea, malaria and even plague. Every person generates 250-300 gms of waste per day.

Women's role at houses is to collect food scraps in a separate basket. Similarly yard wastes, soiled paper, box board, polythene bags etc., should be collected in another basket i.e., organic and inorganic wastes separately. Take care every day that these wastes are taken by the municipal garbage van. Such a practice keeps the environment clean and healthy.

### **Conclusion**

Women and the Environment are so complex and vast. Each woman's problem is unique. Remedies have to be specific for each woman have to be protected and taken care of as they are responsible for new generation.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***I Fill in the blanks***

1. Tree Saving Movement was formed in the year\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 1972

2. The Indian woman who founded Tree Saving Movement was\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** Narmada Bachao Andolan

3. \_\_\_\_\_coastal village in Tamil Nadu has survived successfully without any damage by the Tsunami.

**Ans :** Pitchavaram

4. The Pitchavaram villagers are safer, the credit goes to the women of the \_\_\_\_\_community.

**Ans :** Irula

5. The Green Belt Movement was founded by\_\_\_\_\_ Wangari Mathai.

**Ans :** Kenyan Environmentalist Dr

6. Green Belt Movement was formed in the year\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans :** 1977





## NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS FOR WOMEN

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs.M.Santhi

*“ Love your life...  
By educating yourself  
Love your life....  
By becoming strong mentally  
Love your life ....  
By loving yourself ”*

### **Introduction**

Nutrient requirement can be defined as the minimum amount of the absorbed nutrient that is necessary for maintaining the normal physiological functions of the body.

Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) is defined as the nutrient present in the diet which satisfies the daily requirement of nearly all individuals in a population .RDA of an individual depends on many factors like age,sex,physical work and physiological stress.

### **Factors**

#### **Age**

An adult requires more total calories than a child due to larger size of the body and increases in activity. A growing child requires more calories and protein per Kilogram of body weight than an adult.

#### **Sex**

Females require less calories than males.

#### **Physical works**

Sedentary workers require less calories and B-vitamins than hard working persons.

#### **Physiological stress**

During pregnancy and lactation period the requirement of nutrients are increased. Women need a wide range of nutrients to perform various functions in the body and to lead a healthy life.

### **I. Nutritional requirements for Adolescence**

In the life of boys and girls the period of transition from childhood to adulthood is called adolescence with accelerated physical, biochemical and emotional development. It is during this

period that the final growth spurt occurs. There are many body changes which result due to the influence of hormones. The hormones spurt of girls is faster than the boys. 22% of body fat is required to maintain regular ovulation. Greatest nutrient need for boys is between 10-13 years.

**i) Proteins**

For most adolescents, eating to satisfy appetite offers a reasonably sensitive indicator of energy needs. Protein needs represent 12-14 % of energy intake. The protein intake usually exceeds 1 gm/kg. This meets growth needs and for the pubertal changes.

**ii) Minerals**

Calcium and iron particularly needed during adolescence. About 150 mg of calcium must be retained each day to follow for the increase in bone mass. Iron needed for hemoglobin synthesis necessitated by considerable expansion of blood volume and for hemoglobin needed for muscle growth. The girls need to ensure adequate intake of iron as they lose 0.5mg/day by way of menstruation. During adolescence there is an increase in body mass corresponding to about 4 kg/year in female.

**iii) Vitamins**

Folic acid, B12 are essential for DNA and RNA synthesis and needed in higher amount when tissue synthesis is occurring rapidly.

Tissue growth takes place at this adolescent stage. So the requirement for B6 is increased to carry out amino acid metabolism. Pre-menstrual tension can be reduced if adolescent girls consume 100 mg/day Vitamin B6. Skeletal growth requires vitamin D while the structural and functional integrity of newly formed cells depends on the availability of vitamins A, C and E.

***Recommended dietary allowances of adolescents***

Nutrients	Units	Years (Girls)	
		13-15	16-18
Body weight	kg	46.7	49.9
Energy	kcal	2060	2060
Protein	Gm	65	63
Fat	Gm	22	22
Calcium	Mg	600	500
Iron	Mg	28	30
Vitamin A	Mcg	600	600

## II. Nutritional requirements for adults/women:

During adulthood nutrients are required for the purpose of energy, for replacement of worn out tissues and maintenance of body functions.

### i) Energy

Energy requirements of an adult woman are based on reference woman. Reference woman is between 20-39 years of age, healthy and weights 50 kg. she may be engaged for 8 hours in general household work, in light industry (or) in other moderately active work. For those whose occupation entails heavy work, allowances have to be higher than for those who are either sedentary (or) engaged in moderate works.

### ii) Fat

20% of energy may be derived from fats. Invisible fat furnishes about 9 % energy and visible fat 10 %. Saturated fatty acids, cis-monosaturated fatty acids, proteins and cholesterol can increase essential fatty acid requirements.

### iii) Minerals

Iron requirement for woman is 2 mg higher than man. Iron loss through menstruation in women of reproductive age groups are 0.6 mg/day on an average, when spread over whole month calcium and phosphorous are essential for women. An adult needs atleast 350 ml of cow's milk per day.

### iv) Vitamins

Requirement of vitamin B is higher for moderate and heavy workers. In take of 20 mg of vitamin C may be sufficient to maintain ascorbic acid levels in adults.

#### *Recommended dietary allowances of adult women*

Nutrients	Units	Woman		
		Sedentary	Moderate	Heavy
Energy	kcal	1875	2225	2925
Protein	Gm	50	50	50
Calcium	Mg	400	400	400
Iron	Mg	30	30	30
Vitamin A- retinol	Mcg	600	600	600

### **III.Nutritional requirements for Lactating woman**

Women who lose weight too rapidly fall below their ideal body weight during lactation need increased calories intake. They should be monitored for high calorie, low nutrient-dense foods in their diet and protein control.

#### **i) Protein**

During lactation period protein requirement has been computed on the basis of secretion of milk is 9.4 g protein per day during 0-6 months and 6.6 g during 6-24 months which correspond to 820 ml and 600 ml of milk respectively.

#### **ii) Fat**

The requirements of linoleic acid during lactation increases 5.7 in percentage. Insoluble fat requirement is 17.5% and soluble fat should be 45 g.

#### **iii) Calcium**

Increased amount of calcium was required during gestation for mineralization of the foetal skeleton is now diverted into mother's milk production. Both during pregnancy and lactation 1000 mg has been prescribed.

#### **iv)Iron**

The iron requirement during lactation remains the same as adult women of 30 mg/day.

#### **v) Vitamins**

##### **▪ Vitamin A**

Vitamin A can be achieved by including liver, fish liver oils, eggs yolk, green leafy vegetables.

##### **▪ Vitamin B**

The amount of vitamin B12 secreted in milk per day is 0.25-0.3 mg. An additional intake of 0.5 mg per day would cover the needs during lactation.

#### **vi) Fluid**

An increased intake of fluids is necessary for adequate milk production. Water, beverages such as juices, tea, coffee and milk all add to the fluid necessary to produce milk.

***Recommended dietary allowances of a lactating mother***

Nutrients	Units	Normal adult woman	Lacting Mother	
			0-6	6-12
Energy	Kcal/kg			
Sedentary		1875	+550	+400
Moderate		2225	+550	+400
Heavy		2925	+550	+400
Protein	Gm/kg	50	+25	+18
Fat	Gm	20	45	45
Calcium	Mg	400	1000	1000
Iron	Mg	30	30	30

**IV. Nutritional requirements for Old women**

Old age is best defined as the age of retirement that is 60 years and above. Aging is a normal process begins at conception and ends only with death. Heredity and good nutrition may slow the ageing processes so that individual enjoys physical and mental vigour in his eighties.

After the age of 35 the basal metabolic rate decreases due to Reduced muscle mass and metabolically active tissue mass. Body protein level in healthy elderly is 30 - 40% less than that in young adults. Energy requirement decreases beyond the age of 30.

**i) Protein**

As people age there is a decrease in skeletal tissue mass. This Results in decrease in store of protein provided by skeletal muscle and may be inadequate to meet the needs for protein synthesis. Hence the dietary protein intake is more important to meet essential needs.

**ii) Carbohydrates**

Whole grain cereals and pulses should be included in the diet. It is necessary that at least 50% of calories are derived from carbohydrates.

### iii) Lipids

Emphasis should be placed on reducing the intake of saturated fat and choosing mono saturated or poly unsaturated fat sources.

### iv) Minerals

Calcium needs during old age decreases. Women over 50 years of age who are not receiving estrogens require more calcium as there is increased loss resulting in demineralization of bone. For women over fifty 1000mg/day is recommended to decrease the prevalence of fractures and to compensate age related bone loss. Milk is an important source of calcium for elderly persons. Iron, Sodium and Zinc are also essential for old age women.

### v) Vitamins

Elderly people are at risk for vitamin D deficiency due to decreased exposure to sunlight or decrease in renal mass. Prudent dietary supplementation with calcium and vitamin D improves bone density and may prevent fractures in a healthy elderly population. All the vitamin requirements remain the same as the adult requirement.

### vi) Water

It is essential for the older person as it is for the younger individual. The kidney can function more adequately where there is sufficient fluid and hence to eliminate the waste solids. Water can be consumed as such or in the form of butter milk, fruit juices, porridge and soups.

### vii) Fiber

The fiber of tender vegetables and fruits is essential for easy digestion. Fibre also helps in reducing cholesterol.

Thus the process of ageing brings about physiological, psychological and immunological changes which influence the nutritional status.

\*\*\*\*\*

### *I Fill in the Blanks*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the most important fatty acid for infants.  
**Ans :** Linoleic
2. The period of transition from childhood to adulthood is called \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans :** adolescence
3. \_\_\_\_\_ of body fat is required to maintain regular ovulation.  
**Ans :** 22%
4. \_\_\_\_\_ and B<sub>12</sub> are essential for DNA and RNA synthesis during the period of adolescence.  
**Ans :** Folacin
5. Pre menstrual tension can be reduced if adolescent girls consume \_\_\_\_\_ vitamin B<sub>6</sub> day.  
**Ans :** 100mg/day

6. For adult woman \_\_\_\_\_ is required for the replacement of worn out tissue.  
**Ans : protein**
7. Demineralisation of bone occurs in women over the age of \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Ans : 50**
8. \_\_\_\_\_ food is essential for easy digestion during the old age.  
**Ans : Fibre**

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

- Sedentary workers require less calories and  
a) vitamin C      b) **vitamin B**      c) vitamin D      d) vitamin E.
- Egg yolk is an supplementary diet for  
a) **vitamin A**      b) vitamin C      c) vitamin B      d) vitamin E.
- Milk is the best source of  
a) phosphorous      b) iron      c) **calcium**      d) magnesium.
- Iron requirement for woman is higher than man for about  
a) 3 mg      b) 4 mg      c) 5 mg      d) **2 mg.**
- The metabolic rate decreases due to reduced muscle mass and other metabolically active tissue mass after the age of  
a) 50      b) 60      c) **35**      d) 20.
- During pregnancy and lactation period, the requirement of nutrients are  
a) decreased      b) **increased**      c) normal      d) none of these.

### ***III Answer in One Word***

- Define Nutrient requirement
- Expand RDA
- What is adolescence?
- How much amount of Vitamin B12, secreted in milk per day?
- Define Old Age.

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

- Write short notes on nutritional requirements for Adolescence.
- What is RDA? Explain the nutrients for Lactating women.

### ***V Essay Questions***

- Write an essay on nutrient requirements for Lactating woman and old age woman with reference to RDA.

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## WOMEN AND HEALTH

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mrs.P.Stella Muthu Rajam &**

**Miss.G.Sathiabama**

*“ Without woman the beginning of our life would be helpless , the middle without pleasure , and the end without consolation ”*

*-- De Jouy*

### **Introduction:**

“Health is a set of complete physical, mental and social well-being”. The women in India during the colonial and the post intrinsic socio-cultural forces set a limit and purposive intervention to improve health conditions. Thus the process got rooted in the historical and ecological conditions of the country.

Health is a vital resource without which effective living is impossible. Yet the greatest discrimination is visible in the health care available to women. This includes not only medical care but nutritional needs consonant with energy requirements. Indian society values only males and male children. But women and girl child comprise a major portion of the nations population as such it is the responsibility of the state to look after the health of women and girl child.

Common health problems faced by women today are discussed in two groups.

1. General Medical Problems
2. Gynaecological Problems

### **I. General Medical Problems:**

#### **1. Depression**

Depression an emotional and mental state of extreme sadness, disappointment and frustration that disturbs normal patterns of behaviour. It has a range of severity and is a very common disorder that affects more women than men. Symptoms of depressions include weepiness, inability to feel pleasure, forgetfulness, low self-esteem, changes in appetite, weight gain or loss, sleep disturbances and Insomnia, and Headaches. Married women often have worse mental health and higher rates of depressive illness than single women and married men.

#### **2. Anaemia**

A shortage of the oxygen-carrying pigment HAEMOGLOBIN in RED BLOOD CELLS. Haemoglobin is made in the body using VITAMINS B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>9</sub> (folic acid) and B<sub>12</sub> (cyanocobalamin) along with iron. Each red blood cell contains 200-300 molecules of

haemoglobin , so vitamin B deficiency can cause anaemia. If a woman has less than 12 g of haemoglobin per 100 mls of blood, she is considered anaemic. Anaemia is a common in women with a poor diet deficient in vitamins, those having heavy menstrual periods and in pregnancy . Blood loss from surgery, bone marrow disease , hereditary disorders such as sickle-cell anaemia, and the use of oral contraceptives may cause anaemia.

A Pregnant woman has around 3 extra pints of blood, so more of the critical vitamins are needed to make red blood cells and provide for the needs of the baby. Folic acid is required for correct development of the baby, and women with a multiple pregnancy are most likely to need supplements of iron and folic acid.

### **3. Back pain**

This result from poor seating in chairs that do not give sufficient support and is a common problem at work , in the home or car. It is also caused by bending and lifting incorrectly or by a repetitive strain.

### **4. Breast Cancer:**

The development of abnormal cells in the breast tissue, forming a lump or tumour. This is the most common type of cancer in women, and there are at least 15 different kinds, depending on the site of development. All have different rates of growth and varying tendencies to metastasize(spread to other areas). Breast cancer is a malignant growth of tissue.

It is normally found when a suspicious lump is detected, but 90 percent of all breast lumps are benign. Other signs of cancer are a change in breast size or shape, a swelling in the armpit or upper arm, nipple retraction, thickening, dimpling or ulceration of the skin, and a lump on the nipple.

### **5. Headache**

Pain felt within the head that is thought to be caused by dilation of intracranial arteries or pressure upon them. Common causes are stress, tiredness, fever accompanying an infection, dyspepsia, high blood pressure, rheumatic diseases and an excess of close work involving the eyes. Headache may indicate the presence of disease or disorder in the brain and also result from injury or concussion .Headaches can also arise as a side effect of some oral contraceptive pills. Many drugs are used to treat headaches, and the most common are paracetamo, codeine , aspirin and ibuprofen.

### **6. Irregular periods**

A menstrual cycle that varies in duration from the usual 28 days and may show no regular pattern. It may result from Hormone imbalances , stress, dieting , anaemia, thyroid gland disorder, emotional distress or serious illness including pelvic lesions and cancer.

## **7. Itching**

Irritation of the skin that is relieved by scratching. It can be caused by an allergic reaction, dry skin and genital problems. Conditions such as Haemorrhoids, Eczema, Pubic Lice, Thrush, athlete's foot, ringworm, Jaundice, Pruritus Vulvae, Dandruff and Genital Herpes can all cause itching. Treatment of each condition is required to stop the irritation.

## **8. Hair Loss**

Loss of hair that occurs as a result of several conditions. Alopecia is the most common reason, but it can also occur during pregnancy or the menopause because of fluctuating hormone levels. It can be due to hair damage caused by frequent use of harsh chemicals or hot air appliances (e.g. rollers, tongs). It can be an adverse reaction to a prescribed medicine or occur as part of the normal ageing process, stress anxiety or illness. Certain skin disorders, e.g. ringworm, can also cause patchy hair loss.

## **II. Gynecological Problems:**

The term reproductive health is often equated with one aspect of women's lives-motherhood. Complications associated with various maternal issues are major contributors to poor reproductive health among millions of women worldwide.

### **Pregnancy:**

The period of time from conception to delivery, which lasts approximately 280 days from the first day of the last menstrual period (LMP). Pregnancy constitutes for 9 months or 39-40 weeks and is divided into three trimesters. Signs of pregnancy are amenorrhoea or cessation of periods, morning sickness, increased breast size and later enlargement of the abdomen. In the first trimesters, the embryo implants, grows and develops. Hormone levels rise, and the blood supply to the pelvis increases, resulting in Chadwick's sign. The baby's heartbeat can be detected at 11 weeks' gestation. In the second trimester the size and shape of the uterus has changed, and there may be signs on the mother's skin such as pigment changes (chloasma) or stretch marks. The woman commonly has a faster heart rate, increased blood volume. The large size of the uterus by the third trimester can lead to discomfort and pressure on the other body organs. Indigestion, constipation, fatigue, heartburn and urinary frequency are common.

### **Common Problems of Adolescent girls:**

**Dysmenorrhoea:** Painful menstruation

**Vaginal discharge:** Increased fluid secretion is a normal physiological function meant for lubrication of vagina.

**Problems of menstruation:**

A normal menstruation period lasts for 2-6 days after every 28-30 days. There may be increase in frequency, duration or amount of blood flow. Increased menstruation is troublesome and requires medical consultation.

Infections: Pelvic Inflammatory Disease(PID) is the term used for infections of uterus, tubes and ovaries.

**AIDS:**

The Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome is a fatal illness caused by a retrovirus known as the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus(HIV) which breaks down the body's immune system, leaving the victim vulnerable to a host of life-threatening opportunistic infections, neurological disorders or unusual malignancies. The basic modes of transmission are sexual transmission, blood contact and maternal foetal transmission.

**Health aspects of family planning:**

Family planning refers to practices that help individuals as couples to attain certain objectives:

- a) to avoid unwanted births
- b) to bring about wanted births
- c) to regulate the intervals between pregnancies
- d) to determine the number of children in the family

**Menopause:**

This is the period before and including the end of menstruation. This normally occurs between the age of 45 and 55, but a premature menopause may happen earlier, before the age of 40. The ovaries stop producing eggs, menstrual flow ceases, and the woman is no longer able to have children. Generally the menopause arises gradually, with menstrual periods changing in frequency and level of flow. After periods have ceased for 12 months, the menopause is usually complete and the woman is said to be postmenopausal. There is a hormonal imbalance in the body during the menopause, with less oestrogen from the ovaries and a higher level of FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone) to compensate. This causes menstrual irregularities and other symptoms.

Many of these symptoms can be resolved by hormone replacement therapy, which is becoming increasingly popular. Birth control is necessary until periods have stopped for a year, and regular physical examinations should be carried out, e.g. Blood pressure, weights, breasts, pelvic organs and a cervical smear test. Breast self examination is important. Any bleeding after the menopause should be investigated to eliminate the possibility of cancer. The menopause can

occur after surgery to remove the ovaries, and in this case it may occupy a short time period and problem can be more severe.

### **Mental Health of Women:**

This cannot be considered an isolation from social, political and economic issues. The inferior status of women in Indian society can account for the excess of depression and anxiety experienced by them. A long term solution to her problems may require the woman to acquire self confidence and redefine her sense of 'self' through group support, contact with credible role models, education and economic independence.

### **Conclusion:**

Statistical data derived from health indicators tell us about the health problems of women and yet many questions pertaining to women's health remain unanswered. So, there needs to be further research and studies made by demographers, social scientist, activist and health professionals to improve women's health in India.

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### ***I Fill in the Blanks***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a malignant growth of tissue.

**Ans :** Breast Cancer

2. \_\_\_\_\_ can also arise as a side effect of some oral contraceptive pills.

**Ans :** Headache

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the most common reason for hair loss.

**Ans :** Alopecia

4. Pregnancy constitutes for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

**Ans :** 9

5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the period before and including the end of menstruation.

**Ans :** Menopause

### ***II Choose the Best Answer***

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is required for correct development of the baby

a) Iron            b) **Folic Acid**            c) vitamin B    d) none of the above

2. A pregnant woman has around \_\_\_\_\_ of blood.

a) 1 extra pints            b) 2 extra pinta            c) **3 extra pints**

d) none of the above

3. A woman has less than \_\_\_\_\_ of haemoglobin per 100 mls of blood, she is considered anaemic.
  - a) 6 g
  - b) 10 g
  - c) **12 g**
  - d) 5 g
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is painful menstruation
  - a) Vaginal discharge
  - b) **Dysmenorrhoea**
  - c) Pelvic inflammatory Disease
  - d) none of the above
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the term used for infections of uterus, tubes and ovaries.
  - a) Dysmenorrhoea
  - b) Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
  - c) **Pelvic inflammatory Disease**
  - d) none of the above

### ***III Answer in One Word***

1. What is health?
2. Mention the symptoms of depression.
3. Which vitamin deficiency can cause anaemia?
4. What are the common drugs are used to treat headaches?
5. Mention any two signs of pregnancy.

### ***IV Paragraph Questions***

1. Mention the various General Medical problems faced by women.
2. Write short notes on Menopause.

### ***V Essay Questions***

1. What are the Gynaecological problems faced by women?

\*\*\*\*\*

***This is a book which doesn't  
Demand Equality for women  
This is a book which Empowers  
Woman to Command a  
Special Status,  
Dignity and Respect  
For her 'self'***

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