

B.Ed. 2nd YEAR

PAPER XIII

GENDER, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

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SYLLABUS
PAPER XIII
GENDER, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

Marks: 50 (40+10)

Course Objectives:

The student teachers will be able to:

1. Develop basic understanding and familiarity with key concepts: Gender Bias, gender stereotype, empowerment, equity and equality, patriarchy, matriarchy, masculinity and feminism.
2. Understand some important landmarks in connection with gender and education in the historical and contemporary perspective.
3. Learn about gender issues in school curriculum, textual materials across discipline, pedagogical processes and its interaction with class, caste, religion and region.
4. Understand relationship of gender power and sexuality to education (in terms of access, curriculum and pedagogy).

Unit I Gender Issues and Gender Studies:

1. Concept of Gender: Meaning of Gender Equality, Need and Importance, Gender Bias, Gender Stereotype.
2. Gender Equity and Equality in India in relation to caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disability and region.
3. Historical Backdrop: Some landmarks from social reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries with focus on women education.
4. Policy initiatives for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in India.

Unit II Gender, Education and Empowerment:

1. Socialization theory of Gender and Educational Implications.
2. Gender Identities and Socialization Practices in: family, school, other formal and informal organizations.
3. Schooling of Girls: Inequalities and Resistances, issues of access, retention and exclusion (infrastructure and hidden curriculum).
4. Role of education in dealing with social issues: Domestic Violence against women, female foeticide and infanticide and dowry.

Activity:

Development of a project on the organizational climate of two schools single sex and co-educational school.

UNIT – I: CONCEPT OF GENDER

Lesson Structure

- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Learning Objectives**
- 1.3 Concept of Gender**
Self-Check Exercise-1
- 1.4 Need and Importance**
Self-Check Exercise-2
- 1.5 Gender bias and gender stereotype**
Self-Check Exercise-3
- 1.6 Summary**
- 1.7 Glossary**
- 1.8 Answers to Self-Check Exercise**
- 1.9 References/Suggested Readings**
- 1.10 Terminal Questions**

1.1 Introduction

Gender is a social construct that impacts attitudes, roles, responsibilities and behaviour patterns of boys and girls, men and women in all societies. Increasing attention has been given to the importance of achieving gender equality in education. To date, however, most efforts have focused on addressing gender parity – an equal number or proportion of girls and boys accessing educational opportunities. Although simple gender parity may be easier to measure, gender equality encompasses a wider concept, of which gender parity is only a part. Gender equality moves beyond access and requires that girls and boys also experience the same levels of quality and outcomes of education. One of the key impediments to achieving gender equality in education is that it cannot be addressed in a vacuum; rather, educational institutions are products of the inequalities that exist in larger society.

Educational institutions are shaped by the societal forces that perpetuate gender-based discrimination; yet, they can also be essential tools to effect great change throughout a community or social context. Behaviours and beliefs formed in schools and educational institutions can have a lasting impact on gender relations in society. Education systems are both a result of external forces and instrumental to perpetuating or alleviating gender disparity around the world. This unit emphasizes the concept of gender, types of gender roles, attitude towards gender and social construction of gender. This unit creates a lot of inputs for the prospective teachers about the gender issues, gender dynamics and gender roles.

1.2 Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit, the student teachers will be able to:

- Define the concept of gender and distinguish between gender and sex.
- Explain the meaning of gender equality and its significance in society.
- Identify and describe the need and importance of promoting gender equality.
- Recognize and discuss examples of gender bias and gender stereotypes.

- Analyse the impact of gender bias and stereotypes on individuals and society.
- Propose strategies to challenge and overcome gender bias and stereotypes.

1.3 Concept of Gender

Gender encompasses the roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women by families, societies, and cultures. It also includes the traits, abilities, and behaviors expected of men and women, often referred to as masculinity and femininity. These roles and expectations are learned and can evolve over time, differing across and within cultures. Factors such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disabilities, and age can influence gender roles. Understanding gender is crucial because it highlights how the subordination of women (or the dominance of men) is socially constructed, meaning it can be changed. This subordination is not biologically predetermined or immutable.

Gender must be seen as a crucial sociocultural variable that intersects with other variables like race, class, age, and ethnicity. Gender systems are formed within various sociocultural contexts, dictating what is expected, permitted, and valued in men and women, boys and girls. These roles are taught through socialization and are adaptable rather than fixed. Education systems, political and economic frameworks, laws, culture, and traditions institutionalize gender systems. Adopting a gender perspective focuses on the system that defines gender roles and responsibilities, resource access and control, and decision-making capacities, rather than on individual men and women.

Related terminology and concepts include:

- **Gender roles:** The specific economic, political, and social responsibilities and roles deemed suitable for men and women within a culture.
- **Gender equality:** The condition where no person is discriminated against based on sex in terms of authority, opportunities, resource allocation, benefits, and service access.
- **Gender equity:** The practice of ensuring fairness to both women and men, which may involve addressing historical disadvantages that have restricted equal access to rights and privileges. This fairness paves the way for equality. Gender equity also means allocating appropriate resources to address the unique health needs of each gender.
- **Gender awareness:** Recognizing that social differences between men and women influence their access to and control over resources.
- **Gender sensitivity:** The capacity to detect existing gender differences and issues, and to integrate this understanding into strategies and actions. This is in contrast to gender blindness.
- **Gender analysis:** The process of identifying inequalities stemming from the different roles of men and women and examining the impact of these inequalities on their lives, health, and wellbeing.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** The strategy of ensuring that the concerns and experiences of both women and men are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all legislation, policies, and programs.

- **Gender parity:** A numerical concept focused on achieving relative equality in numbers and proportions of women, men, girls, and boys. In the context of education, this means ensuring that equal numbers of boys and girls receive educational services at various levels and in different forms.

A. Definition of Gender

Gender is defined by FAO as 'the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution' (FAO, 1997).

Gender has been defined as: "The commonly shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behavior, characteristics and roles. Gender can be considered a social and cultural construct that differentiates females from males and thus defines the ways in which females and males interact with each other. These roles and expectations are learned and they can change over time as well as vary within and between cultures."

B. Difference between Gender and Sex

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are closely related but not synonymous. In the 1960s, Robert Stoller made a clear distinction between them. He suggested that 'sex' should refer to the physical differences between men and women, while 'gender' should pertain to the behaviors and cultural practices of men and women.

Sex: Refers to the biological characteristics and natural differences between men and women, such as reproductive organs. A person's sex is biologically determined as male or female based on identifiable physical features, which are fixed. Often, women's marginalization has been perceived as a 'natural' outcome of their biology.

Gender: Refers to the cultural and socially constructed differences between the sexes. It encompasses how society encourages and teaches different behaviors to men and women through socialization. Gender and the power dynamics between men and women based on gender are socially constructed, not biologically determined. Gender identities and the expectations associated with roles and responsibilities are thus variable across and within cultures. Gendered power relations infiltrate social institutions, making gender an ever-present factor.

The following are differences between sex and gender with respect to some attributes:

- **Biological vs. Social:** Sex is based on biological attributes, while gender is rooted in social and cultural contexts.
- **Fixed vs. Changeable:** Sex is biologically fixed, whereas gender roles and expectations can change over time and vary between cultures.
- **Natural vs. Constructed:** Sex differences are often seen as natural, whereas gender differences are constructed by societal norms and practices.

- **Physical vs. Behavioral:** Sex pertains to physical attributes, while gender pertains to behavioral and cultural practices.
- **Determinants:** Sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, such as chromosomes (XX for females and XY for males), hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender, on the other hand, is shaped by societal influences, cultural norms, and personal identities.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Sex roles are based on biological functions, such as childbirth and breastfeeding for females. Gender roles involve the expectations placed on individuals by society, such as the belief that women should be nurturing and men should be providers.
- **Impact on Identity:** Sex is a component of one's physical identity, identified at birth. Gender encompasses one's personal sense of identity, which can include a range of identities beyond the traditional binary of male and female, such as non-binary or genderqueer.
- **Relevance to Rights and Opportunities:** Sex-based differences often influence healthcare needs, such as gynaecological or prostate care. Gender-based differences influence rights and opportunities, such as career choices, political representation, and social status, where systemic biases can lead to unequal treatment and opportunities.
- **Language and Usage:** The term 'sex' is typically used in medical and scientific contexts to discuss biological differences. The term 'gender' is used in social sciences and humanities to discuss roles, behaviors, and identities influenced by societal norms.

C. Meaning of gender equality

Gender equality, often referred to as sex equality, gender egalitarianism, or sexual equality, is the principle that all individuals should be treated equally and not face discrimination based on their gender. True gender equality is realized when both women and men have the same rights and opportunities in every aspect of society, including economic involvement and decision-making processes. It also means that the diverse behaviors, goals, and needs of both genders are equally acknowledged and respected. The following sections discuss the roles that various stakeholders play in promoting gender equality within the school environment.

1.4 Role of Schools in Reinforcing Gender Equality

Gender inequalities present in society are often reflected in the school environment, manifesting in various processes such as teaching methods, teacher-student interactions, school management, and physical infrastructure design. Teaching and learning materials may perpetuate gender stereotypes, and teachers might not always be aware of the specific needs of both girls and boys. School management systems often fall short in addressing gender-related issues such as sexual harassment, and many schools lack adequate or separate toilets for girls and boys. Consequently, schools may not provide a gender-responsive environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Achieving such an

environment requires a holistic approach involving multiple interventions, including:

- Conducting gender sensitization programs for parents, community leaders, teachers, and students to raise awareness and support for girls' education.
- Training teachers to make teaching and learning processes responsive to the specific needs of both girls and boys.
- Empowering girls with skills for self-confidence, assertiveness, speaking out, decision-making, and negotiation to overcome gender-based educational constraints.
- Empowering boys to break away from gender oppressive attitudes and practices, such as machismo, bullying, and sexual harassment, and to develop the confidence to positively embrace gender equality.
- Training the school community to manage sexual maturation issues for both girls and boys, with an emphasis on menstruation management.
- Providing guidance and counselling training for teachers and students.
- Establishing guidance and counselling desks to support the social and psychological development of students.

Additional ideas to promote gender equity in schools include:

- Establishing awards to recognize students who promote equity.
- Performing plays about gender equity.
- Writing equity columns or articles in school publications.
- Organizing events like walks, races, or athletic competitions for equity.
- Honouring individuals who foster gender equity in their work and lives.
- Developing posters that promote equity.
- Creating videos on gender equity.
- Reformulating or constructing equitable workplaces.
- Monitoring schools or districts for equity.
- Awarding gender equity scholarships.
- Presenting equity workshops at conferences.
- Observing classrooms to detect bias in interactions.
- Managing equity booths at public events like toy, computer, or grocery stores.

E. Role of Peers in Reinforcing Gender Equality

Peers, like teachers, play a significant role in the socialization of gender differences through various pathways. Upon entering school, children interact with many peers who often model traditional gender behaviours, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes. Schools are typically characterized by gender segregation, leading children to select same-sex playmates, which influences their play experiences and conformity to gender stereotypes. Peers also reinforce gender differentiation by teaching stereotypes (e.g., "Short hair is for boys, not girls") and punishing non-conformity through verbal harassment and physical aggression. Intervention programs can teach young children to recognize and challenge their peers' sexist remarks (e.g., "You can't say girls can't play!"). Peer group influence starts in preschool and continues throughout school, impacting

activities such as play, academic success, popularity, body image, and dress, thus reinforcing gender norms throughout life.

F. Role of Teachers in Reinforcing Gender Equality

Teachers are pivotal in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of their students. Their interpretation of the curriculum, interactions with students and assignment of duties and homework significantly impact students' education. To reinforce gender equality, teachers can:

- Examine syllabuses to incorporate gender perspectives by including introductory themes on gender and exploring gender issues within existing topics.
- Participate in gender awareness and sensitization programs to become gender-sensitive educators.
- Employ gender-inclusive patterns of classroom organization and interaction.
- Utilize teaching approaches that promote gender equity.
- Establish capacity-building centres in educational regions to train teachers and teacher educators in gender-inclusive education.
- Conduct workshops, introduce gender-sensitive classroom organization and interaction, include introductory lessons on gender, focus on gender issues within existing syllabus topics, introduce gender issues in career guidance, analyse gender issues in instructional materials, and conduct research projects on gender issues.

G. Role of Curriculum and Textbooks in Reinforcing Gender Equality

Integrating a gender equity perspective into the curriculum and teaching approaches is challenging due to the typically full curriculum and the centralized development and control of curricula by experts and the state. However, recognizing diversity and employing participatory processes can allow women and girls from diverse backgrounds to participate in curriculum discussions. To make teaching and the curriculum gender-equitable, the following areas need attention:

- **Curriculum Content:** Consider what girls from marginalized environments are offered by their schooling, providing literacy learning that enhances their confidence and transforms their lives.
- **Learning Methods:** Move beyond simplistic portrayals of gender in textbooks to foster a sophisticated understanding of gender learning.
- **Language of Instruction and Literacy:** Address the language barriers faced by geographically or culturally marginalized children, particularly girls and women.
- **Methods of Evaluation and Assessment:** Use varied assessment methods, such as continuous assessment, to provide more equal opportunities for girls in school. Teachers should encourage and reward girls for participating in classroom activities.

To achieve gender-equitable education, it is essential to educate teachers on gender equality through courses and practical materials. Curriculum content,

teacher-student relationships, and teacher education require special attention and policy development to promote gender equality. Government and relevant stakeholders should:

- Ensure curriculum development involves consultation at all societal levels about gender equality and its implications for women and girls, especially those marginalized by language, social practices, or environmental factors.
- Develop and implement government-agreed standards for quality and equality in education.
- Enforce strong legal measures to prevent sexual violence and harassment in schools, with clear procedures for handling abuse.
- Include gender equality training in teacher education programs, both pre-service and in-service.
- Strengthen the capacity and role of inspectorates and gender units to support gender equality in classrooms at all educational levels.
- Assess planning and budgeting processes and ensure that officials at all educational levels are trained to implement these processes effectively.

H. Role of Government in Reinforcing Gender Equality

The government plays a critical role in establishing and maintaining gender equality in education by creating policies, providing resources, and setting standards. Key actions include:

- **Policy Development:** Formulate and implement policies that promote gender equality at all educational levels. These policies should address gender disparities in enrollment, retention, and completion rates for both girls and boys.
- **Funding and Resources:** Allocate sufficient funding to support gender equality initiatives, such as building separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys, providing scholarships for girls, and funding gender-sensitization programs.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide ongoing training for educators and administrators on gender-sensitive teaching methods, classroom management, and curriculum development. Establish capacity-building programs to ensure that all educational personnel are equipped to promote gender equality.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress towards gender equality in education. Collect and analyze data on gender disparities in educational outcomes and use this data to inform policy and practice.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Strengthen legal frameworks to protect against gender-based violence and discrimination in schools. Ensure that laws are enforced and that there are clear procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of harassment and abuse.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct public awareness campaigns to promote gender equality in education and challenge societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender discrimination.

I. Role of Parents and Community in Reinforcing Gender Equality

Parents and community members are influential in shaping children's attitudes towards gender roles and education. Their support is crucial in creating a gender-equal school environment. Actions they can take include:

- **Encouragement and Support:** Encourage both girls and boys to pursue their education and support their academic and extracurricular activities. Parents should provide equal opportunities for their children to participate in various activities, regardless of gender.
- **Role Models:** Act as positive role models by demonstrating gender-equitable behaviors and challenging traditional gender roles. Community leaders and parents should actively promote the importance of education for all children.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage in community activities that promote gender equality, such as attending gender-sensitization workshops and participating in discussions on the value of educating girls and boys equally.
- **Advocacy:** Advocate for gender-equitable practices and policies in local schools. Parents and community members can work together to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive and supportive environments for all students.
- **Support Networks:** Establish support networks for parents to share information and resources on gender equality in education. These networks can provide a platform for parents to discuss challenges and solutions related to gender issues in schools.

J. Role of Media in Reinforcing Gender Equality

The media plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles and equality. By promoting positive portrayals of gender equality, the media can influence societal norms and support educational initiatives. Key actions include:

- **Positive Representation:** Promote positive and diverse representations of both genders in media content, including television programs, movies, advertisements, and news stories. Avoid perpetuating stereotypes and instead showcase stories of empowerment and equality.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Develop and broadcast public service announcements and campaigns that highlight the importance of gender equality in education. Use various media platforms to reach a wide audience and raise awareness.
- **Educational Programs:** Produce and air educational programs that discuss gender issues and promote gender equality. These programs can feature interviews with experts, success stories from gender-equal schools, and discussions on overcoming gender barriers.
- **Collaborations:** Partner with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations to create content that supports gender equality initiatives. Collaborations can include documentaries, social media campaigns, and educational series.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** Establish mechanisms to monitor media content for gender bias and hold media outlets accountable for promoting

gender equality. Encourage media organizations to adopt gender-sensitive policies and practices.

K. Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Reinforcing Gender Equality

NGOs play a vital role in advocating for and implementing gender equality initiatives in education. Their actions can complement government efforts and provide additional resources and support. Key actions include:

- **Advocacy and Policy Influence:** Advocate for policies and practices that promote gender equality in education. Work with governments, schools, and communities to influence policy development and implementation.
- **Programs and Interventions:** Develop and implement programs that address gender disparities in education. These can include scholarships for girls, mentorship programs, gender-sensitization workshops, and community outreach initiatives.
- **Research and Data Collection:** Conduct research on gender equality in education to provide evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice. Collect and analyse data on gender disparities and use this information to drive advocacy efforts.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs for educators, school administrators, and community members. Focus on developing skills and knowledge related to gender-sensitive teaching, classroom management, and curriculum development.
- **Support Services:** Offer support services for students facing gender-based challenges in education. This can include counselling, legal assistance, and safe spaces for students to discuss and address gender-related issues.

By addressing gender inequalities through a comprehensive and collaborative approach, schools, peers, teachers, curricula, governments, parents, communities, media, and NGOs can create an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students.

Self-Check Exercise - 1

- Q 1.** Gender _____ refers to the state in which access to rights and opportunities is unaffected by gender.
- Q 2.** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified belief about the characteristics and roles of men, women, and other gender identities is known as a gender _____.
- Q 3.** Gender equality means that everyone should have the same rights and opportunities regardless of their gender. (True/False)
- Q 4.** Gender bias only affects women. (True/False)
- Q 5.** What is the difference between gender and sex?
- Q 6.** Why is gender equality important in society?

L. Need and Importance

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, but its importance goes far beyond that. It's about creating a world where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal opportunities to thrive. Here's a breakdown of why gender equality is so crucial:

a. Importance of Gender Equality:

- **Human rights:** Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Everyone deserves equal opportunities, respect, and treatment regardless of their gender.
- **Economic growth:** When all genders participate fully in the workforce, economies grow faster and are more resilient.
- **Social progress:** Societies with greater gender equality tend to be more peaceful, stable, and have better overall quality of life.
- **Innovation:** Diverse perspectives lead to more creative problem-solving and innovation across all sectors.
- **Education:** Equal access to education for all genders leads to more skilled populations and better societal outcomes.
- **Health:** Gender equality promotes better health outcomes for all, including reduced maternal mortality and improved family planning.
- **Political representation:** Balanced gender representation in politics leads to more comprehensive policymaking that addresses diverse needs.
- **Breaking stereotypes:** Equality challenges harmful gender stereotypes, allowing individuals to pursue their interests and talents freely.
- **Reduced violence:** Societies with greater gender equality tend to have lower rates of gender-based violence and domestic abuse.
- **Sustainable development:** Gender equality is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals and creating a more equitable world.

b. Need for Gender Equality:

- **Persistent wage gap:** Despite progress, women still earn less than men for equal work in many countries, necessitating continued efforts for pay equity.
- **Underrepresentation in leadership:** Women remain underrepresented in top leadership positions across business, politics, and other sectors.
- **Gender-based violence:** Many individuals, especially women and gender minorities, continue to face high rates of violence and discrimination.
- **Unequal domestic responsibilities:** Women often bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work and caregiving, limiting their career opportunities.
- **Educational disparities:** In some regions, girls still face barriers to education, highlighting the need for equal access to learning opportunities.
- **Healthcare inequities:** Gender biases in healthcare can lead to poorer health outcomes for women and gender minorities.
- **Legal discrimination:** Some countries still have laws that discriminate based on gender, emphasizing the need for legal reforms.

- **Cultural barriers:** Deeply ingrained cultural norms and stereotypes continue to limit opportunities for various genders in many societies.
- **Intersectional challenges:** Gender inequality often intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as race or socioeconomic status, creating complex barriers.
- **Economic vulnerability:** Women are often more economically vulnerable, especially in times of crisis, underlining the need for gender-responsive policies.
- **Digital divide:** In many areas, women have less access to technology and the internet, creating a need for initiatives to bridge this gap.
- **Climate change impact:** Climate change often disproportionately affects women, necessitating gender-conscious environmental policies.

Self-Check Exercise – 2

- Q 1.** Gender equality is a fundamental _____ right.
- Q 2.** Societies with greater gender equality tend to have _____ rates of gender-based violence.
- Q 3.** Gender equality hinders economic growth.
- Q 4.** Women are equally represented in top leadership positions across all sectors.
- Q 5.** How does gender equality contribute to innovation and problem-solving?
- Q 6.** Explain the concept of the "double burden" faced by many women in the workforce.

1.5. Gender bias and gender stereotype

A. Gender Bias

Gender bias refers to a preference or prejudice toward one gender over the other, whether conscious or unconscious, and it manifests in various forms, both subtle and overt. In educational settings, gender bias influences the treatment of students and their opportunities for learning and development. This bias can have significant consequences, affecting aspects such as classroom dynamics, curriculum design, enrollment rates, and dropout patterns.

B. Gender Bias in School Enrollments

Gender discrimination remains a significant barrier to education, impacting both boys and girls. In some regions, traditional gender roles lead to boys being prioritized for work over education, especially as they reach adolescence. Conversely, in many parts of the world, girls face greater obstacles to accessing education due to societal norms that devalue their educational pursuits. Despite education being key to achieving gender equality, disparities persist in achieving equitable enrollment rates, particularly in societies where gender roles are deeply entrenched. Even with increased literacy rates, achieving true gender equality in Indian society remains a challenge due to persisting cultural norms and gender-based expectations.

While there has been progress in improving how females are treated in classrooms and in educational materials, gender bias continues to affect students. Stereotypes embedded in texts and teaching resources, coupled with unintentional or biased behaviors from educators, perpetuate gender inequalities in education. Teachers, despite their best intentions, may unknowingly treat students differently based on their gender, race, ethnicity, or class background.

C. Gender Bias in Dropouts

Gender bias also contributes to disparities in school dropout rates. Social barriers such as poverty, household responsibilities, and cultural beliefs often prevent girls from attending school regularly. Factors such as limited economic incentives for educating girls, lack of adequate facilities like clean toilets and safe transport, and early marriage norms further exacerbate these challenges. In rural areas especially, where secondary schools are scarce, girls are particularly disadvantaged, facing higher dropout rates compared to boys due to these intersecting barriers. The biases and stereotypes ingrained in educational institutions can further hinder girls' opportunities to reach their full potential.

D. Gender Bias in Household Responsibilities

The gender discrimination observed in schools reflects broader societal attitudes within families and communities. Creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment requires addressing underlying biases and fostering cooperation and respect within families. Programs aimed at eliminating gender discrimination in education must involve parents, teachers, and the community at large. Without addressing gender inequality at home and in society, achieving equality within educational institutions remains challenging. Equal opportunity for all children, regardless of gender, is a fundamental right that requires continuous efforts to uphold.

In conclusion, tackling gender bias in education demands comprehensive strategies that encompass policy changes, community engagement, teacher training, and public awareness campaigns. Only through collective action and sustained commitment can societies create environments where all children have equal access to quality education and opportunities to thrive.

E. Strategies for Addressing Gender Bias

To effectively address gender bias in education, several key strategies can be implemented:

- **Policy Reforms:** Governments should enact and enforce policies that promote gender equality in education. This includes measures to eliminate discriminatory practices, ensure equal access to education for all children, and provide support for marginalized groups.
- **Teacher Training:** Conduct regular gender-sensitive training for teachers and educators. This training should focus on raising awareness about unconscious biases, implementing inclusive teaching practices, and creating supportive classroom environments for all students.

- **Curriculum Revision:** Review and revise curricula to ensure they are gender-inclusive and free from stereotypes. Educational materials should represent diverse perspectives and experiences, challenging traditional gender roles and promoting gender equality.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage parents, guardians, and community leaders in initiatives that promote gender equality in education. Foster dialogue and collaboration to address cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender bias.
- **Supportive Facilities:** Improve school infrastructure to support the needs of all students, including separate and adequate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Accessible transportation options and safe environments are essential to ensuring girls can attend school without barriers.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in education. Use various media platforms to challenge stereotypes, promote positive role models, and advocate for equal educational opportunities for all children.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** **Establish mechanisms to monitor progress towards gender** equality in education. Collect data on enrollment rates, dropout rates, academic performance, and school environment to identify gaps and inform targeted interventions.
- **Empowerment Programs:** Implement programs that empower girls and boys with skills, knowledge, and confidence to challenge gender stereotypes and advocate for their rights within educational settings.
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F. Gender Stereotype

A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives.

Whether overtly hostile (such as "women are irrational") or seemingly benign ("women are nurturing"), harmful stereotypes perpetuate inequalities. For example, the traditional view of women as care givers means that child care responsibilities often fall exclusively on women.

Further, gender stereotypes compounded and intersecting with other stereotypes have a disproportionate negative impact on certain groups of women, such as women from minority or indigenous groups, women with disabilities, women from lower caste groups or with lower economic status, migrant women, etc.

Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Examples include:

- Not criminalizing marital rape, perceiving that women are the sexual property of men; and Failing to investigate, prosecute and sentence sexual violence against women, believing that victims of sexual violence agreed to sexual acts, as they were not dressing and behaving "modestly".
- Wrongful gender stereotyping is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. It is a contributing factor in violations of a vast array of rights such as the right to health, adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relations, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence.

G. What are the different types of gender stereotypes?

The most common kinds of gender stereotypes that concern women are:

(i) stereotypes based on the so-called 'inherent characteristics' of women;

(ii) stereotypes based on the gender roles of women; and
(iii) stereotypes related to sex, sexuality, and sexual violence. Each of these three types of stereotypes are discussed below.

(i) Stereotypes based on the so-called “inherent characteristics” of women:

Assumptions are held about the characteristics of men and women which are believed to be “inherent” to each group. These assumptions extend to their emotional, physical, and cognitive capabilities. The table lists a few assumptions about the traits of women and explains why such notions are incorrect

(ii) Stereotypes based on gender roles

Society ascribes specific roles to specific genders, most often seen in the context of men and women. These gender roles are products of social construction and social understandings. For example, men are often believed to be more suited to professional jobs whereas women are believed to be more suited to care for their families. Even when women pursue professional careers, the social behaviour and characteristics expected of them in the private sphere (e.g., performing domestic tasks such as cooking or cleaning) continues to be expected of them. Women are also often expected to behave, dress, and speak in a manner that is compliant with the so-called ‘inherent characteristics’ of women and the corresponding gender roles. Any deviation from these gendered roles leads to social stigmatisation.

(iii) Stereotypes concerning sex and sexual violence

Assumptions are often made about a woman’s character based on her expressive choices

(e.g., the clothes she wears) and sexual history. These assumptions may also impact how her actions and statements are assessed in judicial proceedings. Assumptions based on a woman’s character or the clothes she wears diminish the importance of consent in sexual relationships as well as the agency and personhood of women.

H. Negative effect of Gender Stereotyping

- **Limits opportunities:** Gender stereotyping can limit people’s opportunities . It discourage them from pursuing certain careers or interests that are seen as “not appropriate” for their gender. This can lead to missed opportunities for personal growth, career advancement, and societal progress.
- **Reinforces inequality:** Gender stereotyping reinforces the idea that certain genders are superior to others and reinforces gender inequality. This can lead to discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender, which can have negative effects on individuals and society.
- **Lowers self-esteem:** Gender stereotyping can lower the self-esteem of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles or expectations. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, shame, and self-doubt.
- **Negatively impacts mental health:** Gender stereotyping can contribute to mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and stress. This is particularly true for individuals who face discrimination and bias due to their gender identity or expression.
- **Hinders relationship building:** Gender stereotyping can create barriers to building meaningful relationships between people of different genders. It can lead to

misunderstandings, biases, and stereotypes that can hinder communication and connection

I. Examples of Female Gender Stereotyping:

- Women are expected to be nurturing and caring.
- Women are supposed to be homemakers and take care of children.
- Women should be interested in fashion, beauty, and other traditionally “feminine” things.
- Women are often portrayed as passive and submissive in media and advertising.

J. Examples of Male Gender Stereotyping :

- Men are expected to be tough and not show emotions.
- Men are supposed to be the primary breadwinners in a household.
- Men should be interested in sports, cars, and other “manly” things.
- Men are often portrayed as aggressive and dominant in media and advertising.

K. Gender Stereotypes in India

- **Women are supposed to be homemakers:** In India, there is a strong expectation that women should be responsible for managing the household and taking care of the family. This can limit women’s opportunities for education and career advancement, as well as perpetuate the idea that women’s primary role is to be a caregiver.
- **Men are supposed to be breadwinners:** Similarly, there is an expectation that men should be the primary breadwinners in the family. This can put pressure on men to provide for their families, often at the expense of their own well-being and personal fulfillment.
- **Women are supposed to be modest:** There is a belief in Indian culture that women should be modest and not draw attention to themselves. This can lead to victim-blaming in cases of sexual harassment or assault, as women are often blamed for “provoking” the attacker by their clothing or behavior.
- **Women are supposed to be submissive:** In Indian culture, women are often expected to be submissive and deferential to men. This can lead to power imbalances in relationships and perpetuate gender-based violence.
- **Men are supposed to be strong and dominant:** Men are often expected to be strong and dominant, and to display their masculinity through physical strength and aggression. This can lead to toxic masculinity and violence against women.

Self-Check Exercise – 3

- Q 1.** Fill in the blank: Gender equality is achieved when _____ and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society.
- Q 2.** Fill in the blank: Gender bias refers to a preference or prejudice toward one gender over the other, whether conscious or _____.
- Q 3.** True or False: Gender bias can only manifest in overt forms of discrimination.
- Q 4.** True or False: Curriculum revision is not necessary for addressing gender bias in education.

1.5 Summary

Gender is a social construct that encompasses roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender equality means that individuals of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Achieving gender equality is essential for creating a fair and just society. However, gender bias and stereotypes continue to hinder progress. Gender bias refers to preconceived notions about the abilities and roles of men and women, often resulting in unfair treatment. Gender stereotypes are oversimplified and widely held beliefs about the characteristics of men and women. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including education, policy changes, and cultural shifts.

1.6 Glossary

- **Gender:** The range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity.
- **Gender Equality:** The state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.
- **Gender Bias:** Prejudiced actions or thoughts based on preconceived notions about gender roles.
- **Gender Stereotype:** Overgeneralized beliefs about what men and women are supposed to be like.
- **Gender Roles:** Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.
- **Gender Equity:** The process of being fair to women and men according to their respective needs and circumstances.

1.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

Self-Check Exercise – 1

- Ans 1. Equality
Ans 2. Stereotype
Ans 3. True
Ans 4. False

Self-Check Exercise – 2

- Ans 1. human
Ans 2. Lower
Ans 3. False
Ans 4. False

Self-Check Exercise – 3

- Ans 1. Women
Ans 2. Unconscious
Ans 3. False
Ans 4. False

1.8 References/Suggested Readings

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1.9 Terminal Questions

- Q 1.** Analyze the role of education in promoting gender equality. Provide examples of how educational institutions can challenge gender stereotypes.
- Q 2.** Discuss the historical development of gender studies and its significance in addressing contemporary gender issues.
- Q 3.** Discuss the role of schools in reinforcing gender equality. What strategies can schools implement to create a more gender-responsive environment?
- Q 4.** Explain the concept of intersectionality in the context of gender issues. How does intersectionality impact experiences of gender bias?

UNIT – 2: GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY IN INDIA

Lesson Structure

- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Learning Objectives**
- 2.3 Concept of Gender Equality**
Self-Check Exercise-1
- 2.4 Equality in India**
Self-Check Exercise-2
- 2.5 Summary**
- 2.6 Glossary**
- 2.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise**
- 2.8 References/Suggested Readings**
- 2.9 Terminal Questions**

2.1 Introduction

Equality is defined as the state or condition that treats women and men the same with regard to social status, political and legal rights. Historically, men have enjoyed higher social status than women in all societies. In Britain, feminists towards the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century started the campaign of equal rights for women regarding education, employment, property and right to vote. By the late twentieth century, much legislation such as: Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act were made with an intention to promote gender equality in Britain. The equality debate argues that all women need to be treated as being the same as all men despite having differences on the basis of caste, class, religion, ethnic and other identities. In India, we have certain policies for achieving gender equality in sectors of governance, health, education, employment, property and law. This includes 33 per cent reservation for women in local government, Maternity Benefit Act, Succession Act 2005, Reproductive and Child Health Policy, Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Harassment Act 2013 etc.

These policy initiatives and Acts are essential for bridging the gender gap in India.

Gender equity helps in understanding the planning process from a gender perspective. For example, assessing the actual needs of women in their local situation will help to bring gender equity in a country or state. Tools such as gender analysis, gender planning, gender responsive budgeting and gender audit are helpful in bringing gender equity in the planning process itself by assessing the gender needs of both women and men. Let us take one case study on Gender equity and local governance

2.2 Learning Objectives

- Define the concept of equality and its importance in the Indian context.
- Explain the various forms of inequality in India, including those based on caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disability, and region.

- Identify and analyze the impact of these inequalities on individuals and society.
- Discuss the legal and constitutional measures in place to promote equality in India.
- Propose strategies to address and reduce these forms of inequality in Indian society.

2.3 Concept of Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the state where people of all genders have equal rights, opportunities, and experiences. It's not just about women being equal to men, but about everyone having the chance to thrive regardless of their gender identity.

A. Importance of Gender Equality:

1. **Fairness and Justice:** Basic human right: Everyone deserves equal opportunities and treatment, regardless of gender.
2. **Social and Economic Benefits:** Empowered people, stronger societies: When everyone has access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, societies flourish. Studies show this leads to better health outcomes, increased economic growth, and reduced poverty.
3. **Diverse workplaces are better:** Businesses with a balanced mix of genders are more innovative and productive.
4. **Safety and Security:** Reduced violence: Gender inequality fuels violence against certain genders. Equality helps create safer communities for everyone.
5. **Stronger families:** When responsibilities are shared, families are more stable and nurturing.
6. **Overall Progress:** Reaching full potential: When half the population is limited, society's potential is limited too. Equality allows everyone to contribute their talents.
7. **Sustainable development:** Achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals requires gender equality. It's critical for issues like poverty reduction, health, and education.

a. Examples of Gender Inequality:

- **Unequal Pay for Equal Work:** Despite legislation like the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, a significant gender pay gap persists in India. Women often earn only 60-80% of what men earn for comparable work. This is due to factors like unconscious bias, lack of access to promotions, and stereotypical gender roles in the workplace.
- **Limited Access to Education for Girls:** While female literacy rates are rising in India, they still lag behind male rates. Societal perceptions often prioritize education for boys, leading to higher dropout rates for girls, especially in rural areas. Early marriage and household chores further hinder their educational opportunities.
- **Lack of Women in Leadership Positions:** Women are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles across sectors – politics, business, and academia. This lack of representation creates a glass ceiling, limiting

opportunities for women to reach their full potential and influence decision-making.

- **Gender-Based Violence:** India grapples with a high prevalence of violence against women and girls. This includes domestic violence, sexual assault, dowry-related violence, and honor killings. Fear of violence restricts women's mobility and participation in public life.

B. Working towards Equality:

- **Education and Awareness:** Educating girls and boys about gender equality from a young age is crucial. Campaigns can raise awareness about unconscious bias and empower women to pursue their rights.
- **Legislation and Policies:** Strengthening and enforcing laws promoting equal pay, parental leave policies that encourage men to share childcare duties, and stricter punishments for gender-based violence are essential steps.
- **Cultural Change:** Challenging deeply ingrained patriarchal norms through media campaigns, social movements, and community dialogues is necessary. Promoting positive role models who defy gender stereotypes can inspire change.

a. Examples of Initiatives

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child):** This government initiative aims to improve the sex ratio and education of girls.
- **The Nirbhaya Fund:** Established after the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, this fund supports initiatives to improve women's safety.
- **Reservations for Women in Panchayats (Local Councils):** A quota system ensures women's participation in local governance.

C. Gender Equality in India

India's journey towards equality is multifaceted and complex, influenced by its diverse socio-cultural landscape. Below is an exploration of equality in India with respect to caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disability, and region, along with relevant examples.

a. Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Caste

In India, gender equality intersects significantly with caste, creating a compounded form of discrimination for women from lower castes, particularly Dalits and Adivasis. These women face a unique set of challenges due to the overlapping oppressions of caste and gender.

Gender Equality: Gender equality refers to the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making, and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations, and needs equally, regardless of gender.

Caste System: The caste system in India is a traditional social stratification where individuals are classified into hierarchical groups based on their birth. The primary castes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, with Dalits (formerly known as "Untouchables") and Adivasis (tribal communities) outside the main caste hierarchy.

1) Case Studies:

Bhanwari Devi Case (1992):

- **Background:** Bhanwari Devi, a Dalit woman and social worker in Rajasthan, was gang-raped by upper-caste men as a punishment for trying to stop a child marriage.
- **Impact:** Her case led to the landmark Vishakha Guidelines, which aimed to combat sexual harassment at the workplace. However, her attackers were acquitted, highlighting the deep-seated caste and gender biases in the legal system.

2) Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan:

- **Background:** This movement focuses on the eradication of manual scavenging, predominantly performed by Dalit women.
- **Impact:** It has empowered many Dalit women by providing alternative livelihood options and raising awareness about their rights, challenging both caste-based and gender-based discrimination.

3) Governmental Initiatives

(i) Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 15(1):** Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- **Article 15(3):** Allows the state to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 17:** Abolishes "untouchability" and forbids its practice in any form.

(ii) Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:

- **Purpose:** Provides comprehensive measures to prevent atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, including specific protections for women.
- **Impact:** This act aims to reduce violence and discrimination against Dalit women, though enforcement remains a challenge.

(iii) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):

- **Purpose:** A national campaign aimed at improving the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls and addressing the issue of declining child sex ratios.
- **Impact:** While not specifically targeting caste, it aims to uplift the status of girls across all communities, including marginalized castes.

(iv) Mahila Samakhyas Programme:

- **Purpose:** An education program launched to empower women from marginalized communities, including Dalits, through education and skill development.
- **Impact:** It has played a significant role in enhancing the literacy and awareness levels among Dalit women.

4) Historical Context and Current Scenario:

- The caste system in India is a hierarchical social stratification historically rooted in Hinduism. It divides people into four main categories: Brahmins, Kshatriyas,

Vaishyas, and Shudras, with Dalits (formerly known as "Untouchables") outside of this hierarchy facing severe discrimination.

- Despite constitutional protections and affirmative action policies, caste-based discrimination persists, particularly in rural areas.

Examples:

- **Education and Employment:** Affirmative action in the form of reservations in educational institutions and government jobs aims to uplift Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). However, disparities remain in access to quality education and job opportunities.
- **Social Inclusion:** Efforts like the "Dalit Rights Movement" advocate for the social inclusion and rights of Dalits, challenging traditional practices and prejudices.

5) Facts and Figures

(i) Education:

Literacy Rate: The literacy rate for Dalit women is significantly lower compared to upper-caste women. According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate for Scheduled Caste women was 56.5% compared to 64.8% for non-SC/ST women.

(ii) Employment:

Workforce Participation: Dalit women are often engaged in low-paid, unskilled labor. The National Sample Survey (2011-12) indicates that a higher percentage of Dalit women are employed in casual labor compared to upper-caste women.

(iii) Health:

Maternal Health: Dalit women face higher maternal mortality rates due to limited access to healthcare services. A study by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) shows that institutional deliveries are less common among Dalit women compared to upper-caste women.

6) Education and Empowerment:

- Kausalya Baisantry:** A Dalit woman who overcame caste and gender barriers to become an acclaimed author and social activist, advocating for Dalit rights and gender equality.
- Phoolan Devi:** Known as the "Bandit Queen," she was a Dalit woman who became a symbol of resistance against caste and gender oppression before entering politics to fight for marginalized communities.
- Grassroots Movements:**
Dalit Women's Collective: Groups like the All India Dalit Women's Rights Forum work to address the intersectional issues faced by Dalit women, including violence, discrimination, and access to justice.

7) Challenges

- Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Deep-rooted social norms and practices continue to perpetuate caste and gender discrimination, limiting the effectiveness of legal and policy measures.
- Economic Dependence:** Many Dalit women are economically dependent on upper-caste landlords and employers, making it difficult for them to assert their rights and challenge discriminatory practices.

- iii. **Violence and Safety:** Dalit women are often targets of caste-based violence, including sexual violence, which is used as a tool of oppression and control by upper-caste men.

b. Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Class

Gender equality in India is heavily influenced by class distinctions. Women from lower economic classes face compounded disadvantages due to their gender and socio-economic status. They often lack access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, which further perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality.

1) Definitions

Gender Equality: Gender equality refers to the state of equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making, and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations, and needs equally, regardless of gender.

Class System: The class system refers to the social stratification where people are divided into groups based on their socio-economic status, including factors such as income, education, and occupation. In India, class divisions often intersect with caste, but they also independently affect gender dynamics.

2) Initiatives and Case Studies

i. The SEWA Initiative (Self Employed Women's Association):

Background: SEWA is a trade union based in Ahmedabad that was formed in 1972 to promote the rights of low-income, self-employed female workers.

Impact: SEWA has empowered thousands of women by providing them with vocational training, financial services, and a platform to advocate for their rights. This initiative has improved their socio-economic status and provided greater autonomy and decision-making power.

ii. Domestic Workers in Urban India:

Background: Millions of women from lower socio-economic classes work as domestic workers in urban areas. They often face exploitation, low wages, and lack of social security.

- iii. **Impact:** Organizations like the National Domestic Workers' Movement (NDWM) have been advocating for the rights of these workers, pushing for legal recognition, fair wages, and improved working conditions.

3) Governmental Initiatives

i. National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM):

Purpose: Launched in 2011, NRLM aims to reduce rural poverty by promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor women into Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Impact: The mission has helped millions of rural women gain access to credit, training, and markets, thereby improving their economic status and empowering them within their households and communities.

ii. Mahila E-Haat:

Purpose: An initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Mahila E-Haat is an online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs and SHGs.

Impact: It has provided a digital marketplace for women from lower economic classes to sell their products, thereby increasing their income and visibility.

iii. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):**

Purpose: Launched in 2014, PMJDY aims to provide universal access to banking facilities, particularly for the underserved sections of society.

Impact: This initiative has helped many women from lower economic classes open bank accounts, access financial services, and improve their financial literacy.

4) Facts and Figures

i. **Income Disparity:**

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2018-19, the average monthly income for female casual laborers in rural areas was ₹112.4 compared to ₹141.7 for males. In urban areas, the figures were ₹155.6 for females and ₹176.9 for males, highlighting the gender wage gap.

ii. **Education:**

The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education in India is significantly lower for women from economically weaker sections. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20, the GER for women from Scheduled Castes was 23.4%, compared to 27.1% for all categories.

iii. **Employment:**

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women in India remains low, especially among those from lower economic classes. According to the World Bank, the LFPR for women in India was 20.8% in 2019.

iv. **Microfinance and Women Entrepreneurs:**

Example: Grameen Bank and SKS Microfinance have provided micro-loans to millions of low-income women, enabling them to start small businesses and become financially independent.

Impact: These microfinance initiatives have helped women from lower economic classes build sustainable livelihoods and gain economic autonomy.

v. **Education and Skill Development:**

Example: Programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) have been crucial in promoting the education of girls from lower economic classes.

Impact: BBBP has raised awareness and increased enrollment rates for girls in schools, especially in economically disadvantaged regions.

5) Challenges

i. **Limited Access to Quality Education:** Women from lower economic classes often lack access to quality education due to financial constraints, social norms, and inadequate infrastructure.

ii. **Healthcare Inequities:** Lower economic status significantly limits women's access to healthcare services, leading to higher maternal mortality rates and poor health outcomes.

iii. **Employment Disparities:** Women from lower economic classes are often engaged in informal, low-paying jobs without job security, benefits, or social protection.

- vi. **Social Norms and Patriarchy:** Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and practices continue to restrict women's mobility, decision-making power, and opportunities for economic advancement.
- vii. **Economic Inequality:**
 - Economic class divides are significant in India, with a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Economic reforms have led to growth, but benefits have not been equitably distributed.
 - Examples:**
 - **Income Disparity:** India has one of the highest levels of income inequality among emerging economies. The top 10% of the population controls a substantial portion of the country's wealth.
 - **Access to Services:** The disparity in income translates to unequal access to healthcare, education, and housing. For instance, slum dwellers in cities like Mumbai and Delhi often lack basic amenities compared to affluent urban residents.

c) Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Religion

India, a land of diverse religions and cultures, faces a complex challenge in achieving gender equality. While the Constitution guarantees equal rights for all, religious practices and interpretations sometimes create roadblocks.

Gender equality in India is intricately linked with religious beliefs and practices. Different religions have their own doctrines and customs that impact gender roles, often leading to disparities in rights and opportunities between men and women. While some religious practices empower women, others perpetuate gender discrimination.

Religion: Religion in India plays a significant role in shaping social norms and values. India is home to multiple religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Religious beliefs and practices significantly influence gender roles and expectations.

Religious Freedom: The right to practice, preach, and propagate any religion of one's choice.

Personal Laws: In India, these are laws that apply to a specific religious community in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, and succession.

Religious Equity: Fair treatment of individuals regardless of their religious beliefs or practices.

Religious Equality: Equal rights and opportunities for people of all faiths or no faith.

1) Role of Religion:

1. Positive Influences:

- **Community Support:** Religious institutions can provide social support networks for women, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.
- **Moral Guidance:** Religious teachings can promote values like compassion, respect, and dignity, which can translate into gender-just practices.
- **Leadership Roles:** Some religions offer opportunities for women to take on leadership positions within religious institutions, fostering leadership skills.

2. Negative Influences:

- **Patriarchal Structures:** Many religions have historically enshrined male dominance, limiting women's participation in religious ceremonies and decision-making.
- **Selective Interpretations:** Texts can be interpreted to justify gender bias, restricting women's education, inheritance rights, and freedom of movement.
- **Social Stigma:** Religious practices can perpetuate harmful social norms, like child marriage and female seclusion.

2) Types of Religious Inequalities:

- **Economic disparities**
- **Educational inequalities**
- **Political representation**
- **Access to healthcare**
- **Employment opportunities**

3) Governmental Initiatives

i. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):

- **Purpose:** Launched in 2015, this initiative aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote the education and empowerment of the girl child.
- **Impact:** The campaign has raised awareness and improved the status of girls in communities with strong patriarchal and religious biases against female children.

ii. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005:

- **Purpose:** This amendment aimed to provide equal inheritance rights to daughters in Hindu families.
- **Impact:** It has empowered Hindu women by granting them the same inheritance rights as their male counterparts, promoting economic independence and gender equality.

4) Facts and Figures

i. Educational Attainment:

According to the Census 2011, literacy rates among Muslim women were significantly lower (52%) compared to Hindu women (65%), reflecting the educational disparity based on religious lines.

ii. Workforce Participation:

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women varies across religions. Hindu women have a higher LFPR compared to Muslim women, indicating the impact of religious norms on economic participation.

iii. Gender Disparity Index:

The Global Gender Gap Report 2021 by the World Economic Forum ranked India 140th out of 156 countries, highlighting significant gender

disparities across various sectors, influenced by religious and cultural practices.

Examples

- **Shariat Law vs. Indian Law:**
 - **Example:** Muslim personal law, governed by Shariat, often places women at a disadvantage in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. However, Indian law provides more progressive measures to ensure gender equality.
 - **Impact:** The conflict between religious laws and secular laws often results in challenges for Muslim women seeking justice and equality.
- **Christian Women's Inheritance Rights:**
 - **Example:** Prior to amendments in Indian law, Christian women had limited inheritance rights compared to men. Changes in the Indian Succession Act now provide more equitable rights.
 - **Impact:** These legal reforms have empowered Christian women by ensuring equal property rights.
- **The Constitution:** Enshrines equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on gender or religion.
- **Specific Legislation:** The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, aim to protect women from specific forms of abuse.
- **Reservations:** Policies reserve seats in legislatures and government jobs for women to increase their representation.

5) Types of Problems Faced

- i. **Patriarchal Norms:**
 - Many religious practices are rooted in patriarchal norms that subordinate women and restrict their rights and freedoms. For example, Hindu customs such as dowry and ritual purity practices often disadvantage women.
- ii. **Lack of Education:**
 - Religious conservatism can result in lower educational attainment for women. For instance, Muslim girls in conservative families may have limited access to education due to traditional gender roles and early marriage.
- iii. **Economic Disparities:**
 - Women from religious minorities often face economic disadvantages. For instance, Muslim women have lower labor force participation rates due to religious and cultural restrictions on their mobility and employment.
- iv. **Social Exclusion:**
 - Women from certain religious communities face social exclusion and discrimination, affecting their access to healthcare, employment, and legal

rights. This is particularly evident in rural areas where traditional practices are more entrenched.

v. Moving Forward:

- **Interfaith Dialogue:** Promoting dialogue between religious leaders and gender rights advocates to find common ground.
- **Religious Reforms:** Encouraging progressive interpretations of religious texts that promote gender equality.
- **Empowering Women:** Providing education and vocational training to women to achieve economic independence.
- **Data Collection:** Collecting data disaggregated by religion to identify specific challenges faced by different communities.
- **Conflicting Priorities:** Religious beliefs and practices can clash with initiatives promoting gender equity.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Women may be unaware of their rights or lack the resources to challenge discriminatory practices.

vi. Political Interference: Religious institutions can be used to justify political agendas and undermine gender equality efforts.

- Communal violence and tensions
- Discrimination in housing and employment
- Underrepresentation in government and public sectors
- Stereotyping and prejudice
- Unequal access to education and healthcare

Examples:

- The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 sparked debates about religious discrimination in citizenship processes.
- Reservation policies for religious minorities in educational institutions and government jobs have been implemented in some states.
- Interfaith marriages often face social and legal challenges, highlighting issues of religious freedom and personal choice.

vii. Religious Diversity and Secularism:

- India is a secular state with a diverse religious population, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and prohibits discrimination based on religion.

Examples:

- **Communal Tensions:** Instances of religious violence and discrimination, such as the Gujarat riots in 2002, highlight ongoing religious tensions. However, there are also numerous interfaith initiatives promoting harmony.
- **Legal Protections:** The Indian Constitution and various laws protect religious minorities and ensure their rights. For example, the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, aims to safeguard the interests of religious minorities.

Religion plays a complex role in India's journey towards gender equity and equality. By promoting progressive interpretations of religion, coupled with strong legal and social reforms, India can create a society where women from all faiths have equal opportunities to thrive. Gender equality and equity in India are deeply influenced by religious beliefs and practices. While there have been significant strides towards promoting gender equality through legal reforms and government initiatives, challenges remain due to deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and religious conservatism. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including continued legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and community engagement to ensure that women of all religious backgrounds have equal rights and opportunities.

d. Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Ethnicity

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural, or national experiences. It is often marked by shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions that set apart one group of people from another.

Types of Ethnicities in India:

India is a land of diverse ethnicities. Some broad categories include:

- **Linguistic groups:** Each major Indian language represents a distinct ethnic identity.
- **Religious groups:** Religious minorities like Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians may face specific challenges.
- **Tribes:** There are hundreds of tribal communities with unique cultures and traditions.

1) Role of Ethnicity in Gender Equity and Equality

Ethnicity in India plays a significant role in shaping the social structure and influences gender norms and practices within various ethnic groups. Different ethnic communities have distinct customs, traditions, and social norms that affect gender roles and relations. These can either hinder or promote gender equity and equality.

- **Marginalized ethnic groups:** Women from these groups may face double discrimination based on both gender and ethnicity. They may have limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.
- **Cultural norms:** Certain ethnicities might have cultural norms that restrict women's rights or limit their participation in public life.
- **Representation:** Lack of representation of women from minority ethnicities in government and leadership roles can hinder progress towards gender equality.

2) Case Studies

i. Tribal Communities:

- **Background:** Tribal communities in India often have matrilineal and matriarchal structures, especially in the northeastern states like Meghalaya, where the Khasi tribe practices matrilineality.

- **Impact:** In such societies, women have significant rights and autonomy in property inheritance and household decision-making, which promotes gender equity.
 - **Example:** The Khasi tribe in Meghalaya provides an example where women inherit property, and the youngest daughter is the custodian of the ancestral property.
- ii. **Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs):**
- **Background:** SCs and STs have historically faced social exclusion and economic disadvantages, which disproportionately affect women within these groups.
 - **Impact:** Women from these communities often face multiple layers of discrimination based on both gender and ethnicity.
- iii. **Governmental Initiatives:** Various schemes like the "Stand-Up India" scheme, which promotes entrepreneurship among women from SCs and STs, aim to address these disparities.
- Outcome:** While these initiatives have provided opportunities, women in these communities still face significant challenges in achieving equality due to deep-rooted social prejudices.
- **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST):**
 - **Purpose:** Established to protect and promote the rights of Scheduled Tribes, including tribal women, and ensure their social, educational, and economic development.
 - **Impact:** Provides a platform to address grievances and monitor the implementation of policies aimed at tribal welfare.
 - **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP):**
 - **Purpose:** Ensures a specific allocation of funds for the development of STs, including programs targeting women's education, health, and economic empowerment.
 - **Impact:** Aims to improve the living standards of tribal women by providing better access to education and health services.
 - **The Constitution:** The Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity and guarantees equal rights for all citizens.
 - **Affirmative Action:** Policies like reservations in education and government jobs aim to increase representation of disadvantaged groups, including some ethnicities.
 - **Tribal welfare schemes:** These schemes provide special assistance to tribal communities in areas like education, healthcare, and livelihood development.
 - **Adivasi women in central India:** These indigenous women often face triple discrimination based on their ethnicity, gender, and economic status, leading to lower access to education and healthcare.
 - **Dalit women:** Despite legal protections, Dalit women frequently experience discrimination in employment and social settings, highlighting the intersection of caste, ethnicity, and gender.

- **Background:** Dalit women face intersectional discrimination based on caste and gender, making them one of the most marginalized groups in India.
- **Impact:** They encounter severe social exclusion, economic deprivation, and violence, including sexual violence.
- **Example:** The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) works towards the empowerment and protection of Dalit women by advocating for their rights and providing legal aid.
- **Santhal Women:**
 - **Background:** Santhal women, part of one of the largest tribal communities in India, are known for their participation in agricultural and economic activities.
 - **Impact:** Despite their contribution, Santhal women face challenges such as lack of education, healthcare, and exposure to modern economic opportunities.
 - **Example:** Initiatives like self-help groups (SHGs) have empowered Santhal women by providing microfinance and training for income-generating activities.
- **North-Eastern women:** Women from North-Eastern states like Manipur and Nagaland often face discrimination and safety issues when migrating to major cities for work or education.

3) Facts and Figures

- i. **Literacy Rates:**
 - According to the Census 2011, the literacy rate among tribal women was 49.4%, significantly lower than the national average for women, which was 65.46%.
- ii. **Workforce Participation:**
 - The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women in STs is higher compared to the general population, indicating the significant economic contribution of tribal women. However, they often engage in low-paying, unorganized sectors.
- iii. **Health Indicators:**
 - Maternal mortality rates and infant mortality rates are higher among tribal communities, reflecting inadequate healthcare services for tribal women.

4) Types of Problems Faced

- i. **Social Exclusion:**
 - Ethnic minority women often face social exclusion and discrimination in accessing education, employment, and healthcare. For example, tribal women in remote areas may lack access to quality education and healthcare facilities.
- ii. **Economic Disparities:**

- Women from ethnic minorities are often engaged in unorganized sectors with low wages and poor working conditions. They have limited access to formal financial services and economic opportunities.
 - iii. **Health and Nutrition:**
 - Ethnic minority women, particularly in tribal areas, suffer from poor health and nutrition due to inadequate healthcare services and cultural practices. High maternal and infant mortality rates are common among these communities.
 - iv. **Violence and Exploitation:**
 - Women from marginalized ethnic groups are more vulnerable to violence, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. For instance, Dalit women face higher rates of sexual violence compared to women from other castes.
 - v. **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:**
 - India is home to numerous ethnic groups and languages. This diversity can lead to both rich cultural exchanges and ethnic tensions.
- Examples:**
- North-East India: The region is ethnically diverse with multiple indigenous groups. Movements for autonomy and recognition, such as the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland, reflect ethnic aspirations.
 - Scheduled Tribes: Indigenous tribes often face marginalization. Government initiatives like the Forest Rights Act, 2006, aim to secure their land and livelihood rights.

Gender equity and equality in India are deeply influenced by ethnic diversity. While some ethnic communities offer more egalitarian structures, others continue to struggle with deep-seated gender discrimination. Government initiatives and civil society efforts have made significant strides in addressing these disparities, but challenges remain. Achieving gender equity and equality for women from all ethnic backgrounds requires a holistic approach that includes legal reforms, education, economic empowerment, and social awareness to dismantle entrenched biases and promote inclusivity.

e. **Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Disability**

Disability: Disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. Disabilities can be congenital or acquired due to injury, disease, or aging.

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs): Individuals who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

1) The Role of Disability in Gender Equity:

Disability intersects with gender to create unique challenges for women and men with disabilities. Women with disabilities often face compounded discrimination

based on both their gender and their disability status, affecting their access to education, employment, healthcare, and social participation.

- **Double Marginalization:** Women with disabilities often face a double disadvantage. They may experience discrimination based on both gender and disability, limiting their access to education, employment, and healthcare.
- **Violence:** Women with disabilities are at a higher risk of violence and abuse.
- **Lack of Representation:** Women with disabilities are underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making processes, hindering progress towards gender equality.

2) Case Studies

i. Case Study: Women with Disabilities in Employment:

- **Background:** Women with disabilities in India face significant barriers to employment due to societal attitudes, lack of accessible workplaces, and inadequate skills training.
- **Impact:** These women are often confined to low-paying, unskilled jobs or are unemployed.
- **Example:** The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) has worked on several initiatives to promote the employment of women with disabilities by advocating for inclusive policies and conducting skill development programs.

ii. Case Study: Access to Education for Girls with Disabilities:

- **Background:** Girls with disabilities are less likely to attend school compared to their non-disabled peers due to physical barriers, lack of accessible educational materials, and societal attitudes.
- **Impact:** This limits their future employment opportunities and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and dependence.
- **Example:** The Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme aims to provide inclusive education to children with disabilities in mainstream schools. However, implementation remains a challenge due to insufficient resources and trained staff.

3) Governmental Initiatives

i. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:

- **Purpose:** This act provides comprehensive rights and entitlements for persons with disabilities, including women and children, to ensure their full and effective participation in society.
- **Impact:** It mandates inclusive education, accessible public facilities, and equal employment opportunities.

ii. Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan):

- **Purpose:** Launched to make public buildings, transportation systems, and information and communication technology accessible to persons with disabilities.

- **Impact:** Aims to create a more inclusive environment that facilitates equal participation of women with disabilities in public life.
- iii. **Rights and Inclusion:**
 - People with disabilities in India face significant challenges in accessing education, employment, and social inclusion. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, seeks to address these issues.
- Examples:**
 - Education: Inclusive education policies are in place, but implementation is inconsistent. Special schools and integrated education programs aim to provide better opportunities for children with disabilities.
 - Accessibility: Urban infrastructure is gradually becoming more accessible, with efforts to make public spaces, transportation, and services disability-friendly.
- iv. **Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan):** Launched in 2015 to achieve universal accessibility for PwDs.
- v. **Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:** Provides financial assistance to NGOs for various projects aimed at rehabilitating PwDs.
- vi. **Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme):** Provides assistive devices to PwDs.
- vii. **National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities:** Provides financial assistance for higher education.
- viii. **Unique Disability ID (UDID) Project:** Aims to create a national database of PwDs and issue unique ID cards.

4) Facts and Figures

- i. **Education:**
 - According to Census 2011, the literacy rate for persons with disabilities in India is 54.5%, with a gender gap where 62.9% of men and only 45.4% of women with disabilities are literate.
- ii. **Employment:**
 - The 2011 Census reported that only 23.7% of women with disabilities were employed, compared to 47.6% of men with disabilities.
- iii. **Healthcare Access:**
 - Women with disabilities often face challenges in accessing healthcare due to physical barriers, lack of accessible information, and prejudices within the healthcare system.
- iv. **Economic Empowerment:**
 - **Example:** The "Sashakt Divyang Mahila Yojana" aims to provide vocational training and self-employment opportunities to women with disabilities to empower them economically.
 - **Impact:** Helps women with disabilities become financially independent and improves their social status.
- v. **Inclusive Education Initiatives:**
 - **Example:** The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) includes provisions for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education.

- **Impact:** Promotes the right to education for all children, regardless of their abilities, although challenges in implementation persist.

5) Types of Problems Faced

- Social Exclusion:** Women with disabilities often face social isolation due to stigma and discrimination, limiting their participation in community activities and decision-making processes.
- Economic Disparities:** Lack of access to quality education and vocational training results in limited job opportunities and economic dependence for women with disabilities.
- Healthcare Barriers:** Physical inaccessibility of healthcare facilities, lack of specialized services, and inadequate awareness among healthcare providers about the needs of women with disabilities.
- Violence and Abuse:** Women with disabilities are more vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, both within their families and in public spaces.
- Social Stigma:** Negative attitudes and misconceptions about disability lead to social exclusion and isolation.
- Accessibility Barriers:** Physical infrastructure like buildings and transportation systems often lack necessary modifications for PwDs.
- Attitudinal Barriers:** Prejudiced mindsets can prevent PwDs from participating fully in society.
- Limited Resources:** Inadequate access to healthcare, rehabilitation services, and assistive technology can hinder their potential.

Achieving gender equity and equality for women with disabilities in India requires a multifaceted approach that includes legal reforms, education, economic empowerment, and social awareness. Governmental initiatives have made strides in promoting inclusivity, but significant challenges remain due to deep-seated societal attitudes and infrastructural barriers. By addressing these issues holistically, India can move closer to ensuring that women with disabilities have equal opportunities to realize their full potential and contribute to society.

f. Gender equity and equality in India in relation to Region

Region: Region refers to a specific geographical area, which can be defined by natural borders, administrative boundaries, cultural characteristics, or economic activities. In India, regional disparities often arise due to varied levels of development, resources, and socio-economic conditions.

1) Regional disparities can significantly impact gender equality:

- **Education:** Unequal access to quality education across regions affects girls' education rates and future prospects.
- **Healthcare:** Limited healthcare facilities in some regions can lead to higher maternal mortality rates and limited access to reproductive healthcare for women.

- **Livelihood Opportunities:** Lack of job opportunities in certain areas can force women into low-paying or exploitative work

2) Role of Region in Gender Equity and Equality

Regional disparities in India significantly impact gender equity and equality. Women in different regions experience varying levels of access to education, healthcare, employment, and social services. These disparities can be attributed to factors such as economic development, cultural practices, infrastructure, and government policies.

3) Case Studies

i. Women's Education in Rural vs. Urban Areas:

- **Background:** Urban areas in India generally have better access to educational facilities compared to rural areas. Girls in rural regions often face more significant barriers to education due to infrastructure issues, traditional gender roles, and economic constraints.
- **Impact:** Girls in urban areas are more likely to complete their education and pursue higher studies, whereas girls in rural areas often drop out earlier.
- **Example:** The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative by the government aims to address this disparity by promoting the education of girls in rural regions.

ii. Case Study: Healthcare Access in North-Eastern States:

- **Background:** The North-Eastern states of India face unique challenges in terms of healthcare due to their geographical isolation, lack of infrastructure, and limited healthcare facilities.
- **Impact:** Women in these regions have lower access to maternal healthcare services, leading to higher maternal and infant mortality rates.
- **Example:** The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has been instrumental in improving healthcare infrastructure and services in these regions, although challenges remain.

4) Governmental Initiatives

i. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM):

- **Purpose:** Launched to improve healthcare delivery in rural areas and address regional disparities in healthcare access.
- **Impact:** Significant improvements in healthcare infrastructure and services, particularly for women and children in underserved regions.

ii. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):

- **Purpose:** A national campaign aimed at promoting gender equality by ensuring the survival, protection, and education of the girl child.
- **Impact:** Focuses on changing societal attitudes, improving the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls, and encouraging education in regions with skewed gender ratios.

- iii. **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):**
 - **Purpose:** Aims to alleviate poverty by promoting self-employment and organization of rural women into self-help groups (SHGs).
 - **Impact:** Empowers women in rural regions economically, improving their social status and contributing to gender equity.
- iv. **Regional Disparities:**
 - Economic and developmental disparities exist between different regions of India. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have higher human development indices compared to states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Examples:

- **Development Programs:** The government implements region-specific development programs to address these disparities. For example, the "Aspirational Districts Programme" targets underdeveloped districts to improve socio-economic indicators.
- **Migration:** Economic disparities drive internal migration, with people from less developed states moving to urban centers in search of better opportunities. This can lead to social and economic challenges both in source and destination regions.

5) Facts and Figures

- i. **Education:**
 - The female literacy rate in urban areas is significantly higher (79.11%) compared to rural areas (57.93%) according to Census 2011.
- ii. **Healthcare:**
 - Maternal mortality rates are higher in states with poor healthcare infrastructure, such as Assam and Uttar Pradesh, compared to more developed states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- iii. **Employment:**
 - Women's participation in the workforce is higher in urban areas (23.6%) compared to rural areas (17.5%), reflecting regional disparities in employment opportunities.
- iv. **Economic Empowerment:**
 - Example: In states like Kerala, women have higher workforce participation and better access to microfinance and self-employment opportunities compared to states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where regional disparities limit economic empowerment.
- v. **Political Participation:**
 - Example: Women in southern states such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have higher political participation and representation in local governance compared to northern states like Haryana and Rajasthan.

6) Types of Problems Faced

- i. **Educational Disparities:**

- Inadequate infrastructure, lack of transportation, and traditional gender roles limit girls' access to education in rural and remote regions.
- ii. **Healthcare Barriers:**
 - Poor healthcare infrastructure, lack of trained medical personnel, and geographical isolation affect women's access to quality healthcare in underserved regions.
- iii. **Economic Inequities:**
 - Limited access to employment opportunities, vocational training, and financial resources hinder women's economic empowerment in less developed regions.
- iv. **Cultural and Social Norms:**
 - Traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms prevalent in certain regions restrict women's mobility, decision-making, and participation in public life.

Achieving gender equity and equality in India requires addressing regional disparities through targeted policies and interventions. Government initiatives like NRHM, BBWP, and DAY-NRLM have made significant strides in promoting gender equity across regions, but challenges remain due to deep-seated socio-cultural norms and infrastructural gaps. By focusing on regional disparities and implementing holistic development strategies, India can ensure that women across all regions have equal opportunities to realize their full potential and contribute to the nation's progress. India's pursuit of equality is a continuous process, influenced by its complex social fabric. Efforts to address caste-based discrimination, economic inequality, religious tensions, ethnic diversity, disability rights, and regional disparities are crucial for creating a more inclusive society. While significant progress has been made, ongoing challenges require sustained and multifaceted interventions to ensure that all citizens enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

Self-Check Exercise-1

- Q 1.** What is a major barrier to gender equality in India in relation to caste?
- a. Economic disparity
 - b. Cultural festivals
 - c. Caste-based discrimination
 - d. Technological advancements
- Q 2.** Gender equity in India is often hindered by _____ discrimination, which affects access to resources and opportunities for women.
- Q 3.** True/False: Caste-based discrimination has no impact on gender equality in India.
- Q 4.** How does caste-based discrimination affect gender equality in India?

2.4 Need and Importance of Equality and Equity

Equality in India refers to the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. It implies uniform treatment for all citizens, ensuring that everyone has the same legal and social rights.

a) Need for Equality in India

1. **Social Justice:** Ensuring that every individual is treated equally helps in eradicating discrimination based on caste, gender, religion, or economic status.
2. **Economic Development:** Equality ensures that everyone has equal access to resources, opportunities, and employment, leading to overall economic growth.
3. **Political Stability:** Equal treatment fosters social harmony and reduces the chances of conflicts and uprisings due to perceived injustices.

b) Scope of Equality in India

1. **Legal Equality:** Uniform application of laws to all individuals.
2. **Social Equality:** Elimination of social discrimination based on caste, gender, religion, etc.
3. **Economic Equality:** Equal access to economic resources and opportunities.
4. **Political Equality:** Equal participation in the political process and governance.

c) History of Equality in India

1. **Pre-Independence Era:** The Indian society was heavily stratified with the caste system and gender-based discrimination.
2. **Post-Independence:** The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, enshrined the principles of equality, aiming to eliminate historical injustices and promote social justice.

d) Characteristics of Equality in India

1. **Non-Discrimination:** Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth (Article 15 of the Indian Constitution).
2. **Equal Opportunity:** Guarantee of equal opportunities in matters of public employment (Article 16).
3. **Abolition of Untouchability:** The practice of untouchability is forbidden (Article 17).
4. **Right to Equality:** Equality before the law and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India (Article 14).

e) Advantages of Equality

1. **Social Harmony:** Reduces social tensions and conflicts.
2. **Economic Growth:** Ensures everyone can contribute to and benefit from economic development.
3. **Political Stability:** Promotes trust in the political system and governance.
4. **Empowerment:** Empowers marginalized communities and individuals.

f) Disadvantages of Equality

1. Implementation Challenges: Ensuring true equality requires effective implementation of policies, which can be difficult due to bureaucratic inefficiencies.

2. Perceived Inequities: Measures to promote equality, like reservations, can be perceived as unfair by other groups.

3. Resistance to Change: Social and cultural resistance to equality, especially in deeply rooted patriarchal and caste-based systems.

g) Government Initiatives and Policies

1. Constitutional Provisions: Articles 14-18 ensure various aspects of equality.

2. Right to Education Act (2009): Ensures free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14.

3. Reservation Policies: Quotas in education and employment for SCs, STs, and OBCs to promote social equality.

4. Anti-Discrimination Laws: Various laws like the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

5. Gender Equality Initiatives: Schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, reservation of seats for women in local governance.

h) Historical Significance

1. Abolition of Untouchability: One of the most significant steps towards social equality.

2. Women's Rights Movement: Progress in women's education and employment since independence.

3. Constitutional Guarantees: The Indian Constitution is a landmark document in ensuring equality for all citizens.

Understanding equality in India involves appreciating its constitutional basis, historical context, the scope of its application, and the continuous efforts required to implement and sustain it. The journey towards achieving true equality is ongoing, with significant strides made and numerous challenges yet to be addressed.

A. Equity in India

Equity refers to the fairness and justice in the way people are treated. In the context of India, it involves recognizing the diverse needs and circumstances of different groups and ensuring that resources and opportunities are distributed in a way that addresses these differences.

a) Need for Equity in India

1. Social Justice: To address historical and systemic disadvantages faced by marginalized communities.

2. Inclusive Development: To ensure that all sections of society benefit from economic growth and development.

3. Reducing Inequality: To bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups and promote a more balanced society.

b) Scope of Equity in India

- 1. Educational Equity:** Ensuring all children have access to quality education, with special support for disadvantaged groups.
- 2. Healthcare Equity:** Providing tailored healthcare services to meet the needs of different populations, particularly the underserved.
- 3. Economic Equity:** Implementing policies that support economically weaker sections and promote equitable growth.
- 4. Social Equity:** Addressing social disparities and promoting equal participation in all aspects of life.

c) History of Equity in India

- 1. Pre-Independence Era:** Social structures were heavily influenced by caste, gender, and economic status, leading to significant inequities.
- 2. Post-Independence:** The Indian Constitution and various policies aimed to rectify these historical injustices and promote equity.
- 3. Recent Developments:** Continued efforts through policy reforms and targeted initiatives to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities.

d) Characteristics of Equity in India

- 1. Affirmative Action:** Policies like reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs in education and employment.
- 2. Targeted Schemes:** Special programs for women, children, rural populations, and economically weaker sections.
- 3. Social Welfare Programs:** Initiatives like Public Distribution System (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and various health schemes.
- 4. Regional Development:** Special packages and policies for the development of backward regions.

e) Advantages of Equity

- 1. Reduces Inequality:** Helps bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups.
- 2. Promotes Social Cohesion:** Reduces social tensions and fosters a sense of belonging among all communities.
- 3. Boosts Economic Growth:** Inclusive development ensures that all sections of society contribute to and benefit from economic progress.
- 4. Empowers Marginalized Groups:** Provides opportunities and resources to those historically disadvantaged.

f) Disadvantages of Equity

- 1. Implementation Challenges:** Ensuring effective implementation of equitable policies can be difficult due to bureaucratic hurdles and corruption.
- 2. Perception of Unfairness:** Some groups may perceive equity measures, like reservations, as unfair advantages.

3. Resource Allocation: Equitable distribution requires substantial resources and careful planning, which can be challenging in a diverse country like India.

g) Government Initiatives and Policies

1. Reservation Policies: Quotas in education and employment for SCs, STs, and OBCs.

2. Educational Schemes: Mid-day Meal Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and scholarships for minority and economically weaker students.

3. Healthcare Programs: Ayushman Bharat, Janani Suraksha Yojana, and targeted vaccination drives.

4. Economic Initiatives: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), and financial inclusion programs like Jan Dhan Yojana.

5. Social Welfare: Public Distribution System (PDS), MGNREGA, and social security schemes for senior citizens, widows, and disabled individuals.

h) Historical Significance

1. Constitutional Provisions: The Indian Constitution, through various articles, ensures special provisions for the upliftment of marginalized communities.

2. Social Reform Movements: Movements led by leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, and others emphasized the need for equity.

3. Policy Milestones: Landmark policies and acts, such as the Mandal Commission recommendations, have played a crucial role in promoting equity.

Equity in India is crucial for ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to succeed and thrive. While significant progress has been made, continuous efforts and effective implementation of policies are essential to achieve true equity and inclusive development.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q 1. Which Indian labor law guarantees rural households 100 days of wage employment per year?

- a. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- b. Ayushman Bharat
- c. MGNREGA
- d. Jan Dhan Yojana

Q 2. The Indian Constitution guarantees _____ before the law and prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

Q 3. True or False: Affirmative action policies in India aim to provide advantages to already privileged groups.

Q 4. What is the main objective of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India?

2.5 Summary

Equality in India is a complex and multifaceted issue, encompassing various dimensions such as caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disability, and region. Despite

constitutional guarantees and legal measures aimed at promoting equality, these forms of discrimination and inequality persist in Indian society. Caste-based discrimination, deeply rooted in historical and social structures, continues to affect social interactions and access to resources. Class disparities result in significant economic inequality, while religious minorities often face prejudice and exclusion. Ethnic diversity, while a source of cultural richness, can also lead to conflict and marginalization. People with disabilities face significant barriers to inclusion, and regional disparities in development contribute to uneven opportunities across the country. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies, including policy interventions, education, and grassroots movements.

2.6 Glossary

- **Caste:** A traditional social stratification system in India, dividing people into hierarchical groups based on their birth.
- **Class:** Economic and social divisions based on wealth, income, education, and occupation.
- **Religion:** A system of faith and worship; in India, major religions include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism.
- **Ethnicity:** Social groups with a shared history, culture, and identity.
- **Disability:** Physical or mental conditions that limit a person's movements, senses, or activities.
- **Region:** Geographic areas that may experience different levels of development and opportunities.

2.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

Self-Check Exercise-1

Ans 1. c) Caste-based discrimination

Ans 2. Caste

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Caste-based discrimination affects gender equality by limiting access to education, employment, and social opportunities for women, especially those from lower castes, thereby reinforcing social and economic inequalities.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Ans 1. c) MGNREGA

Ans 2. Equality

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. The main objective of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India is to distribute subsidized food and non-food items to the poor to ensure food security.

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2.9 Terminal Questions

- Critically examine the historical context of equity in India. Discuss how colonial legacies continue to impact economic and social disparities in the country. What steps can be taken to address these historical imbalances?
- Evaluate the effectiveness of affirmative action policies in India. Consider both the advantages and disadvantages, and discuss the challenges of balancing equity with individual merit. Propose alternative or complementary strategies for achieving greater social and economic equality.
- Analyse the connection between gender equity and overall national development in India. How do regional disparities in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women hinder progress towards a more equitable society? Suggest specific policy interventions to address these challenges.
- Discuss the role of government initiatives in promoting equity in India. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs like MGNREGA, Jan Dhan Yojana, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. What are the key challenges in ensuring successful implementation of these schemes?
- Compare and contrast the concepts of equality and equity. How do these concepts differ in their approach to achieving a just society? In the context of India, which approach do you think is more crucial for achieving inclusive growth and development? Explain your reasoning.

- The pursuit of equity is often seen as a trade-off with economic efficiency. Do you agree with this statement? Discuss the potential benefits and drawbacks of prioritizing equity in economic policy. How can India achieve a balance between both goals?
- Choose a specific region or marginalized community in India facing unique challenges in terms of equity (e.g., tribal communities, religious minorities). Analyse the specific barriers they face and propose strategies for promoting greater equity in their development.

UNIT – 3: SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES WITH FOCUS ON WOMEN EDUCATION

Lesson Structure

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3.1 Introduction

The term 'women's movement' does not refer to one individual movement or entity. It is composed of several movements that touch upon a variety of issues and uses various approaches. It is a term used in recognition of the 'feel that all these movements' are working in some way or the other towards the emancipation of women. These movements seek to reformulate public life, education, the workplace, and the home. In short, they seek a total transformation of society. A women's movement is a conscious and collective effort to deal with a specific set of problems and needs. Women face these needs or problems due to a cultural system that categorically puts them at a disadvantage.

In patriarchal societies, women have been forced to resist because of generally silent and unorganized disenchantments, suppressed feelings of rejection and gender injustice. Women have been affected by these factors at an individual level, resulting in an organized outburst in the form of manifest women's movements. In Hindu society the caste hierarchy is connected with the ideology of patriarchy and maintenance of ritual purity. The complex substance of 'Jati' is transmitted from one generation to another and here the role of women became crucial as they had a burden of maintaining the patriarchal line. Therefore, female sexuality and her reproductive abilities are controlled. As women are considered responsible for bodily purity of caste, pre-pubertal marriage was prescribed and ban on inter-caste marriage was highlighted. Two important movements

influenced the growth of the feminism in India. One was the social reform movement which aimed at changing traditional structure. The other was the struggle of National Independent from colonial rule. The general situation regarding the status of women has been one of separation and domination within the patriarchal system of family and society. Movements of reform against the social evils that affected women began in India in the early 19th century.

One of the most important influences in reform movements was the rise of liberal ideology with its concepts of liberty, fraternity, equality and education. Western education helped to create a new awareness among the Indian upper caste and class which led to social reform and legislation throughout the 19th and 20th century. In India, the tradition of women's struggles and movements against patriarchal institutions of gender inequality has been weak in comparison to the women's movements in Western and European societies. The rise of women in their fight against patriarchy has been rather slow. Women's writings of the eighteenth century show disenchantment with patriarchy and gender injustices rather than any kind of active resistance or revolt. The women's movement in India can be seen as forming three 'waves' The first wave can be seen during the national movement, when there was mass mobilization of women for participation in the nationalist movement. Thereafter, for over a decade, there was a lull in political activities by women. The late 1960s saw resurgence in women's political activity and can be called the second wave. In the late 1970s, the third wave of the women's movement emerged, which focused on women's empowerment.

3.2 Learning Objectives

- Understand the role of reform and nationalist movements in the context of women's rights.
- Recognize the impact of social reform movements and women's organizations on women's status.
- Identify key women leaders of the nationalist movement and their contributions.
- Comprehend the historical development and significance of female education.
- Analyze the agitation by women for suffrage and its outcomes.
- Explore Gandhi's perspective on women's rights and their role in the nationalist movement.
- Assess the participation and impact of women in political action.

3.3 Reform and Nationalist Movement in the Context of Women Rights

There are two distinct progressive movements aimed at emancipating Indian women. Each group acknowledged the restrictive and coercive nature of social customs and institutions. One group opposed these customs and institutions as they contradicted the democratic principles of liberty and freedom. This group was called the Reformers. The other group demanded the democratization of social relations and removal of harmful practices on the basis of revival of the Vedic society in modern

India, which according to them, was democratic. This group came to be known as the Revivalists. The social reformers believed in the principle of individual

liberty, freedom, and equality of all human beings irrespective of sex, color, race, caste, or religion. They aimed to liberate Indian women hence, attacked traditional, authoritarian, and hierarchical social institutions. Although many reformers were men, the movement aimed to improve the status of Indian women.

The issues taken up by the reform movements included Sati, Widow Remarriage, Child Marriage, Polygamy, Education for Women and Women's Property Rights. These were the problems faced mainly by Hindu women of higher castes and class. The social reformers who were educated and from upper classes felt that women's role in the context of patriarchy must be addressed. The social evils also affected middle class families and social reform was necessary to convince people to give up such practices. The social reform movements influenced the British administration to prevent these social evils by passing legislation.

a. Key Movements and Organizations

Brahmo Samaj: Founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, it advocated for the abolition of sati, child marriage, and promoted widow remarriage and women's education.

Arya Samaj: Founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, it also supported women's education and the upliftment of women.

All India Women's Conference (AIWC): Established in 1927, AIWC played a pivotal role in promoting female education, social welfare, and legislative reforms.

Impact:

These organizations were instrumental in advocating for legal reforms, such as the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act (1856) and the Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929), and in setting up schools and colleges for women.

b. Key Personalities

Pandita Ramabai: Pandita Ramabai was a remarkable woman who pioneered women's education, and she rebelliously fought for women's rights and empowerment. She combined ideas that she had learned from her sisters and friends from other racial and ethnic backgrounds at Gender & Society Wantage. She saw caste system as a major flaw in Hindu society. According to her caste system not only saw physical work and labour as denouncing, but it also led to false ideas of valuing intellect and merit. Furthermore, she believes caste associations promote narrow self-interest and hinder the development of a truly democratic spirit. She formed various organizations like Arya Mahila Samaj, Sharada Sadan, Mukti Mission for empowering young widows, providing residential school for Brahmin women, mainly widows, and also unmarried girls. Her organization also provided vocational training to girls and women in order to make them economically secure.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the greatest social reformers of India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's (1772–1833) name is usually listed first among those of nineteenth-century reformers concerned with improving women's status. The first social reform movement of 19th century was led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Historians have called him the 'father of modern India,' a 'champion of women's rights,' and a 'feminist'. He was concerned about a

number of evil customs like Sati, female infanticide, polygamy, child marriage, purdah, absence of education among women, and the Devadasi system. He also fought to permit widow remarriage. He quoted from religious literature to show that Sati, Child Marriage and female infanticide were not part of the Hindu religion. He established the Brahmo Samaj to fight for the better status of women. He strongly refuted the contention that Sati was a free, voluntary act of the widow, and called it a monstrous lie. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's arguments and anti-Sati activities led Lord William Bentinck to legislate for the prohibition of Sati in 1829.

Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar: Another social reformer, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, worked to improve the situation of widows, encouraging widow remarriage. Others like Maharshi Karve and Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade continued his work, legalizing widow remarriages. All the efforts taken by these reforms led to the passing of the 'The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act 1856' which legalized the remarriage of widows in all jurisdictions of India under East India Company rule.

Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade: Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade was a social reformer from Maharashtra with a background of the western education. He worked to abolish child marriage and to support widow remarriage. He was also concerned with the education of girls. He was instrumental in the foundation of an all-Indian organization that carried on the struggle for social reform - the Indian National Social Conference. It was the first national organization to carry out the social reform movement collectively, in an organized manner, and on a national scale. He took up the problems of widow remarriages and was an active member of a society, which worked for widow remarriages. It was in 1869 that he was excommunicated by the Shankaracharya for attending the first widow remarriage. Ranade was also committed towards educating women. He and his wife established a school for girls in 1884.

Maharishi Karve: Maharishi Karve was deeply concerned about the plight of widows and the problem of widow remarriages. He founded the Hindu Widow's Home and revived the Widow Remarriage Association. Karve also worked toward improving the education of girls and widows. Consequently, he established the Kane Women's University. His efforts in the movement to liberate Indian women were crucial, and his successful and extensive work led to a change in attitudes towards widows. He married a widow after his first wife passed away, in an effort to set an example for others.

Jyotirao Phule: Jyotirao Phule, a Maharashtrian of the upper caste led to anti-brahmin struggle. He made a connection between caste oppression and women's oppression. He opposed polygamy and child marriage and was in favour of women's education and widow remarriage. Yet another social reformer Behramji Malbari of Bombay fought against child marriage, for widow remarriage, education of girls and better conditions for women.

Another important area for social reformers was that of property rights for Hindu women. In 1874, the Right to Property Act gave a widow a life interest in her husband's share of property and a share equal to that of her son. The efforts of Social reformers of 19th century helped to bring about some improvement in women's condition.

Self-Check Exercise-1

- Q 1.** Which social reformer was known for his work in promoting women's rights in India?
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak
 - Raja Ram Mohan Roy
 - Subhas Chandra Bose
 - Bhagat Singh
- Q 2.** Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the _____ to fight against social evils like _____ and promote women's rights.
- Q 3.** True/False: The social reform movements in India had no significant impact on the status of women.
- Q 4.** What was the role of women's organizations in the social reform movement in India?

3.4 Social Reform Movement and Women's Organizations

The social reform movement led to the establishment of several institutions and organizations. These institutions covered the whole country with their activities. The institutions established during this period are as follows:

The Gujarat Vernacular Society: The social institute was founded in 1848. This institute aims to decrease the high levels of illiteracy and superstition that characterized Gujarati society. Moreover, it has been associated with all social reforms for women in Gujarat. The society worked for the rights of women through education. It started a number of co-educational schools. It published articles about women's issues in the Gender & Society vernacular press. It organized elocution competitions and provided a platform for women to express their issues and problems.

The Deccan Education Society: This society was formed in 1884. The society started girls' schools and encouraged education of women in Maharashtra.

The Ramakrishna Mission: The Ramakrishna Mission was established in 1897. It set up homes for widows and schools for girls. It also gave refuge to invalid and destitute women, ante- and post-natal care for women, and provided training for women to become midwives.

The Arya Samaj: Arya Samaj was started as a revivalist organization, but it prioritized women's education. Girls were instructed in home science and domestic affairs. The curriculum also included fine arts. Religious instruction and ceremonies were also part of the curriculum. A shelter was provided for distressed women during difficult times.

The Hingne Women's Education Institute: In 1896, this institution was created to meet the needs of women, whether they were married, unmarried or widowed. By imparting training in various fields to young unmarried girls, it hoped to prevent early marriage. The program aimed to provide married women with the skills and education they needed to carry out domestic duties efficiently and economically. Widows were also trained to become economically independent.

S.N.D.T. Women's University: This University was established to meet the needs for higher education for women in such a manner that women's requirements were satisfied. It provided education in the mother tongue. It was established exclusively for the education of women.

The Seva Sadan: In 1908, the Seva Sadan was founded to bring together enlightened women from different communities who wished to elevate backward women. Its main purpose was to provide social and medical aid to women and children from the poorest classes, regardless of caste or creed. A home was also established for destitute and distressed women and children. Moreover, it provided training in domestic crafts for poor women to enable them to earn a living. Seva Sadan in Poona was established to provide women with religious, literary, medical, and industrial education. Additionally, it stressed the importance of all-round development of a woman's personality. It also stressed the necessity of economic self-sufficiency for women.

The Indian National Social Conference: Some of the activities taken up by this organization were to deal with disabilities of child marriages, sale of young girls, the practice of polygamy, and the issue of widow remarriages. It also took up the problem of access to education for women.

All India Women's Conference: This organization focused primarily on women's education and social reforms. The main purpose of the group was to actively advance the general welfare and progress of women and children. In different sessions, it passed various resolutions aimed at Women in the Nationalist Movement advancing women's status. Additionally, it also dealt with the evils of early marriage, polygamy, and divorce prohibition. It advocated complete equality for women in property matters. It sought to improve working conditions for women. It also agitated against immoral traffic in women and children, and against the inhuman custom of Devadasi.

Self-Check Exercise-2

- Q 1.** Which organization was founded in 1848 with the aim of decreasing illiteracy and superstition in Gujarati society?
- a. The Deccan Education Society
 - b. The Gujarat Vernacular Society
 - c. The Ramakrishna Mission
 - d. The Arya Samaj

- Q 2.** The _____ was established in 1897 and set up homes for widows and schools for girls.
- Q 3.** The Hingne Women's Education Institute aimed to prevent early marriage by imparting training to young unmarried girls.
- Q 4.** What were the main objectives of the Seva Sadan, founded in 1908?

3.5 Women Leaders of the Nationalist Movement

There is no doubt that a significant number of women took part in the anti-imperial struggle in India. If we were to recall the names of women leaders in our national movement, the list would be very long. We can begin with Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Mridula Sarabhai at the national level and then move to provincial leaders like Annie Mascarene and A.V. Kuttimaluamma in Kerala, Durgabai Deshmukh in Madras Presidency, Rameshwari Nehru and Bi Amman in UP, Satyawati Devi and Subhadra Joshi in Delhi, Hansa Mehta and Usha Mehta in Bombay and several others. Due to the nature of our nationalist movement, it is very difficult to distinguish between regional and national level leaders. Many women began at the local level and went on to become players in the nationalist centre stage. Besides all these Indian women, there were also Irish women like Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins, who brought their own knowledge of the Irish experience of British exploitation to bear on India.

I'd be happy to explain in detail the contributions of these remarkable women to India's independence movement and social progress. Let's examine each one:

Sarojini Naidu: Sarojini Naidu, often called the "Nightingale of India," made significant contributions in multiple areas:

- **Poetry:** She was a renowned poet, writing in English about Indian themes and culture. Her works helped promote Indian art and literature on the global stage.
- **Political activism:** Naidu was deeply involved in the Indian independence movement. She joined the Indian National Congress and worked closely with leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.
- **Leadership:** In 1925, she became the first Indian woman to be president of the Indian National Congress, a major milestone for women in Indian politics.
- **Women's rights:** Naidu was a strong advocate for women's education and emancipation. She founded the Women's Indian Association in 1917.
- **Diplomacy:** She traveled extensively, speaking about Indian culture and the independence movement, helping to garner international support.

Annie Besant: Despite being British, Annie Besant made significant contributions to India:

- **Theosophy:** As president of the Theosophical Society, she promoted Indian spiritual and philosophical ideas.
- **Education:** She founded the Central Hindu College in Benares (now Varanasi), which later became part of Banaras Hindu University.

- **Home Rule Movement:** In 1916, she launched the Home Rule League, advocating for Indian self-governance within the British Empire.
- **Indian National Congress:** She became the first woman president of the Indian National Congress in 1917.
- **Journalism:** She used her newspaper "New India" to criticize British policies and promote Indian self-rule.

Kasturba Gandhi: As Mahatma Gandhi's wife, Kasturba Gandhi was deeply involved in the freedom struggle:

- **Civil disobedience:** She participated in various non-violent protests and was imprisoned multiple times.
- **Women's empowerment:** She worked to educate women about hygiene, literacy, and self-reliance.
- **Ashram management:** She played a crucial role in managing Gandhi's ashrams, which were centers for his philosophy and activism.
- **Salt Satyagraha:** In 1930, she led the famous Salt March when Gandhi was arrested.
- **Phoenix Settlement:** She helped establish and run this community in South Africa, which was an early experiment in Gandhi's principles.

Aruna Asaf Ali: Aruna Asaf Ali was a prominent figure in the later stages of the independence movement:

- **Quit India Movement:** She gained fame for hoisting the Indian National Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay in 1942, becoming a symbol of the movement.
- **Underground activism:** After the 1942 event, she went underground to continue her work, evading arrest for several years.
- **Socialist politics:** After independence, she was involved in socialist politics and helped found the All India Democratic Women's Association.
- **Journalism:** She edited magazines like "Inquilab" and "Patriot," promoting progressive ideas.
- **Women's rights:** Throughout her life, she advocated for women's education and empowerment.

These women made diverse and significant contributions to India's struggle for independence and social reform. They challenged not only British rule but also social norms that restricted women's participation in public life. Their work in politics, education, social reform, and literature helped shape the vision of an independent India and inspired generations of Indians, particularly women, to engage in nation-building and social progress.

Self-Check Exercise-3

- Q 1.** Who among the following was a prominent woman leader in the Indian nationalist movement?
- a) Sarojini Naidu
 - b) Indira Gandhi

- c. c) Kiran Bedi
 - d. d) Lata Mangeshkar
- Q 2.** Sarojini Naidu, also known as the _____ of India, played a significant role in the Indian independence movement.
- Q 3.** True/False: Women leaders were not involved in the Indian nationalist movement.
- Q 4.** Name two prominent women leaders of the Indian nationalist movement and describe their contributions.

3.6 Female Education

In the 19th century, as 'women's question' became part of discourse of progress, there was a movement to educate women, seeking a new vision of womanhood based on the goals of educated colonial males. The educated middle-class male dreamed of finding the perfect woman for marriage from an educated and gentle background. Westernized independent women were seen as a threat to the moral order of modernized Hindu patriarchy. A major agenda of social reform included reform of the marriage rules and the family structure by enforcing strict control over female sexuality and reproductive power as well as following the orthodox norms of Hindu society. Throughout Hindu society, the model codes that defined women's status varied according to respective sections of the hierarchy, but in almost every situation the responsibility to maintain the honour of the community and family fell on women, resulting in disadvantage to them.

It is well argued that women in each section of society began to lose their autonomy in their communities. Many experienced social mobility and felt pressure to reinvent themselves according to the norms of the Brahmanical culture. Gender & Society Since the reform of social evils was linked to preserving and strengthening the family structure and creating good wives, it was necessary to have female education. This policy was supported by progressive and orthodox reformers. There had been many educated women from the upper classes and castes but there was no general education for girls. As a result many attempts we made to provide opportunities for female education. Schools for girls were started by Vidhya Sagar in Bengal and by Ranade and Karve in Maharsahtra. The SNDT Women's University was also started in Mumbai. Many Indian reform groups like Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj ran education institution for women. Generally Indian reformers thoughts that social evils could best be eliminated through education. However, the concept of education was limited to producing home makers and continuing orthodox idea. However, as a result of this a large number of girls received education in the 19th century by 1882 there were 2700 educational institution for girls with 127000 students. By the end of the 19th century, there were also some women graduates. By early 20th century education helped women to become (gain) employment especially as teacher and nurses. Some women from the upper castes and classes also became doctors and lawyers. The female education remained a hotly contested terrain of social reforms on one hand it became compulsory for educated elite to respond to reformist discourse of progress on the other hand it was considered

as a potential threat to the harmony of the family and the peace of the households. These dilemmas and anxiety of a revivalist nationalist discourse of the late 19th century resonated against the lower caste literature in the early 20th century.

Although some women benefited from access to schools and universities, education for women was mainly confined to the needs of the petty bourgeoisie. The policies of promoting women education and the types of education provided were not intended to promote women's emancipation or independence but to reinforce patriarchy and the class system. The claim that education would only improve women's efficiency as wives and mothers left its permanent mark on the educational policy. Female education in India has been a complex and evolving issue, deeply intertwined with social, cultural, and economic factors. Here's a detailed look at female education in India:

a. Historical Context:

1. Ancient India: Historically, there were periods when women had access to education, particularly in elite classes. Texts mention learned women like Gargi and Maitreyi.

2. Medieval Period: Women's education declined significantly, with social norms and practices like child marriage limiting access.

3. Colonial Era: The British introduced formal education systems, but access for girls remained limited. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar advocated for women's education.

b. Post-Independence Developments:

1. Constitutional Provisions: The Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to education for all citizens, regardless of gender.

2. Government Initiatives:

- National Policy on Education (1986) emphasized removing disparities and equalizing educational opportunities.
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001) focused on universal elementary education.
- Right to Education Act (2009) made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6-14.

3. Specific Programs for Girls:

- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya (2004) established residential schools for girls from disadvantaged communities.
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (2015) aims to improve child sex ratio and promote girls' education.

c. Current Status:

1. Literacy Rates: Female literacy has improved significantly, from 8.9% in 1951 to 70.3% in 2021, but still lags behind male literacy (84.7%).

2. Enrolment: Near gender parity achieved in primary education, but gaps persist in secondary and higher education.

3. Dropout Rates: Girls have higher dropout rates, especially in rural areas and among marginalized communities.

d. Challenges:

1. Social Factors:

- Child marriage
- Preference for male children
- Household responsibilities
- Safety concerns

2. Economic Factors:

- Poverty
- Cost of education
- Opportunity cost of girls' labor at home

3. Infrastructure:

- Lack of separate toilets for girls in schools
- Distance to schools in rural areas

4. Quality of Education:

- Shortage of female teachers
- Gender stereotypes in curriculum

e. Positive Trends:

1. Increasing awareness about the importance of girls' education
2. More women entering professional fields
3. Rising number of women in higher education

f. Impact:

1. Economic: Educated women contribute more to household income and national GDP.
2. Health: Better educated mothers have healthier children and smaller families.
3. Social: Education leads to delayed marriage and increased decision-making power.

g. Future Directions:

1. Focusing on retention and transition to higher levels of education
2. Addressing regional disparities
3. Enhancing quality and relevance of education
4. Leveraging technology for broader access
5. Challenging societal norms and stereotypes

Female education in India has made significant strides but continues to face challenges. Ongoing efforts by government, NGOs, and communities are crucial for achieving true educational equality. The progress in this area is seen as key to India's overall development and empowerment of women.

Self-Check Exercise-4

- Q 1.** Who was a pioneer in promoting female education in India?
- a. Mahatma Gandhi
 - b. Rabindranath Tagore
 - c. Savitribai Phule
 - d. Jawaharlal Nehru
- Q 2.** Savitribai Phule, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, started the first school for girls in _____.
- Q 3.** True/False: Female education was widely accepted and promoted in India during the 19th century.
- Q 4.** Why was female education important in the context of social reform in India?

3.7 Agitation by Women- Women Suffrage

The women's suffrage movement, or the fight for women's right to vote, was a significant part of the broader women's rights movement. While often associated with Western countries, it was also an important issue in India, albeit with some unique characteristics.

Women in India played an important part in the struggle for women suffrage. In the first period of struggle in India, British women like Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins led Indian women in their struggle for the right to vote. At the 1918 special Congress session in Mumbai, Sarojini Naidu, underlined the growth of education, civic consciousness amongst women, their greater engagement with political processes, serving on municipal councils, other local bodies, therefore deserved voting rights. Similarly, Sarla Devi Chaudurani passed a resolution demanding adult suffrage, citing similar arguments. It's denial infuriated women. Princess Sophie Duleep Singh (grand daughter of Raja Ranjit Singh), Lady Herabai Tata, Mitian Tata-Lam, a graduate of London School of Economics, Mrs. Radhabai Subbrayan, Mrs. Shah Nawaz, Mrs. Muthulaksmi Reddy, Sarla Ray, Dorothy Jinarjadas, Margaret Cousins over the years organised protest meetings, passed resolutions, wrote letters, petitions, emphasizing the right to vote as essential for women's overall empowerment. As a result between 1921-30 Provincial legislatures granted voting rights to women subject to educational and property qualifications, and the Government of India Act (1935) 'reserved' seats for women. Since most Indian women did not own property, the franchise did not help women in practice. Nevertheless, more than 4.25 million women had acquired and exercised their right to vote by the first provincial elections (1937). The unconditional right to vote came to women after independence.

Historical Context:

- In pre-independence India, suffrage was limited not just by gender, but also by property qualifications and other factors.
- The suffrage movement in India was closely tied to the nationalist movement and social reform efforts.

a. Early Advocacy:

- Women's organizations like the Women's Indian Association (WIA), founded in 1917, played a crucial role in advocating for women's suffrage.

- Notable figures like Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, and Margaret Cousins were key advocates.

b. Gradual Progress:

- 1921: Madras Presidency became the first to grant women's suffrage, albeit with property and educational qualifications.
- By 1930, most Indian provinces had granted women limited voting rights.

c. Challenges:

- Conservative opposition argued that women's suffrage would disrupt family life and social order.
- Some nationalists feared that focusing on women's rights would distract from the independence movement.

d. Integration with Nationalist Movement:

- Many suffragists linked women's rights with the broader struggle for Indian independence.
- This approach differed from Western suffrage movements, which were often separate from other political issues.

e. Key Organizations:

- All India Women's Conference (AIWC), founded in 1927, became a significant force in advocating for women's rights, including suffrage.

f. Constitutional Assembly Debates:

- When India gained independence, women's right to vote was enshrined in the constitution without much debate.
- This was partly due to the involvement of women like Sarojini Naidu and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in the independence movement and constitutional assembly.

g. Universal Suffrage:

- The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, granted universal adult suffrage to all citizens over 21 (later changed to 18), regardless of gender, caste, or education.

h. Impact and Aftermath:

- While women gained the right to vote, other issues like political representation, economic rights, and social equality remained challenges.
- The focus shifted to increasing women's participation in politics and addressing broader issues of gender equality.

i. Comparison with Global Movement:

- India's suffrage movement was relatively short compared to some Western countries.

- It was closely tied to anti-colonial and social reform movements, giving it a unique character.

j. Key Figures:

- Sarojini Naidu: Known as the "Nightingale of India," she was a poet and politician who advocated for women's rights.
- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: A social reformer and freedom fighter who worked for women's suffrage and other rights.
- Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz: One of the first Muslim women to advocate for women's suffrage in pre-partition India.

k. Ongoing Challenges:

- While women have the right to vote, issues like voter intimidation, family voting, and low political representation of women continue to be concerns.

The agitation for women's suffrage in India was a crucial step in the broader struggle for women's rights and equality. It laid the groundwork for future movements addressing various aspects of gender equality in Indian society. The relatively quick achievement of universal suffrage post-independence was a significant milestone, though it also highlighted the need for continued efforts in achieving substantive equality in political participation and representation.

Self-Check Exercise-5

Q 1. When did women in India gain the right to vote?

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| a. 1919 | c. 1947 |
| b. 1929 | d. 1950 |

Q 2. Women in India gained the right to vote with the adoption of the _____ in 1950.

Q 3. True/False: Women in India were granted suffrage before the country's independence.

Q 4. What was the significance of women's suffrage in India?

3.8 1. Gandhi, Women's Rights and Nationalist Movement

The intersection of Gandhi's philosophy, women's rights, and the nationalist movement in India is a complex and fascinating topic. These developments aided India's women's movement and encouraged their active involvement in public life, but it was Mahatma Gandhi's leadership of the Indian National Movement that enabled them to come out of their homes. Madhu Kishwar, a well-known feminist, explains it was during the Gandhian movement that the single woman acquired her sense of dignity and came to be respected for her political work. As part of the Gandhian movement, women weren't mere add-ons, but they played a crucial role. When explaining his strategy of satyagraha and how it worked, Mahatma Gandhi often said that he felt women would understand the method better. The act of satyagraha required patience, forbearance, and moral courage and Gandhi believe that most women in India possessed these qualities.

Despite the limited participation of women in the first major Gandhian movement, the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement of 1920-22, some notable developments occurred. A second important development was that women went to prison for the first time during the NonCooperation Movement. Although Mahatm Gandhi was initially opposed to women being jailed. Then, in 1921, when Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das' wife and sister were arrested in Calcutta, Gandhiji had to reconsider his position. After that, he began addressing women all over the country, exhorting them to go to jail. "A yagna is incomplete without women taking part in it", he told the women of Gujarat. At the end of 1921, he invited them to attend the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress in large numbers. The women of U.P. in particular responded to the appeal, setting forth from their distant homes, travelling to Ahmedabad, staying at Sabarmati Ashram and experiencing the rigours and austerities of Ashram life. Attending the Congress session, participating in the discussions and getting more deeply drawn into the spirit of non-co-operation were exhilarating experiences. After the Congress session, their lives had been transformed. The NonCooperation Movement was at its peak, most of the leader had been arrested. As a result, the women held meetings defying prohibitory orders, addressing large crowds for the first time in their lives, and, if necessary, even going to jail to keep the movement alive.

Women actively participated in the peasant movement in Awadh that accompanied the Non-Cooperation Movement. Jaggi Devi, the wife of Baba Ramchandra, was an active figure. We also have some other names of peasant women who were part of the large crowds who gathered outside police stations to get their leaders released. The peasant historian, Kapil Kumar, in his article titled "Rural Women in Oudh 1917-1947" refers to women like Musammat Putta and Abhilakhi, who came into the peasant movement on their own and not at the initiative of their husbands. Sumitra

Devi, on the other hand, had her husband and mother-in-law in the peasant movement. Gandhi's basic ideas about women's rights focused on equality in some areas and opportunities for self-realization and development. He realized that women's position as subordinates was a result of male dominance. In his struggle against non-cooperation, Gandhi was well aware of the power women could wield. Moreover, he urged them to join the nationalist movement and to participate actively in social and political affairs. He believed that women are able to endure suffering and could therefore play an important role in this movement. He advocated principles of nonviolence and political non-violence. Having been exposed to passive resistance in their everyday lives, it was suggested that they could effectively participate in socially organised passive resistance and noncooperation. Also, India women soon took up Gandhian ideology and advocated Satyagraha as a form of struggle especially suitable for women.

a. Gandhi's Philosophy and Women:

Gandhi believed in the equality of women and their important role in society. His views were revolutionary for his time:

- Equality: Gandhi advocated for equal rights for women in all spheres of life.

- Non-violence: He saw women as natural proponents of ahimsa (non-violence), a core principle of his philosophy.
- Social Reform: Gandhi campaigned against child marriage, purdah system, and advocated for widow remarriage.

b. Gandhi's ideology the Nationalist Movement:

- Salt Satyagraha (1930): Women participated in large numbers, breaking salt laws alongside men.
- Civil Disobedience: Women were at the forefront of boycotts of foreign goods and picketing of liquor shops.
- Quit India Movement (1942): Women played crucial roles, with many taking leadership positions when male leaders were arrested.

c. Gandhi's Strategies and Women's Involvement:

- Mass Mobilization: Gandhi's methods of non-violent resistance allowed women to participate without challenging prevalent social norms directly.
- Symbolism: Gandhi often used traditionally feminine symbols (like spinning) in his campaigns, making it easier for women to join.
- Public Sphere: The nationalist movement provided a socially acceptable way for women to enter public life.

d. Key Women in the Gandhian Movement:

- Kasturba Gandhi: Gandhi's wife, who was a leader in her own right, particularly in the management of ashrams.
- Sarojini Naidu: Poet and politician who worked closely with Gandhi and became the first Indian woman president of the Indian National Congress.
- Kamala Nehru: Wife of Jawaharlal Nehru, she was active in the Non-Cooperation Movement and led women's protests.

e. Contradictions and Criticisms:

- Traditional Roles: While Gandhi encouraged women's participation, he often framed it within traditional gender roles.
- Sexuality: Gandhi's views on celibacy and his experiments with brahmacharya (sexual abstinence) have been criticized by feminists.
- Leadership: Despite increased participation, women rarely held top leadership positions in the nationalist movement.

f. Impact on Women's Rights:

- Political Awareness: The nationalist movement raised political consciousness among women.
- Education: Emphasis on women's education increased as part of the larger social reform agenda.
- Legal Reforms: Post-independence, many laws were passed to improve women's status, partly due to their role in the freedom struggle.

g. Gandhi's Specific Campaigns for Women:

- Anti-Untouchability: Gandhi's campaign against untouchability had a significant impact on Dalit women.
- Swadeshi Movement: The emphasis on indigenous goods, especially khadi, provided economic opportunities for women.

h. Women's Organizations:

- Women's Indian Association (1917)
- All India Women's Conference (1927)

These organizations, while not directly Gandhian, were influenced by his ideals and worked alongside the nationalist movement.

i. Post-Independence Legacy:

- Women's Reservations: The idea of reserved seats for women in panchayats (local governance bodies) can be traced back to Gandhian thought.
- Grassroots Activism: Many women's movements in independent India have drawn inspiration from Gandhian methods of non-violent protest.

j. International Impact:

- Gandhi's inclusion of women in the nationalist movement inspired similar actions in other anti-colonial struggles worldwide.

Gandhi's approach to women's rights was revolutionary for its time, though not without contradictions. He successfully mobilized women for the nationalist cause, which in turn provided a platform for women to articulate their own demands for equality. The intersection of Gandhi's philosophy, women's rights, and the nationalist movement created a unique dynamic that significantly influenced the trajectory of women's empowerment in India.

2. Women's Rights and Nationalist Movement

The relationship between the women's rights movement and the Indian nationalist movement is a fascinating and complex topic. Let's explore this in detail:

a. Intertwined Movements:

- The women's rights movement in India was closely linked with the nationalist movement, unlike in many Western countries where these were often separate.
- Many women saw participation in the nationalist movement as a path to greater rights and freedoms.

b. Early 20th Century Developments

- The Swadeshi movement (1905-1911) saw increased participation of women in public life.
- Women joined boycotts of British goods and started using indigenous products, marking their entry into political activism.

c. Key Organizations:

- Women's Indian Association (WIA), founded in 1917
- National Council of Women in India (NCWI), established in 1925
- All India Women's Conference (AIWC), formed in 1927
- These organizations worked on women's rights while also supporting the nationalist cause.

d. Prominent Women Leaders:

- Sarojini Naidu: Poet and politician, she became the first Indian woman president of the Indian National Congress in 1925.
- Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: Sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, she was active in both nationalist and women's rights movements.
- Aruna Asaf Ali: Known for hoisting the Indian flag during the Quit India Movement in 1942.

e. Gandhi's Influence:

- Mahatma Gandhi encouraged women's participation in the freedom struggle, seeing it as a way to challenge both colonial rule and patriarchal norms.
- His emphasis on non-violent resistance allowed more women to participate without challenging prevailing gender norms too radically.
- This campaign saw massive participation of women in civil disobedience.
- Women like Sarojini Naidu and Khurshed Naoroji led marches and made salt in defiance of British laws.
- Women played a crucial role, with many taking leadership positions when male leaders were arrested.
- Usha Mehta set up an underground radio station to spread information about the movement.

f. Impact on Social Reform:

- The nationalist movement provided a platform for discussing social issues affecting women, such as child marriage and widow remarriage.
- Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar supported women's rights as part of their vision for an independent India.

g. Education and Awareness:

- The nationalist movement emphasized education, including women's education, as crucial for nation-building.
- This led to increased literacy and awareness among women, further fueling their participation in both movements.

h. Challenges and Contradictions:

- While the nationalist movement provided opportunities for women's participation, it often reinforced traditional gender roles.
- Some nationalist leaders were hesitant to push for radical changes in women's status, fearing it might alienate conservative supporters.

i. Post-Independence Developments:

- Women's active participation in the freedom struggle led to the inclusion of gender equality in the Indian Constitution.
- However, many women leaders felt that their contributions were sidelined after independence, leading to a renewed focus on women's rights.

j. Long-term Impact:

The involvement of women in the nationalist movement set a precedent for women's participation in politics and public life.

It challenged the notion that politics and activism were exclusively male domains.

k. Regional Variations:

- The intersection of women's rights and nationalism varied across regions. For instance, in Bengal, women's participation was more pronounced earlier than in some other regions.

l. Class and Caste Dimensions:

- Initially, participation was largely limited to upper-class and upper-caste women.
- Gradually, the movements became more inclusive, though class and caste disparities remained a challenge.

m. International Context:

- Indian women's rights activists drew inspiration from and connected with international women's movements.
- This global perspective influenced their approach to both women's rights and nationalism.

The intertwining of the women's rights movement with the nationalist movement in India created a unique dynamic. It provided opportunities for women to enter public and political spheres, challenging traditional gender norms. However, it also sometimes led to the subordination of women's issues to the larger goal of independence. The legacy of this relationship continues to influence Indian feminism and politics today, with ongoing debates about the role of women in nation-building and the need for gender-specific reforms.

This legacy continues to shape discussions on gender equality and women's participation in Indian politics and society today. However, it's important to note that while significant progress was made, many challenges to gender equality persisted and continue to be addressed in contemporary India.

Self-Check Exercise-6

Q 1. How did Mahatma Gandhi contribute to the women's rights movement in India?

- a.** By opposing women's participation in the independence movement

- b. By advocating for women's education and participation in the freedom struggle
 - c. By focusing solely on economic issues
 - d. By excluding women from political actions
- Q 2.** Mahatma Gandhi encouraged women to join the _____ and played a pivotal role in advocating for their _____ rights.
- Q 3.** True/False: Mahatma Gandhi believed that women should not participate in the nationalist movement.
- Q 4.** What was Gandhi's perspective on women's role in the nationalist movement?

3.9 Women in Political Action

It was in the political struggle against imperialism that Indian women began to participate. The expansion of women's education and their admission to universities has produced a number of English educate middle class women. By the late 19th century, they made their presence felt in political activities. Bengali writer Swarna Kumari Devi was among the earliest pioneers of reform and political agitation. In 1882, she started the Ladies Theosophical Society, for women of all religions. In 1886, she began a women's association which was concerned with promoting local handicrafts made by the women. In the 1890's women activists like a Pandita Ramabai and women professionals such as Dr. K Ganguly continued to participate in Congress politics.

In the early 20th century, women become more involved in politics. With the increase in nationalist activities, women joined the agitations, organised swadeshi meetings and boycotted the foreign theosophist movement. Many foreign theosophists also participated in the nationalist and women's movement, the foremost being Annie Besant. She came to India in 1893 and was active in the theosophical movement and in education. She not only formed the Home Rule League in India but also become the first woman president of Indian National Congress in 1917.

Other theosophists who were concerned about the Indian women's status include Margaret Noble who arrived in India in 1895 and under the influence Swami Vivekanand took the name of Sister Nivedita and worked in Bengal. Her work in education, cultural activities and agitation for Swaraj was characterized by revolutionary zeal. The Congress leaders saw the advantages of mobilizing women and always urged them to join the Nationalist struggle as equals.

Despite intentions of Reform the status of women, most of the men still saw a women's role basically as that of the housewife within a conservative family structure. Women activist became included in the political struggles. However, the real issues that concerned them as women were regarded by the men as of secondary importance. The agitations of early social reformers about the social evils that affected women in the family were replaced by Nationalist issues resulting in neglect of women unequal social and economic position. The few women's issues that were taken up were those that interested in the middle class organizations, such as right to vote.

a. Pre-Independence Era:

- Early pioneers: Women like Kadambini Ganguly and Anandibai Joshi broke barriers in education and professional fields, paving the way for women's participation in public life.
- Freedom struggle: Women like Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Kasturba Gandhi actively participated in the independence movement.
- Example: Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi led her forces against the British in the 1857 rebellion.

b. Post-Independence Period:

- Constitutional rights: The Indian Constitution guaranteed equal rights to women, including the right to vote and stand for elections.
- First women in office: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became the first woman to hold a cabinet position in 1947. Sucheta Kriplani became the first woman Chief Minister (of Uttar Pradesh) in 1963.

c. Women Prime Ministers and Presidents:

- Indira Gandhi: Served as Prime Minister for 16 years (1966-1977 and 1980-1984), shaping India's political landscape significantly.
- Pratibha Patil: Became India's first woman President in 2007.

d. Women's Representation in Parliament:

- Gradual increase: From 5% in the first Lok Sabha (1951-56) to about 14% in the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-present).
- Key legislators: Women MPs like Sushma Swaraj, Nirmala Sitharaman, and Meenakshi Lekhi have held important ministerial positions.

e. Grassroots Political Participation:

- Panchayati Raj: The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1992 mandated 33% reservation for women in local governance bodies.
- Impact: This has led to over a million women being elected to local government positions.
- Example: The state of Bihar increased women's reservation in panchayats to 50% in 2006.

f. Women-Led Movements:

- Chipko Movement (1973): Women in Uttarakhand hugged trees to prevent deforestation.
- Anti-Arrack Movement (1990s): Women in Andhra Pradesh successfully campaigned against alcohol sale and consumption.

g. Women in Activism:

- Medha Patkar: Led the Narmada Bachao Andolan against large dam projects.
- Irom Sharmila: Conducted a 16-year hunger strike against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Manipur.

h. Women's Rights Legislation:

- Politicians like Brinda Karat and Renuka Chowdhury have been instrumental in pushing for laws addressing women's issues, such as the Domestic Violence Act (2005) and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013).

i. Women Chief Ministers:

- Several women have served as Chief Ministers, including Mayawati (Uttar Pradesh), Jayalalithaa (Tamil Nadu), and Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal).

j. Women in Party Politics:

- Many major political parties have women's wings, like the Mahila Congress and BJP Mahila Morcha.
- Leaders like Sonia Gandhi have held significant influence in party politics.

k. Challenges:

- Despite progress, women remain underrepresented in higher political offices.
- Issues like political violence, character assassination, and patriarchal party structures continue to hinder women's participation.

l. Recent Developments:

- The Women's Reservation Bill, proposing 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, has been a subject of long-standing debate.
- Increased focus on women voters: Political parties are increasingly recognizing women as a distinct voting bloc.

m. Women in Diplomacy:

- Figures like Nirupama Rao and Sujatha Singh have served as Foreign Secretaries.
- Example: S. Jaishankar, the current External Affairs Minister, has emphasized increasing women's representation in the diplomatic corps.

n. Women in State Politics:

- Some states have seen higher women's participation. For instance, Rajasthan had 28 women MLAs elected in the 2018 assembly elections.

o. Digital Age and Women's Political Engagement:

- Social media has provided new platforms for women politicians to connect with constituents.
- Example: Smriti Irani effectively uses social media for political communication.

Women's political action in India has come a long way, from the freedom struggle to contemporary governance. While significant progress has been made in terms

of representation and influence, challenges remain in achieving equal participation across all levels of government. The ongoing efforts to increase women's political involvement are crucial for addressing gender-specific issues and ensuring a more inclusive democracy. The study of participation of women in the political struggle of Indian in the 19th century and in movement for the improvement of the status of women provides historical understanding of some of the problems faced by women's movement in the third world. While highlighting the legally abolishing the worst act like sati, emphasizing female education and mobilizing women for satyagraha, the movement gave the illusion of change while women were kept within the structural confines of the family and society. Women in the nationalist struggle did not use the occasion to raise issues that affected them as women. While Indian women participated in all stages of the movement for national independence, they did so in a way acceptable and dictated by men. Nevertheless, their participation and involvement in political activities shows that Indian women have played an important part in the anti-imperialistic, anti-capitalist and democratic movements of protests since a long time.

In spite of Women in political action and despite the good intention of the male social reformers most of them still believed that a women's role basically is that of a house wife within conservative patriarchal family structure. During the Nationalist struggle the large number of women joins the leaders in the fight against British rule. They participated successfully in the Khadi campaign and Dandi March. Thousands of women were jailed all over India. Two famous women associated with the freedom struggle were Sarojini Naidu and Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya.

Self-Check Exercise-7

- Q 1.** Which of the following women became the first female Prime Minister of India?
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. Sarojini Naidu | c. Pratibha Patil |
| b. Indira Gandhi | d. Sonia Gandhi |
- Q 2.** _____ became the first female Prime Minister of India, serving from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 to 1984.
- Q 3.** True/False: Women in India have always had equal representation in political offices since independence.
- Q 4.** Name two significant contributions of women in political action in India.

3.10 Summary

Participation of women in the Indian Nationalist Movement can be traced back to the Swadeshi Movement. During the early decades of the twentieth century, women's lives were transformed by education, the formation of women's associations, and a rise in political participation. The story of women's participation in India's freedom struggle is one of making bold choices, finding themselves on the streets, inside jails, and in legislatures all of which empowered them in many ways. The non-violent movement that gained India her freedom not only took women along but was dependent for its success on the active

participation of women. At the same time, there were other strands in the anti-imperialist movement, such as the revolutionaries, communists and other leftist groups.

3.11 Glossary

- Reform Movement: A type of social movement that aims to bring about gradual change or improvement in specific aspects of society, often through legislative or societal means.
- Nationalist Movement: A political, social, and economic movement aimed at gaining and maintaining a nation's sovereignty over its homeland and the creation of a nation state.
- Women's Rights: The rights claimed for women and girls worldwide, and formed the basis for the women's rights movement in the 19th century and feminist movements during the 20th century.
- Social Reform Movement: Efforts to improve society by addressing issues such as inequality, injustice, and social welfare, often led by activists and reformers.
- Women's Organizations: Groups or associations formed to advocate for and advance the rights and interests of women in various aspects of society.
- Women Leaders: Influential women who have led or significantly contributed to social, political, or economic movements, particularly those advocating for women's rights.
- Female Education: The education of girls and women, which has been a focus of social reform movements due to historical inequalities in educational opportunities.
- Women's Suffrage: The right of women to vote in elections, a key goal of women's rights movements around the world.
- Gandhi and Women's Rights: Mahatma Gandhi's efforts and philosophy regarding the inclusion of women in the struggle for India's independence and their rights.
- Political Action: Activities aimed at influencing or participating in the political process, including voting, campaigning, advocacy, and holding public office.

3.12 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

Self-Check Exercise-1

Ans 1. b) Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Ans 2. Brahmo Samaj, Sati

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Women's organizations played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights, challenging social norms, and pushing for legal reforms to improve the status and rights of women in society.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Ans 1. b) The Gujarat Vernacular Society

Ans 2. The Ramakrishna Mission

Ans 3. True

Ans 4. The main objectives of the Seva Sadan, founded in 1908, were:

- To bring together enlightened women from different communities to elevate backward women
- To provide social and medical aid to women and children from the poorest classes, regardless of caste or creed
- To establish a home for destitute and distressed women and children
- To provide training in domestic crafts for poor women to enable them to earn a living
- To offer religious, literary, medical, and industrial education to women
- To stress the importance of all-round development of a woman's personality and economic self-sufficiency

Self-Check Exercise-3

Ans 1. a) Sarojini Naidu

Ans 2. Nightingale

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Nehru were two prominent women leaders. Sarojini Naidu was a poet and freedom fighter who played a key role in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was the first woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress. Kamala Nehru was actively involved in the Non-Cooperation Movement and worked tirelessly for the upliftment of women and children's rights.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Ans 1. c) Savitribai Phule

Ans 2. Pune

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Female education was important because it empowered women, enabling them to participate in social, economic, and political activities. It also helped challenge and change traditional gender roles and contributed to the overall progress of society.

Self-Check Exercise-5

Ans 1. d) 1950

Ans 2. Constitution

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. The significance of women's suffrage in India was that it marked a major step towards gender equality, allowing women to participate in the democratic process and influence political decisions and policies affecting their lives.

Self-Check Exercise-6

Ans 1. b) By advocating for women's education and participation in the freedom struggle

Ans 2. freedom struggle, equal

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Gandhi believed that women played a crucial role in the nationalist movement and encouraged them to participate actively. He saw their involvement as essential for both the success of the independence struggle and the improvement of women's status in society.

Self-Check Exercise-7

Ans 1. b) Indira Gandhi

Ans 2. Indira Gandhi

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Indira Gandhi's leadership as the Prime Minister and the advocacy of women's rights by leaders like Brinda Karat and Sushma Swaraj are significant contributions of women in political action in India.

3.13 References/Suggested Readings

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3.14 Terminal Questions

- Discuss the evolution of women's participation in political action in India and its impact on gender equality. Analyze the impact of Mahatma Gandhi's views on women's rights and their participation in the nationalist movement.
- Discuss the agitation for women's suffrage in India and its outcomes. Analyze the historical development and significance of female education in India.
- Examine the contributions of women leaders to the Indian nationalist movement and their impact on the struggle for independence.
- Discuss the impact of social reform movements and women's organizations on the status of women in India.

UNIT – 4: POLICY INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Lesson Structure

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Learning Objectives**
- 4.3 Policy initiatives for Gender equality**
Self-Check Exercise-1
- 4.4 Women empowerment in India**
Self-Check Exercise-2
- 4.5 Summary**
- 4.6 Glossary**
- 4.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise**
- 4.8 References/Suggested Readings**
- 4.9 Terminal Questions**

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Learning Objectives

- Understand the various policy initiatives taken by the Indian government to promote gender equality and women empowerment.
- Recognize the significance and impact of these initiatives on the status of women in India.
- Identify key programs and schemes that aim to improve women's health, education, and economic participation.
- Analyse the effectiveness of these policies in achieving their goals.
- Discuss the challenges and future directions for policy initiatives in promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

4.3. Policy initiatives for Gender equality

The social reform movement in India during the 19th and early 20th centuries sought to address various social issues, including the status and rights of women. This period saw the emergence of several women's organizations dedicated to promoting education, legal rights, and social reforms for women. Gender Equality' is the 5th goal among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations. The Constitution of India also recognizes the principle of gender equality in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and under the Directive Principles of State Policy. One of the most significant provisions in the Indian Constitution is Article 15(3) which empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. It is also notable that the National Commission for Women was set up in the year 1992 for dealing with complaints of women's rights violation, to advise on the aspect of socio-economic development of women and to protect the legal rights of women, etc.

a. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. It is a proven fact that empowering women and girls fosters economic growth and development.

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.
- Recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels.

b. Government policies for gender equality in India

i. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was adopted in the year 2001 for the advancement, development, and empowerment of women. The Policy strives to achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Creation of an environment that fosters the overall development of women and enables them to achieve their full potential. This shall be done by adopting positive social and economic policies.
- De-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal basis with men in all spheres.
- Ensuring equal access for women to participation and decision-making in the social, political, and economic life of the country.
- Equality of access to women in healthcare, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office, etc.
- Strengthening the legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women organisations.

ii. **Policy prescriptions**

- **Judicial legal systems:** The Policy prescribes that the legal and judicial system should be made more responsive to the needs of women. New laws will be enacted for ensuring quick justice to victims. The Policy encourages changes in personal laws relating to marriage, divorce and maintenance, property, etc. to eliminate discrimination against women and for securing them an equal status in society.
- **Decision-making:** This involves undertaking measures to ensure active and full participation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels, including legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, committees, boards, trusts, etc. Reservations and quotas for women should be considered on a time-bound basis.
- **Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process:** Women's perspective to be mainstreamed in all developmental processes, as catalysts, participants, and recipients, through devising policies and programmes, as well as systems.
- **Economic empowerment of women:** Steps will be taken for economic empowerment of women and this shall cover the following aspects:
 - **Poverty eradication:** Poverty eradication programs will be devised to address the needs and problems of the women population living below the poverty line.
 - **Micro-credit:** Existing micro-credit mechanisms will be established and existing mechanisms will be strengthened to enhance women's access to credit for consumption and production.
 - **Women and economy:** Recognition and inclusion of women's perspectives in framing and implementation of macro-economic and social policies through the institutionalisation of women participation in such processes. Appropriate policies and measures shall be undertaken for recognizing women's contribution in various roles in the formal and informal sector and appropriate policies regarding employment and working conditions of women to be drawn up.
 - **Globalisation:** Strategies will be designed to enhance the capacity of women and empower them to deal with the negative social and economic consequences of the globalisation process.
 - **Women and agriculture:** Expansion of training programmes in social forestry, soil conservation, etc. to benefit women workers in the agricultural sector.

- **Women and industry:** Suitable measures to be undertaken so that women can work night shifts in industries. This will include support services such as security and transportation.
- **Support services:** Expansion of support services such as childcare facilities, creche at workplaces, and educational institutions.
- **Social empowerment of women:**
 - **Education:** Equal access to women and girls in education and creation of a gender-sensitive educational system. Special measures to be undertaken such as universalisation of education, development of technical and vocational skills in women, special focus on girls belonging to backward communities, and introduction of a gender-sensitive curriculum at all levels of the educational system.
 - **Health:** Adoption of a holistic approach to women's health including ensuring women's access to comprehensive, affordable, and quality healthcare. Other measures such as compulsory registration of marriages, imparting of information regarding healthcare and nutrition, and resolving issues regarding infant and maternal mortality to be adopted.
 - **Nutrition:** Focus will be made on the fulfilment of the nutritional needs of women at all stages of life including infancy and childhood, adolescent, and reproductive phases.
 - **Drinking water and sanitation:** The needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water and sewage disposal, toilet facilities, and sanitation within acceptable reach of households will be given special attention.
 - Other aspects such as the inclusion of the perspective of women in housing policies, environmental policies, and ensuring increased participation of women in science and technology are also included in the policy.
 - The policy also recognizes the diversity of women's situations and undertakes to provide special assistance to women in extreme poverty, women in conflict situations, disabled widows, elderly women, destitute women, single women in difficult circumstances and prostitutes, etc.
- **Violence against women:** All forms of violence perpetrated against women, whether physical or mental, whether at domestic or societal levels will be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence. Mechanisms and schemes will be created for providing assistance and for prevention of violence including sexual harassment at the workplace, regressive customs such as dowry, and rehabilitation of the victims of violence.
- **Rights of the girl child:** Strong measures shall be undertaken for eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child within and outside the family. Laws against prenatal sex selection and practices of

female foeticide common female infanticide child abuse child marriage and child prostitution to be strictly enforced.

- **Mass media:** The Policy strives to remove the traditional stereotypical representations of women that are insulting, denigrating, and unpleasant.

iii. **Operational strategies**

- **Action plans:** The Central and state ministries are responsible for converting the Policy into a set of concrete actions by drawing up time-bound action plans. For the said purpose, the Central/state departments of women and child development and National/state commissions for women shall be consulted. The action plans will include the identification and commitment of resources and shall incorporate a gender perspective in the budgeting process, etc.
- **Institutional mechanisms:**
 - Strengthening of institutional mechanisms to promote the advancement of women.
 - Formation of National and state councils to monitor the implementation of the policy on a regular basis.
 - National and State Resource Centres on women will be established with mandates for collection and dissemination of information, undertaking research work, conducting surveys, implementing training and awareness generation programmes, etc. These Centers will link up with Women's Studies Centres and other research and academic institutions through suitable information networking systems.
 - Strengthening of institutions at the district level and helping women to organise and strengthen themselves into Self-Help groups at the village level. The government will help the women's groups to institutionalise themselves into registered societies.
- **Legislation:** Existing laws shall be reviewed and new laws shall be enacted for implementing this Policy. For the implementation of laws in an effective manner, the involvement of civil society and the community will be encouraged. Laws such as the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 shall be strictly enforced. In order to eliminate violence and atrocities against women, the following measures shall be undertaken:
 - Expansion of women cells in police stations, encouraging women police stations, legal aid centres, family courts, and counselling centres.
 - Widespread dissemination of information relating to legal rights and human rights of women.
- **Gender sensitisation:** This includes training of personnel of legislative, executive, and judicial wings of the state, promoting societal awareness to gender issues and human rights of women, reviewing educational curriculum to incorporate gender education and human rights issues, removal of references that are derogatory to the dignity of women from all public documents and legal instruments and using various kinds of mass

media to disseminate social messages relating to equality and empowerment of women.

- **Panchayati Raj Institutions:** The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) will play an important role in enhancing women's participation in public life.
- **Partnership with the voluntary sector organisations:** Participation of voluntary organisations including women organisations and NGOs to be ensured in the formation, implementation, monitoring, and review of policies and programmes affecting women.
- **International cooperation:** The Policy aims at the implementation of international obligations and commitments in all sectors on women empowerment including CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5), etc.

iv. Women Vocational Training Programme

The Women Vocational Training Programme under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship was launched in 1997 to mainstream women into economic activities by giving vocational training. This programme was formulated with the assistance of the Swedish International Development Authority(SIDA) and the International Labour Organization(ILO). The Programme offers:

- Industrial skill training under the Craftsmen Training Scheme(CTS)
- Instructor skill training under Craft Instructors Training Scheme(CITS)
- Demand-driven short-term courses
- Special programs for training the instructors of ITIs
- Tailor-made courses as per industry's demand

This program was implemented through a network of 11 institutes which were later named as "National Skill Training Institutes for Women". These institutes function directly under the control of the Central government. Also, new NSTIs have been established in addition to the existing 11 institutes.

v. GATI (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions)

- GATI is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) that aims to promote gender equity in science and technology. It is an innovative project launched by the DST and is one of the three initiatives that was announced by the Hon'ble President of India on 28 February 2020, National Science Day. GATI aims to nudge higher educational institutions towards supporting diversity, inclusion, and the full spectrum of their success and progression.
- It aspires to create an enabling environment that encourages women to participate equally in Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine, and Mathematics (STEMM) disciplines at all levels. The Project is inspired by the Athena SWAN Gender Equality Charter and accreditation framework operated by Advance HE, the UK since 2005.

c. Major initiatives, schemes, and measures taken by the government for achieving gender equality in India

i. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme focuses on ensuring the protection, survival, and education of the girl child. This Scheme was introduced by the government for addressing the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR). The overall goal of the scheme is to Celebrate the 'Girl Child & Enable her Education'. The objectives of the Scheme are as follows:

- Preventing gender-biased sex selective elimination
- To ensure survival & protection of the girl child
- To ensure education of the girl child
- The official website of the Scheme is: <http://www.bbbpindia.gov.in/>

ii. Mahila Shakti Kendra

- Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme (MSK) aims at empowering rural women by providing opportunities for skill development and employment. The Scheme was approved for a period of three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- It is a sub-scheme under the umbrella scheme of the Mission for Protection and Empowerment of Women.

iii. Working Women Hostel (WWH)

The Scheme for Working Women Hostel (WWH) aims at ensuring the security and safety of working women. The scheme seeks to provide safe accommodation for working women including daycare facilities for their children, wherever possible. The beneficiaries of the scheme include the following categories of working women and their children:

- Working women who are single, widowed, divorced, separated, or married but do not live in the same city/area as their husband or immediate family. Women from the disadvantaged sections of society may be given special preference. There should also be a provision for the reservation of seats for physically challenged beneficiaries.
- Women undergoing job training as long as the total training period does not exceed one year. This is only if there is a vacancy available after accommodating working women. The number of women undergoing job training should not exceed 30% of the total capacity.
- Girls up to the age of 18 years and boys up to the age of 5 years, accompanying working mothers, will be housed with their mothers. Working mothers may also avail of Day Care Centre services as provided under the scheme.

iv. Scheme for Adolescent Girls

Previously known as the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA), the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) was devised in the year 2010. The scheme covers adolescent girls aged 11 to

18 years old and aims to provide them with life skills education, nutrition and health education, and awareness of socio-legal issues, among other things. This Scheme replaced the Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) Scheme and the Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls(NPAG).

The objectives of SAG are as follows:

- To enable adolescent girls to self-development and empowerment.
- Improving nutrition and health of adolescent girls.
- Promoting awareness regarding health, hygiene, nutrition, etc.
- Upgrading the home-based skills, life skills, and vocational skills of adolescent girls.
- Supporting the out-of-school girls to transition back to formal schooling.
- Providing information regarding the available public services such as Primary Health Centres(PHCs), post offices, etc.

v. Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV)

- This Scheme envisages the nomination of Mahila Police Volunteers in all States and Union territories who will act as a link between police and community and will facilitate the women in distress.
- An MPV shall serve as a public-policy interface in order to fight crime against women. MPVs shall be responsible for reporting crimes against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, harassment in relation to dowry, etc.

vi. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

- Established in March 1993, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh(RMK) is an autonomous body, a national level organization under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development with the objective of socio-economic empowerment of women.
- Currently, RMK acts as a facilitating agency wherein it provides loans to NGOs, Intermediary Micro-Financing Organization(IMO), and voluntary organizations which on-lend to Self-Help Groups(SHGS) of women.
- The official website of RMK is: <https://rmk.nic.in/>

vii. National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers

A creche is a facility that enables parents to leave their children while they are at work and where children are provided with a stimulating environment for their holistic development. The objectives of the “National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers” are as follows:

- To provide day-care services for children aged 6 months to 6 years of working mothers in the community.
- To improve children’s nutrition and health status.
- To encourage the holistic development of children.
- To educate and empower parents/caregivers to provide better childcare.

viii. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna

- The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana aims to benefit pregnant women and lactating mothers. The Scheme came into effect on 1st January 2017.
- The Scheme provides a benefit of Rs.5000 payable in three installments to Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) for the first live child in the family.

ix. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)

- The DAY-NULM under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, the Government of India aims to provide shelters equipped with essential services to the urban homeless in a phased manner.
- The objective of the Mission is to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by providing them with opportunities for gainful self-employment.
- The Mission covers the urban poor and the families of disadvantaged groups including women. It encourages the formation of women's SHGs, provides for the skilling of street vendors, and facilitates access of the vulnerable groups to institutional credit and social security, etc.

x. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMYY) was introduced by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in May 2016 with an objective to ensure the availability of clean cooking fuel such as LPG in the rural and deprived households which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, cow-dung cakes, and coal, etc.
- The scheme aims to empower women and protect their health by providing free-of-cost LPG cylinders.
- The official website of the scheme is: <https://www.pmuyl.gov.in/index.aspx>

xi. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna(SSY)

- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) aims at the economic empowerment of women. Launched as a part of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign, this Scheme is a small deposit scheme for a girl child in order to secure her future.
- The parents who have a girl child below the age of 10 years can invest in the scheme through any designated public and private banks and post-offices.
- The plan matures when the daughter attains the age of 21 years. The minimum deposit amount is Rs. 250 and the maximum amount is Rs. 1.5 lakh in a financial year. An interest rate of 7.6% p.a. is offered under the scheme.

xii. Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojana

- Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojana(MCY) is a training programme of MSME which aims at empowering women by providing them spinning equipment at subsidized rates after appropriate skill development training.
- A stipend of Rs. 10,000 per month is given to the trainees under the skill development programme.

xiii. Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

The objective of the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is to provide financial assistance to self-employment ventures in order to create job opportunities for unemployed youth and traditional artisans. The key benefits of the programme are as follows:

- Bank-financed subsidy scheme for setting up microenterprises in the non-farm sector.
- Margin money subsidy on bank loans of 15% to 35% for manufacturing projects of up to INR 25 lakhs, and INR 10 lakhs for service projects.
- For special category beneficiaries such as SC/ST/Ex-Servicemen/NER/Women/PH/Minorities, the money subsidy margin is 25% in urban areas and 35% in rural areas.
- The limit for the maximum project cost is INR 10 lakhs in the service sector and INR 25 lakhs in the manufacturing sector.

xiv. Stand-Up India

The Stand-Up India Scheme for financing SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneurs aims to promote female entrepreneurship by facilitating bank loans ranging from 10 lakh and 1 crore to at least one scheduled caste or scheduled tribe borrower and at least one women borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise in the manufacturing, services, agri-allied or trading sector.

- SC/ST and/or woman entrepreneurs aged above 18 years.
- Loans under the scheme are available for only greenfield projects i.e. the first-time venture of the beneficiary in the manufacturing, services, agri-allied activities, or the trading sector.
- In the case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneurs.
- The borrower should not be in default to any bank or financial institution.

xv. Mahila e-Haat

- Mahila e-Haat is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK). Launched on 7th March 2016, Mahila e-Haat is a direct online marketing platform that leverages technology to support women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs

and showcase the products/services that they make/manufacture/undertake.

- This exclusive portal is the first in the country to offer a specialised, female-focused marketing platform. Being a bilingual portal, it aims at the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women.

xvi. One-Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme

One-Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development with the goal of supporting women affected by violence in private and public spaces. The Scheme provides specialised services to women who have endured any type of gender-based violence including “attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honour-related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting”.

Objectives of the scheme are as follows:

- Providing integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.
- Facilitating immediate, emergency, and non-emergency access to a variety of services, including medical, legal, psychological, and counselling support, all under one roof in order to combat all forms of violence against women.

xvii. Ujjawala Scheme

The Ujjawala Scheme is a comprehensive scheme for “prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.” The Scheme became effective on April 1st, 2016. The objectives of the Ujjawala Scheme are provided as follows:

- To prevent the trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilisation and community involvement, awareness generation programmes, generate public discourse through workshops/seminars and such events, and any other innovative activity.
- Facilitating the rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and placing them in safe custody.
- To give urgent and long-term rehabilitation services to victims by providing basic necessities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, counselling, legal advice and guidance, and vocational training.
- To aid the victims’ reintegration into their families and society at large.
- To facilitate the repatriation of cross-border victims to their country of origin.

xviii. Women Helpline Scheme

The Women Helpline Scheme came into effect on April 1, 2015. The Scheme provides a 24-hour emergency response to all women who are

affected by violence both in the public and private spheres. The helpline is established in every state and union territory. Following are some of the significant objectives of the Women's Helpline:

- Provide toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- Facilitate crisis intervention through referral to police, hospitals, or ambulance services.
- Provide information about the appropriate support services available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.
- Creation and maintenance of a comprehensive referral database by the Helpline within its local area.

xix. SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)

This scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development with the objective to rehabilitate women in difficult circumstances. The Scheme covers the following categories of women:

- women who are deserted and without any social and economic support,
- women victims of domestic violence, family tension, and natural disaster.

Under this Scheme, a SWADHAR Greh will be set up in every district with the following objectives:

- To meet the primary needs of women in distress who lack social and economic support, such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, and care.
- To help them regain their emotional strength, which has been hampered due to encounters with unfortunate circumstances.
- Providing them legal aid and guidance to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society.
- To economically and emotionally rehabilitate them.

xx. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme

- The objective of the STEP Scheme is to provide skills that give employability to women and also provide competencies and skills that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.
- The Scheme intends to benefit women all across the country who have attained the age of 16 years and above.

xxi. Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is an initiative of NITI Aayog for the promotion of women entrepreneurship by:

- Promoting and supporting aspiring as well as established women entrepreneurs in India.
- Assisting and handholding the women entrepreneurs in their journey from starting up to scaling up and expanding their ventures.

This unique, one of its kind, enabling platform is built on three pillars:

- 'Iccha Shakti' represents motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their businesses.
- 'Gyaan Shakti' represents providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to foster entrepreneurship.
- 'Karma Shakti' represents providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting and scaling up businesses.

xxii. Initiatives taken by the government for transgender persons

- Recently, India has enacted a law for the protection of rights of transgender persons that came into force on 10th January 2022. The Act, namely the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 recognizes the identity of transgender persons and prohibits discrimination or unfair treatment against them in relation to education, employment, healthcare services, holding public or private offices, etc.
- Section 22 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 empowers the appropriate government to make rules for carrying out the provisions of the said Act.
- In exercise of this power, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 were framed and notified on 25th September 2020 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- In addition to the aforesaid legislative measures, the Government of India has undertaken some policy and other measures for upliftment and protection of the rights of transgender persons, which are discussed as below:

xxiii. Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has come up with a national level umbrella scheme called SMILE i.e., Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise. This Scheme includes two Sub-Schemes, namely:

- Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons;
- Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons engaged in the act of Begging;
- SMILE covers several comprehensive measures for the welfare of transgender persons which are provided as follows:

xxiv. National Portal for Transgender Persons

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the "National Portal for Transgender Persons" in consonance with the

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020. The official website of the portal is: transgender.dosje.gov.in

The Portal provides the following facilities:

- **Certificates and Identity Cards:** The Portal provides the facility for transgender persons to apply for certificate and identity cards from across the country without physical interface through a seamless end-to-end mechanism.
 - The Transgender certificate and identity card is nationally recognised and provided by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The aforesaid certificate is a mandatory document to avail the welfare measures being provided under the SMILE Scheme.
- **Helpline:** The portal provides technical and administrative support to the applicant. It also assists in sending timely reminders to district authorities for expediting the process of issuing certificates and identity cards to applicants to alleviate unnecessary delays by making the process transparent to the beneficiaries.
 - The Portal also encourages online skill training and employment opportunities for transgender persons and provides recognition/incentives to those applicants who have done courses from the SWAYAM portal.

xxv. SMILE Garima Greh : Shelter Homes

Garima Greh aims to provide shelter to destitute and abandoned transgender persons with basic amenities such as shelter, food, medical care, and recreational facilities. In addition to that, it also provides support for the skill development of transgender persons. Garima Greh seeks to empower the transgender community by ensuring that they have access to a safe and secure environment.

Eligibility Criteria for availing benefits under the Scheme

- TGs certified issued through National Portal for Transgender Persons and preferably living below the poverty line.
- Transgenders who are abandoned, aged above 18 years and below 60 years.
- TGs should not be engaged in sex work and beggary.
- TG must be unemployed and not engaged in productive commercial activities.

xxvi. Scholarships

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is providing scholarships to transgender students for studies. These scholarships are available in four categories:

- Scholarships for secondary school (9th and 10th) transgender students.
- Scholarships for senior secondary (11th and 12th) education.
- Scholarships for students (Undergraduate/Diploma).

- Scholarships for students (Post-graduation)

xxvii. Skill Development and Training

- The Skill Development and Training programmes are provided in the form of short-term training programs and long-term training programs with the aim of providing employment opportunities to the persons belonging to the transgender community by teaching them market-oriented skills.
- The training is provided free of cost and a stipend of Rs. 1000 per month per trainee is also given in case of non-residential training.

xxviii. Medical Support and Health Benefits

- This scheme aims to provide health insurance coverage to all transgender persons living in India to improve their health condition through proper treatment including sex reassignment surgery as well as medical support.
- The scheme would cover all transgender persons not receiving such benefits from others centre/state-sponsored schemes.

Eligibility

The transgender persons will be selected as per the following criteria:

- The beneficiary should be a transgender person as notified by the Government of India holding a Transgender Certificate & Identity Card issued by the National Portal for Transgender Persons.
- The beneficiary should not be availing similar benefits from any other scheme of the Centre or state government.

Policy measures, schemes and other initiatives undertaken by the Government of India to achieve gender equality in India. These schemes and measures seek to uplift, protect and empower women and persons of the transgender community to enable them to enjoy an equal status in personal and public life and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, prejudice and unfair treatment meted out to them. While there are a plethora of schemes and laws that have been formulated and are being formulated to address the gender inequalities in India, what is required is the continuous monitoring and tracking of the implementation of these measures. In addition to that, the timely revival and updation of these policies to make them more inclusive and responsive to the urgent needs of a particular situation or crisis will go a long way in accelerating the achievement of the goal of gender equality in India.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q 1. Which policy measure reserves a certain percentage of seats in government and educational institutions for women?

- a. Gender mainstreaming
- b. Affirmative action

- c. Quota system
- d. Economic participation

Q 2. The _____ system in India reserves a certain percentage of seats in _____ and _____ institutions for women to ensure their representation and participation.

Q 3. True/False: The quota system in India has not contributed to increased political representation of women.

Q 4. What is the purpose of the quota system in promoting gender equality?

4.4. Women empowerment in India

Women empowerment refers to enabling women to have control over their lives, make choices and decisions, and have equal access to resources and opportunities. It involves creating an environment where women can participate in society and the economy on an equal footing with men, and where their voices are heard and their rights are protected. Women's empowerment can take many forms, including education, economic, political, and social. Ultimately, women's empowerment aims to create a world where women have the power and freedom to live their lives, without discrimination or limitations based on gender.

A. The Significance of Women Empowerment in India

- Women empowerment can be defined as the process of equipping women with the knowledge, skills, resources, and agency to make informed decisions, participate in social, economic, and political spheres, and challenge gender inequalities.
- In the Indian context, it holds immense relevance due to its potential to drive progress and development.
- Women empowerment is not only crucial for achieving gender equality but is also a catalyst for India's progress and development as it unlocks the full potential of women and fosters a more inclusive and prosperous society.
- Grassroots organizations play a significant role in empowering women, providing them with the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to thrive.
- Through their initiatives, they actively promote women's empowerment, advocate for their rights, and work towards creating a more equitable society for all.

B. Importance of Women's Empowerment:

Women's empowerment is important for several reasons, including

- i. **Gender Equality:** Women's empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality, which is a fundamental human right. Gender equality means that women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and resources, and can participate equally in all aspects of life.
- ii. **Economic Growth:** Women's empowerment is also important for economic growth and development. When women have equal access to education, employment, and other opportunities, they are better able to contribute to the economy and society as a whole.
- iii. **Social Justice:** Women's empowerment is also essential for achieving social justice. Women and girls are often subject to discrimination, violence, and other forms of

oppression simply because of their gender. Empowering women helps to create a more just and equitable society for everyone.

- iv. **Health and Well-being:** Women's empowerment is also important for promoting health and well-being. When women have access to education and healthcare, they can better take care of themselves and their families.
- v. **Sustainable Development:** Women's empowerment is critical for achieving sustainable development. When women are empowered, they are better able to contribute to efforts to address environmental challenges, reduce poverty, and promote social justice.

a. Types of Women's Empowerment:

There are different ways to categorize women's empowerment, but here are five common types:

- i. **Economic Empowerment:** This refers to women's ability to participate in economic activities on an equal basis with men. It includes access to education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as fair wages, equal pay, and access to credit and financial services.
- ii. **Social Empowerment:** This type of empowerment refers to women's ability to participate fully in social and cultural life, free from discrimination and violence. It includes access to education, healthcare, and legal services, as well as the ability to exercise their rights and freedoms.
- iii. **Political Empowerment:** This type of empowerment refers to women's ability to participate in political life and decision-making on an equal basis with men. It includes the ability to vote and run for office, as well as access to leadership positions and participation in policy-making processes.
- iv. **Educational Empowerment:** This refers to women's ability to access education and develop skills and knowledge that enable them to make informed decisions, pursue their goals, and contribute to society. It includes access to quality education at all levels and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- v. **Health Empowerment:** This refers to women's ability to access healthcare and make decisions about their health and well-being. It includes access to information, services, and resources that promote reproductive health, maternal health, and overall well-being.

b. Factors That Encourage Women's Empowerment:

- i. **Education:** Education is a crucial factor in empowering women as it provides them with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to make informed decisions, participate in society, and achieve their goals.
- ii. **Job Opportunities:** Access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities can also empower women economically, giving them the ability to make decisions about their lives and contribute to their communities.
- iii. **Participation in Politics, Defence, Sports, and Games:** Women's participation in various fields, including politics, defense, sports, and games, can break down gender stereotypes and empower women to take on leadership roles, and challenge gender-based discrimination.

- iv. **Equal Opportunities in Society:** Ensuring equal opportunities for women in all aspects of society, including education, employment, and leadership positions, can promote gender equality and empower women to participate fully in society.
- v. **Exposure to Media:** Access to media and information can provide women with the tools they need to stay informed about important issues, advocate for their rights, and participate in decision-making processes.
- vi. **Freedom of Expression:** Women's ability to express themselves freely and without fear of discrimination or retribution is essential for their empowerment and participation in society.
- vii. **Freedom of Movement:** Women's freedom of movement, including the ability to travel, work, and participate in community activities, is important for their empowerment and participation in society.
- viii. **Proper Nutrition and Sanitation:** Access to proper nutrition and sanitation is crucial for women's health and well-being, enabling them to participate fully in society and pursue their goals.
- ix. **Decision-Making Power:** Empowering women to make decisions about their own lives, including decisions about their health, education, and career, is essential for their empowerment and participation in society.
- x. **Introduction to Self-Help Groups:** The introduction of self-help groups can provide women with a supportive network and resources to pursue their goals and challenge gender-based discrimination.
- xi. **Changes in Women's Labour Patterns:** Changes in women's labor patterns, including the recognition and support of women's unpaid care work, can help to promote gender equality and empower women economically.
- xii. **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Strong legal and policy frameworks that promote gender equality and protect women's rights are essential for encouraging women's empowerment. Laws and policies that address discrimination, gender-based violence, and ensure equal opportunities contribute to creating an environment where women can exercise their rights and participate freely in society.
- xiii. **Economic Opportunities:** Providing women with equal access to economic opportunities, including employment, entrepreneurship, and financial services, is vital for their empowerment. When women are economically empowered, they can achieve financial independence, make decisions about their lives, and contribute to the economic development of their communities.
- xiv. **Women's Leadership and Representation:** Encouraging women's leadership and representation in decision-making processes, whether in politics, business, or community organizations, fosters women's empowerment. When women hold leadership positions, they can influence policies, advocate for gender-responsive solutions, and serve as role models for other women and girls.
- xv. **Awareness and Education on Women's Rights:** Increasing awareness and education on women's rights, gender equality, and empowerment are crucial for creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Promoting gender-sensitive education, conducting awareness campaigns, and fostering dialogue on women's issues contribute to changing attitudes and behaviors.

c. **Challenges and Obstacles to Women's Empowerment in India**

Women's empowerment in India faces several challenges and obstacles that hinder their progress towards equality and full participation in society.

- i. **Gender-based Violence:** Domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and dowry-related crimes harm women physically and psychologically, restrict their freedom, and limit opportunities.
- ii. **Limited Access to Education:** Barriers such as poverty, cultural norms, and inadequate infrastructure contribute to lower enrollment rates for girls, restricting their skills acquisition and economic prospects.
- iii. **Gender Pays Gap:** Discrimination in hiring, occupational segregation, and lack of representation in leadership positions contribute to wage disparities between women and men, limiting economic independence and decision-making power.
- iv. **Limited Political Representation:** Women are underrepresented in political decision-making processes, both nationally and at the state level, impeding the inclusion of women's perspectives and priorities in policymaking.
- v. **Social Norms and Cultural Barriers:** Deep-rooted patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and discriminatory customs restrict women's autonomy and opportunities, requiring sustained efforts to change attitudes and promote gender equality.
- vi. **Patriarchal Attitudes:** Patriarchal attitudes that prioritize men over women are still deeply ingrained in many parts of Indian society. This can lead to discrimination against women in areas such as education, employment, and political participation.
- vii. **Limited Access to Education:** Although education is a key factor in women's empowerment, many girls and women in India still face limited access to education due to poverty, cultural attitudes, and lack of infrastructure.
- viii. **Economic Inequality:** Women in India are often economically disadvantaged, facing lower wages, limited job opportunities, and unequal access to financial services and resources.
- ix. **Violence and Discrimination:** Violence and discrimination against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based discrimination, continue to be major obstacles to women's empowerment in India.
- x. **Traditional Gender Roles:** Traditional gender roles and expectations can limit women's opportunities and choices, including in areas such as marriage, family, and career.
- xi. **Lack of Legal and Political Support:** Women in India also face limited legal and political support, including limited representation in government and limited access to legal protections and services.
- xii. **Limited Mobility:** Limited mobility, including restrictions on women's freedom of movement and access to transportation, can also inhibit women's empowerment in India.

d. Importance of Women Empowerment

Women empowerment is crucial for community development as it brings numerous benefits and positive outcomes.

- i. **Economic Growth:** Women's empowerment contributes to economic growth and prosperity within communities. When women have access to education, skills training, and economic opportunities, they can participate in the workforce, start businesses, and contribute to the local economy. Empowered women drive innovation,

productivity, and entrepreneurship, leading to economic development and poverty reduction.

- ii. **Social Progress:** Women empowerment promotes social progress by challenging and transforming societal norms, attitudes, and practices that limit women's rights and opportunities. It involves promoting gender equality, addressing gender-based violence, promoting women's rights, and raising awareness about women's issues. When women are empowered, they can actively contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone's rights are respected.
- iii. **Education and Skill Development:** Empowering women through education and skill development programs has a direct impact on community development. When women are educated, they acquire knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities that enable them to make informed decisions and contribute to their families' and communities' well-being. Educated women are more likely to invest in their children's education and actively participate in community development initiatives.
- iv. **Health and Well-being:** Women's empowerment positively impacts the health and well-being of individuals and communities. When women have access to healthcare services, reproductive rights, and health information, they can make informed decisions about their own health and the health of their families. Ensuring women's health and well-being contributes to improved public health outcomes, reduced maternal and child mortality rates, and healthier communities.
- v. **Leadership and Governance:** Empowering women to participate in leadership and decision-making roles within the community leads to better governance and representation. When women community leaders have equal opportunities to contribute their perspectives, knowledge, and skills, community decisions become more inclusive and reflective of diverse needs and priorities. Women's participation in local governance, as women community leaders, fosters accountability, transparency, and effective community development strategies.

e. Women's Empowerment through education

- Women empowerment through education refers to the process of providing girls and women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to participate fully in society and make informed decisions about their lives.
 - Education is one of the most powerful tools for empowering women, as it can help them to gain knowledge, skills, and confidence that can help them to improve their lives and the lives of their families and communities.
 - Economic empowerment, Health and well-being, Political participation, and Social empowerment are some ways that education can help empower women.
- Overall, women's education is essential for achieving gender equality and empowering women to realize their full potential. By investing in girls' education, we can create a more just and equitable world for all.

Women's empowerment in India is crucial for achieving gender equality and driving progress. Grassroots development organizations like Mahila Housing Trust, as NGOs, play a crucial role in implementing on-the-ground initiatives and advocating for policy changes. Their localized approach and community engagement contribute significantly to driving women's empowerment and promoting gender equality in India. Through their programs and initiatives, they provide support, resources, and opportunities for women,

empowering them to lead fulfilling lives and actively participate in the development of their communities

Self-Check Exercise-2

- Q 1.** Which of the following initiatives is aimed at providing financial services to low-income women?
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
 - Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
 - Microfinance programs
 - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
- Q 2.** _____ programs are aimed at providing financial services to low-income women to support their economic empowerment.
- Q 3.** True/False: Economic empowerment of women has no impact on overall economic growth.
- Q 4.** What is the role of microfinance in women's economic empowerment?

4.5. Summary

The Indian government has implemented several impactful policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. Key initiatives include the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, which addresses gender-biased sex selection and promotes girls' education. Additionally, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, extended maternity leave to 26 weeks, benefiting working women. The One Stop Centre Scheme provides comprehensive support to women affected by violence, and the Ujjawala Scheme focuses on preventing trafficking and rehabilitating victims. These efforts underscore a commitment to improving women's health, education, and economic participation, though challenges such as cultural norms and implementation gaps persist.

4.6. Glossary

- **Gender Equality:** The state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.
- **Women Empowerment:** The process of enhancing women's control over their lives and their participation in social, economic, and political processes.
- **Policy Initiative:** A plan or action undertaken by a government to address a specific issue or improve conditions.
- **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001):** A comprehensive policy aimed at improving the status of women and promoting gender equality.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** A campaign aimed at addressing the declining child sex ratio and promoting education for girls.
- **National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW):** An initiative to strengthen the overall processes that promote all-round development of women.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme:** A scheme to support women affected by violence, providing integrated services including police assistance, legal aid, and psychological counseling.

- Ujjawala Scheme: A scheme aimed at preventing trafficking of women and children, and for the rehabilitation of victims.
- Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017: Legislation that extends maternity leave to 26 weeks for working women.
- Mahila Shakti Kendra: A scheme to empower rural women through community participation and providing an interface for rural women to approach the government.

4.7. Answers to Self-Check Exercise

Self-Check Exercise-1

Ans 1. c) Quota system

Ans 2. quota, government, educational

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. The quota system aims to ensure women's representation and participation in government, educational institutions, and other areas by reserving a certain percentage of seats or opportunities specifically for women.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Ans 1. c) Microfinance programs

Ans 2. Microfinance

Ans 3. False

Ans 4. Microfinance provides low-income women with access to financial services such as loans, savings, and insurance, enabling them to start and grow their businesses, increase their income, and improve their economic status.

4.8. References/Suggested Readings

- Strategy for New India, <https://www.niti.gov.in> (last visited Apr.23,2022)
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- Jugal Kishore Mishra, Empowerment of women in India, 4, The Indian Journal of Political Science, 867, 872-878,(2006)
- Mudra, <https://www.mudra.org.in> (last visited Apr.26,2022)

4.9. Terminal Questions

- Discuss the evolution of gender policies in India since independence and their impact on improving the status of women. Highlight key initiatives, challenges faced, and the outcomes achieved in promoting gender equality.
- Analyze the role of education in empowering women in India. How has access to education influenced women's socio-economic status and participation in decision-making processes? Discuss with examples and current trends.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of governmental schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, in promoting women's rights and welfare. Discuss the challenges in their implementation and propose measures for improvement.
- Explore the intersectionality of gender with other social factors such as caste, class, religion, ethnicity, and disability in India. How do these intersections shape the experiences and opportunities of women? Discuss policy implications for addressing multiple dimensions of inequality.
- Gandhi's philosophy emphasized nonviolence and equality, influencing India's freedom movement. Discuss Mahatma Gandhi's views on women's rights.

UNIT – 5: SOCIALIZATION THEORY OF GENDER AND PRACTICES

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Learning Objectives
- 5.3 Socialization Theory of Gender
Self- Check Exercise-1
- 5.4 The Role of School in the Early Socialisation of Gender
Self- Check Exercise-2
- 5.5 Educational Implications
Self- Check Exercise-3
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Glossary
- 5.8 Answer to self-check Exercises
- 5.9 References / Suggested Readings
- 5.10 Terminal Questions

5.1 Introduction

The question of how gender differences arise is a central topic in psychology. Experts agree that nature (i.e., biology) and nurture (i.e., environment) act together in reciprocally causal, interactive ways to produce gender differences. The experiences afforded to girls and boys within schools are known to affect gender differentiation both directly, by providing differential skill practice and reinforcement, and indirectly, by providing input that leads children to actively socialize themselves along gender-differentiated pathways.

5.2 Learning Objectives:

After going through this unit, learners will be able to:

- Give the meaning social reform movement.
- Describe the different movements during 19th and 20th century.
- Find out the effects of reform movements to enhance the women education

5.3 Socialization Theory of Gender:

Human differentiation on the basis of gender is a fundamental phenomenon that affects virtually every aspect of people's daily lives. This article presents the social cognitive theory of gender role development and functioning. It specifies how gender conceptions are constructed from the complex mix of experiences and how they operate in concert with motivational and self-regulatory mechanisms to guide gender-linked conduct throughout the life course. The theory integrates psychological and socio-structural determinants within a unified conceptual structure. In this theoretical perspective, gender conceptions and roles are the product of a broad network of social influences operating interdependently in a variety of societal subsystems. Human evolution provides bodily structures and biological potentialities that permit a range of possibilities rather than dictate a fixed type of gender differentiation. People contribute to their self-

development and bring about social changes that define and structure gender relationships through their antigenic actions within the interrelated systems of influence. The socialization theory of gender posits that gender roles and behaviors are learned through socialization processes, primarily during childhood. This theory emphasizes that individuals, from a very young age, internalize societal expectations and norms regarding what is considered appropriate behavior for their gender. Here are some key points and concepts related to the socialization theory of gender:

Agents of Socialization: Children learn about gender roles and behaviors from various agents of socialization, including family, peers, media, and educational institutions. These agents convey explicit and implicit messages about how boys and girls, men and women, should behave, dress, and interact.

Gender Schema Theory: This is closely related to socialization theory and suggests that children develop mental frameworks (schemas) about gender based on their social experiences. These schemas influence their perceptions of themselves and others in terms of gender.

Reinforcement: Through reinforcement and punishment, children learn to conform to gender norms. They are rewarded (positively reinforced) for behaving in ways that align with their gender and may be punished (negatively reinforced) for behaviors that deviate from societal expectations.

Cultural Variability: Socialization processes vary across cultures and historical contexts, leading to differences in how gender roles are defined and enforced. For example, expectations for masculinity and femininity may differ significantly between cultures.

Impact on Identity: The socialization theory suggests that gender identity and behavior are not solely determined by biology but are shaped by ongoing social interactions and cultural contexts. This perspective challenges essentialist views of gender that emphasize biological determinism.

Critiques and Debates: Critics of the socialization theory argue that it may oversimplify the complexity of gender identity formation, overlooking individual agency and the role of biological factors. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes rather than challenging them.

Overall, the socialization theory of gender provides a framework for understanding how societal norms and expectations contribute to the construction of gender identity and behavior. It highlights the importance of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping individuals' understanding and expression of gender roles.

Self- Check Exercise-1

Q.1 According to socialization theory, gender roles and identities are primarily shaped by:

- A) Genetic predispositions
- B) Environmental influences

- C) Hormonal fluctuations
- D) Evolutionary pressures

Q.2 According to socialization theory, individuals learn gender roles, behaviors, and identities through _____ and _____ influences.

5.4 The Role of Schools in The Early Socialization of Gender Differences:

SUBJECT

Schools are major contexts for gender socialization, in part because children spend large amounts of time engaged with peers in such settings. For nearly all psychological traits on which young boys and girls differ (e.g., reading ability, play preferences), the distribution of the two groups is overlapping. Schools can magnify or diminish gender differences by providing environments that promote within-gender similarity and between-gender differences, or the inverse (within-gender variability and between group similarity).

PROBLEMS

Schools' affect gender differentiation via two primary sources: teachers and peers. Teachers and peers directly influence gender differentiation by providing boys and girls with different learning opportunities and feedback. Teachers and peers are also sources of learning about gender. Teachers present curricular materials that contain gender stereotypic behaviour, and peers exhibit gender stereotypic attitudes and behaviour. Children internalize gender stereotypes and prejudices, which in turn guide their own preferences and behaviours.

The role of schools, parents, and teachers in the early socialization of gender differences is crucial in shaping children's understanding and enactment of gender roles and identities. Here's a breakdown of their roles:

Schools:

Curriculum and Environment: Schools contribute to gender socialization through their curriculum, activities, and overall environment. For instance, the choice of subjects (e.g., math vs. literature) and the presence or absence of gender stereotypes in textbooks and teaching materials can influence children's perceptions of what is appropriate for their gender.

Peer Interactions: Schools provide a social setting where children interact with peers of the same and different genders. Peer groups within schools can reinforce or challenge gender norms through play, friendship patterns, and social hierarchies.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities: Participation in sports and other extracurricular activities can reinforce gender norms (e.g., boys encouraged to play competitive sports, girls encouraged to participate in dance or gymnastics) or provide opportunities for challenging stereotypes.

Parents:

Role Modeling: Parents serve as primary role models for children's understanding of gender roles. Children observe and learn gender-specific behaviors and attitudes from their parents.

Direct Teaching: Parents often explicitly teach children about gender differences and expectations. This can include behaviors like emphasizing modesty for girls or assertiveness for boys.

Toy and Play Preferences: Parents often guide children towards gender-specific toys and play activities, which can reinforce traditional gender roles.

Teachers:

How Do Teachers Contribute to Gender Differences?

Many educators endorse cultural gender stereotypes (e.g., math is easier for boys than girls) and prejudices (show preferences for same-gender individuals). These biases can be explicit (e.g., consciously endorsed) or implicit (unconsciously held), and they influence teachers' classroom behaviours.

Teachers' gender stereotypes and prejudices shape their classroom behaviour in at least three ways. First, teachers often model gender stereotypic behaviour. Female teachers, for example, often exhibit "math phobic" behaviours. Second, teachers often exhibit differential expectations for males and females (e.g., creating "dress-up" and "construction" centres and accepting—even facilitating—gender-differentiated use). Third, teachers facilitate children's gender biases by marking gender as important by using it to label and organize students. In one study, teachers were asked to use gender to label children and to organize classroom activities by, for example, greeting children with "Good morning, boys and girls" and asking children to line up by gender. Other teachers ignored students' gender. Young children whose teachers labelled and used gender showed higher levels of gender stereotyping than their peers. Preschool teachers' labelling and use of gender increases their pupils' gender stereotyping and avoidance of cross-gender playmates.

Classroom Dynamics: Teachers play a significant role in managing classroom dynamics that may reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes. This includes how they distribute attention, praise, and disciplinary actions among boys and girls.

Inclusive Education: Teachers can promote inclusive education by challenging stereotypes and ensuring equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender.

Curriculum Choices: Similar to schools, teachers influence gender socialization through the choice of teaching materials, examples used in lessons, and discussions facilitated in the classroom.

Overall, schools, parents, and teachers collectively contribute to the early socialization of gender differences by providing environments, interactions, and teachings that either reinforce traditional gender norms or promote more flexible and inclusive understandings of gender roles and identities. Their combined influence can significantly impact how children perceive themselves and others in terms of gender.

How Do Peers Contribute to Gender Differences?

Like teachers, peers contribute to the socialization of gender difference via multiple pathways. Upon entering school, children encounter large numbers of peers, many of whom model traditional gender behaviour, producing and reinforcing the content of gender stereotypes.

In addition, schools are characterized by gender segregation. When many peers are available, children tend to select same-sex playmates. Children's gender segregation, in turn, affects their play experiences, leading them to spend more time in stereotypic play. Furthermore, gender segregation predicts children's future conformity to gender stereotypes. After observing pre-schoolers for six months, researchers found that, as the amount of time that children played with same-sex peers increased, children's own behaviour became more gender stereotypic.

Peers also contribute to gender differentiation by teaching their classmates stereotypes (e.g., "Short hair is for boys not girls") and punishing them for failing to conform to stereotypes via verbal harassment and physical aggression. Importantly, intervention programs can teach young children to recognize and challenge their peers' sexist remarks (e.g., "You can't say girls can't play!").

Self- Check Exercise-2

Q.1 Which of the following is a key way in which schools contribute to the early socialization of gender differences?

- A) Genetic inheritance
- B) Peer interactions
- C) Biological predispositions
- D) Socioeconomic status

Q.2 Parents often guide children towards _____ toys and play activities, which can reinforce traditional _____ roles.

5.5 Educational Implications

The socialization of gender differences has several educational implications that influence how children are taught and how they experience the educational environment. Here are some key educational implications:

Curriculum Design and Content:

Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives: Educators should consider including diverse perspectives on gender in the curriculum to promote understanding and respect for different gender identities and expressions.

Critical Examination of Gender Stereotypes: Curriculum content should encourage critical thinking about gender stereotypes and provide opportunities for students to challenge and analyze them.

Representation in Textbooks and Materials: Textbooks and educational materials should reflect diverse gender roles and contributions to various fields, avoiding reinforcing stereotypes.

Teaching Strategies:

Promotion of Gender Equity: Teachers should adopt teaching strategies that promote gender equity in the classroom, such as ensuring equal participation and opportunities for all students regardless of gender.

Encouraging Inclusive Language: Educators can use inclusive language and examples that reflect the diversity of gender identities, promoting a welcoming and supportive classroom environment.

Addressing Bias and Discrimination: Teachers should be equipped to recognize and address gender bias and discrimination in educational settings, fostering a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

School Climate and Culture:

Promotion of Gender Awareness Programs: Schools can implement programs and initiatives that raise awareness about gender diversity and inclusivity among students, staff, and parents.

Support for Gender Non-Conforming Students: Educational institutions should provide support and resources for gender non-conforming students, ensuring they feel respected and included in all aspects of school life.

Training and Professional Development: Continuous training and professional development for educators on gender issues and inclusive practices are essential to creating a supportive school culture.

Peer Interactions and Social Dynamics:

Facilitation of Positive Peer Relationships: Educators can encourage positive peer interactions that challenge stereotypes and promote understanding of diverse gender identities.

Addressing Bullying and Harassment: Schools should have policies and practices in place to address bullying and harassment based on gender identity or expression, ensuring a safe environment for all students.

Parental and Community Engagement:

Education and Awareness for Parents: Schools can engage parents in discussions and workshops on gender issues, providing them with resources to support their children's understanding and acceptance of diverse gender identities.

Collaboration with Community Organizations: Partnering with community organizations that focus on gender diversity can enrich educational experiences and support initiatives for inclusivity within schools.

In conclusion, addressing the socialization of gender differences in education requires a holistic approach that involves curriculum design, teaching strategies, school climate, peer interactions, parental engagement, and community collaboration. By fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment, schools can play a crucial role in promoting gender equity and respect for all individuals regardless of gender identity or expression.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q.1 Which of the following best describes the impact of gender biases in educational materials?

- A. They encourage all students to pursue STEM careers.
- B. They reinforce narrow gender roles and limit aspirations.
- C. They promote gender equality in classrooms.
- D. They have no impact on student learning.

Q.2 How can teachers counteract gender stereotypes in the classroom?

- A. By treating boys and girls differently based on traditional gender roles.
- B. By providing equal encouragement and opportunities in all subject areas.
- C. By encouraging boys to focus on math and science only.
- D. By having separate curricula for boys and girls.

Q.3 What is the term for the phenomenon where students perform according to teachers' expectations influenced by gender stereotypes?

- A. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies
- B. Gender Equality
- C. Inclusive Education
- D. Curriculum Bias

Q.4 Which of the following strategies can help balance gender disparities in subject choices?

- A. Encouraging girls to only pursue humanities and social sciences.
- B. Exposing all students to a variety of fields and actively encouraging participation in non-traditional areas.
- C. Promoting traditional gender roles in career counseling.
- D. Discouraging boys from pursuing humanities subjects.

5.6 Summary

Educational policy makers should resist the creation of gender segregated educational contexts (e.g., single-sex schools) and instead seek to enhance co-educational schools' promotion of gender egalitarian attitudes and behaviour. Teachers need training to recognize their own explicit and implicit biases and how these biases affect their classroom behaviours. Additionally, teachers should receive explicit training in confronting children's biases, so that they reduce peer policing of gender normativity.¹⁶ Parents should seek educational settings for their students that are gender integrated and that make use of curricula that directly teach about, and challenge, gender bias and inequality.

Schools are important contexts for the socialization of young children's gender attitudes and behaviour. Teachers and classmates shape children's gender attitudes and, in turn, gender differences in cognition and behaviour. Unfortunately, teachers receive relatively little training in recognizing and combating gender stereotypes and prejudices—their own and others—and, as a consequence, teachers often model, expect, reinforce, and

lay the foundation for gender differentiation among their pupils. Thus, most schools create and maintain—rather than counteract—traditional gender stereotypes, biases, and differences. However, educators who adopt a commitment to gender egalitarianism and thus promote cross-gender interaction, expose pupils to counter-stereotypic models, and discuss and teach challenges to gender stereotyping and harassment optimize their pupils' developmental outcomes.

5.7 Glossary

Gender Socialization: The process by which individuals learn and adopt the gender norms and roles expected by their society, typically beginning at an early age and influenced by family, media, peers, and educational institutions.

Gender Bias: Prejudice or favoritism toward one gender over the other, often manifesting in discriminatory practices, beliefs, or attitudes in various contexts, including education.

5.8 Answer to Self-Check Exercise

Exercise-1

Answer1: B) Environmental influences

Answer2: **social interactions** and **cultural**

Exercise-2

Answer1: B) Peer interactions

Answer2: **gender-specific** and **gender** roles.

Exercise-3

Answer1 B. They reinforce narrow gender roles and limit aspirations.

Answer2 B. By providing equal encouragement and opportunities in all subject areas.

Answer3 A. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Answer4 B. Exposing all students to a variety of fields and actively encouraging participation in non-traditional areas.

5.9 References / Suggested Readings

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- Barks, O. (1971) Sociology of Education Ed. 2 Landon: Batsford.
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5.10 Terminal Questions

1. Explain Socialization Theory.
2. The Role of School in the Early Socialisation of Gender.

UNIT -6 : GENDER IDENTITIES AND SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES IN FAMILY, SCHOOL, OTHER FORMAL AND INFORMAL ORGANIZATION

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Learning Objectives
- 6.3 Gender Identities
Self -check Exercise-1
- 6.4 Socialization Practices in Family
Self -check Exercise-2
- 6.5 Socialization Practices in School
Self-check Exercise-3
- 6.6 Socialization Practices through Formal and Informal Organization
Self- check Exercise-4
- 6.7 Summary
- 6.8 Glossary
- 6.9 Answer to self-check Exercise
- 6.10 References / Suggested Readings
- 6.11 Terminal Questions

6.1 Introduction

Gender identities are shaped significantly by socialization practices, which encompass a wide array of societal influences that begin early in childhood and continue throughout life. From birth, individuals are introduced to a set of norms, expectations, and behaviors associated with their perceived gender. These practices are reinforced through various channels, including family dynamics, educational institutions, media representations, peer interactions, and cultural traditions.

Within families, gender socialization often starts with the assignment of gender roles and the reinforcement of gender-specific behaviors. Parents and caregivers play a pivotal role in this process by providing initial models of gendered behavior and expectations. For instance, they may encourage different interests, behaviors, and clothing choices based on societal norms associated with their child's gender. This early conditioning can shape children's self-concept and understanding of their own gender identity.

Educational institutions further contribute to gender socialization through formal and informal curriculum content, classroom interactions, and institutional policies. Schools and teachers may inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes through the types of activities they encourage or discourage, the way they allocate attention and resources,

and the examples they use in teaching materials. Peers also play a crucial role in the socialization process by providing opportunities for children to learn and adopt gender-specific behaviors through play, social hierarchies, and peer pressure.

Media and popular culture amplify and perpetuate societal norms and stereotypes about gender identities. From children's television shows to advertising, media representations often depict narrow and idealized versions of masculinity and femininity, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and others. These representations can either reinforce traditional gender norms or challenge them by presenting diverse and inclusive portrayals of gender identities.

Cultural traditions and societal expectations vary widely across different communities and regions, influencing the flexibility or rigidity of gender roles and identities. Some cultures may have more fluid conceptions of gender, allowing for a broader range of expressions and identities, while others may have strict norms that prescribe specific roles and behaviors based on gender.

Overall, the socialization practices surrounding gender identities are complex and multifaceted, involving a combination of institutional, interpersonal, and cultural influences. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting inclusivity, respect, and equity in society, as well as supporting individuals in exploring and expressing their gender identities authentically and without stigma.

6.2 Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, the learners will be able to;

- Understand Socialization Practices in Family
- Know about Socialization Practices in School
- Enhance Socialization Practices through Formal and Informal Organization

6.3 Gender Identities

Gender identities refer to the deeply held sense of being male, female, a blend of both, or neither. These identities are complex and multifaceted, encompassing one's internal understanding and experience of their own gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Binary and Non-Binary Identities:

Binary Identities: Traditionally, societies have recognized two main gender identities: male and female. Binary identities align with conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity.

Non-Binary Identities: Non-binary or genderqueer identities exist outside the binary framework. Individuals may identify as neither exclusively male nor female, or as a

combination of both genders, rejecting societal norms that require fitting into strictly defined categories.

Gender Fluidity:

Fluid Identities: Some individuals experience their gender identity as fluid, meaning it can change over time or in different contexts. This fluidity challenges the idea of a fixed or static gender identity and acknowledges variability in expression.

Gender Expression vs. Identity:

Expression: Gender expression refers to the way individuals outwardly manifest their gender identity through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and other means. It can be influenced by cultural norms and personal preferences.

Identity: Gender identity, on the other hand, is internal and deeply personal, reflecting how individuals perceive themselves and wish to be recognized in terms of gender.

Intersectionality:

Multiple Identities: Gender identities intersect with other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and disability. These intersections shape individuals' experiences of gender and influence their social interactions and opportunities.

Social and Cultural Influences:

Socialization: Gender identities are influenced by societal norms, cultural beliefs, and social expectations regarding behaviors, roles, and expressions associated with masculinity and femininity.

Representation: Media, literature, and popular culture play a significant role in shaping perceptions of gender identities by reinforcing or challenging stereotypes and promoting diverse representations.

Recognition and Acceptance:

Visibility and Advocacy: Increased visibility and advocacy efforts by gender-diverse communities and allies have contributed to greater recognition and acceptance of diverse gender identities.

Legal and Social Rights: Efforts to secure legal recognition and protection of rights for individuals of all gender identities continue to be important in ensuring equality and inclusion.

Understanding and respecting diverse gender identities is crucial for promoting a society that values inclusivity, dignity, and human rights for all individuals, regardless of how they identify or express their gender.

Self- Check Exercise-1

- Q.1 Which of the following best describes non-binary gender identity?
- A) Identifying strictly as male or female
 - B) Identifying as a combination of both male and female
 - C) Identifying as solely one gender
 - D) Identifying as gender fluid
- Q.2 Which term describes the experience of a gender identity that aligns with the sex assigned at birth?
- A) Cisgender
 - B) Genderqueer
 - C) Gender fluid
 - D) Transgender
- Q.3 _____ identities refer to individuals who do not exclusively identify as male or female, but rather as a combination of both genders, neither gender, or a different gender altogether.
- Q.4 The term refers to society's concept of how men and women are expected to act and how they should behave
- a) Gender Bias
 - b) Gender Role
 - c) Sexual Attitudes
 - d) Sexual Orientation

6.4 Socialization Practices in Family

Socialization practices within the family play a critical role in shaping a child's understanding of gender, societal norms, values, and behaviors. These practices are influenced by cultural, historical, and societal contexts, and they vary widely across different families and communities. Here are some key aspects of socialization practices in the family related to gender:

Gender Roles and Expectations:

Assignment of Roles: Families often assign specific roles and responsibilities based on gender. For example, boys may be encouraged to engage in activities perceived as masculine, such as sports or leadership roles, while girls may be expected to participate in caregiving or domestic tasks.

Modeling Behavior: Parents serve as primary role models for children's understanding of gender roles. Children observe and learn gender-specific behaviors and attitudes through interactions with their parents and other family members.

Social Reinforcement:

Praise and Correction: Parents may reinforce gender-typical behaviors through praise or correction. For instance, praising a boy for being assertive or disciplining a girl for being too outspoken can reinforce traditional gender norms.

Toys and Play: Parents often provide gender-specific toys and encourage play activities that align with societal expectations of gender roles. For example, giving dolls to girls and trucks to boys reinforces stereotypes about caregiving and adventurousness.

Communication Patterns:

Verbal Encouragement: Parents may use different language and communication styles when addressing children based on their gender. This can include using terms like "strong" for boys and "pretty" for girls, reinforcing societal ideals of masculinity and femininity.

Gendered Expectations: Expectations for academic success, emotional expression, and future aspirations can differ based on gender within the family context, shaping children's self-concept and aspirations.

Sibling and Extended Family Dynamics:

Sibling Interactions: Siblings also contribute to gender socialization through imitation, competition, and cooperation within familial relationships.

Extended Family Influence: Extended family members, such as grandparents and cousins, may also play a role in reinforcing or challenging gender norms through their interactions and expectations of children.

Cultural and Religious Influences:

Cultural Traditions: Cultural values and traditions related to gender roles and expectations influence family socialization practices. These can vary significantly across different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Religious Beliefs: Religious teachings and practices may also shape attitudes towards gender roles and behaviors within the family, influencing socialization practices.

Overall, family socialization practices profoundly impact children's development of gender identity and understanding of societal norms. They provide the initial framework through which children learn about themselves and their place in the world in relation to gender. Recognizing and understanding these practices is essential for promoting gender equity, challenging stereotypes, and fostering inclusive environments both within families and in society at large.

Self- Check Exercise-2

Q.1 Which of the following is a primary way through which family socialization practices influence children's understanding of gender roles?

- A) Peer interactions
- B) Genetic inheritance
- C) Media exposure
- D) Verbal encouragement

Q.2 In family socialization practices, parents often provide _____-specific toys and encourage play activities that align with societal expectations of gender _____.

6.5 Socialization Practices in School

Socialization Practices in Schools:

Schools serve as influential settings where children and adolescents learn about societal norms, values, and expectations, including those related to gender. The socialization practices in schools can significantly impact students' understanding and enactment of gender roles, identities, and behaviors. Here are key aspects of how schools contribute to gender socialization:

Curriculum and Educational Materials:

Gender Representation: The curriculum often includes educational materials that portray gender roles, behaviors, and identities. Textbooks, literature, and historical narratives may reflect traditional gender stereotypes or challenge them by presenting diverse and inclusive perspectives.

Subject Choices: Schools may inadvertently reinforce gender norms through subject choices. For example, boys may be encouraged to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects, while girls may be steered towards humanities or arts.

Hidden Curriculum: Beyond formal lessons, schools convey messages about gender through the "hidden curriculum" — implicit norms and values communicated through school rules, discipline practices, and extracurricular activities.

Teacher and Staff Interactions:

Role Modeling: Teachers and staff serve as role models whose behaviors and interactions can influence students' perceptions of gender. They may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes through differential expectations or treatment based on gender.

Feedback and Encouragement: Teachers' feedback and encouragement can impact students' self-esteem and aspirations. Gender bias in feedback (e.g., praising boys for leadership and girls for compliance) can perpetuate traditional gender roles.

Classroom Dynamics: The organization of classrooms, seating arrangements, and group activities can either reinforce or challenge gender norms and expectations among students.

Peer Interactions and Social Dynamics:

Peer Influence: Peers play a significant role in reinforcing or challenging gender norms through social interactions, friendships, and peer pressure. Group dynamics within schools can perpetuate gender stereotypes or create spaces for exploring diverse gender identities and expressions.

Bullying and Harassment: Schools must address bullying and harassment based on gender identity or expression to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

Policies and Practices:

Inclusive Policies: Schools can promote inclusivity by adopting policies that recognize and support gender diversity. This includes policies related to restroom access, gender-neutral dress codes, and inclusive language.

Training and Professional Development: Educators benefit from training and professional development on gender equity and inclusive practices. This helps teachers recognize and challenge biases and support all students effectively.

Community and Parental Involvement:

Parental Influence: Family attitudes and values regarding gender roles and identities can influence children's experiences and perceptions of gender within the school environment.

Community Support: Collaboration with community organizations and advocacy groups that focus on gender diversity can enhance school efforts to create inclusive environments and support for gender-diverse students.

Educational Initiatives and Awareness:

Gender Awareness Programs: Schools can implement educational initiatives that raise awareness about gender diversity and promote understanding and acceptance among students, staff, and parents.

Promoting Critical Thinking: Schools can foster critical thinking about gender norms and stereotypes through discussions, projects, and activities that encourage students to question and analyze societal expectations.

In conclusion, schools play a pivotal role in shaping students' understanding and acceptance of gender roles, identities, and expressions. By fostering inclusive environments, challenging stereotypes, and promoting awareness and acceptance of

gender diversity, schools can contribute positively to the socialization of students and help create a more equitable society.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q.1 Which of the following is an example of how schools contribute to gender socialization?

- A) Genetic predispositions
- B) Peer interactions
- C) Family traditions
- D) Media exposure

Q.2 In schools, gender socialization can be influenced by the choice of _____, the behavior and interactions of _____, and the presence of gender _____ in teaching materials.

6.6 Socialization Practices Through Formal and Informal Organization:

Formal Organisation:

When the managers are carrying on organising process then as a result of organising process an organisational structure is created to achieve systematic working and efficient utilization of resources. This type of structure is known as formal organisational structure.

Formal organisational structure clearly spells out the job to be performed by each individual, the authority, responsibility assigned to every individual, the superior-subordinate relationship and the designation of every individual in the organisation. This structure is created intentionally by the managers for achievement of organisational goal.

Features of Formal organisation:

- (1) The formal organisational structure is created intentionally by the process of organising.
- (2) The purpose of formal organisation structure is achievement of organisational goal.
- (3) In formal organisational structure each individual is assigned a specific job.
- (4) In formal organisation every individual is assigned a fixed authority or decision-making power.
- (5) Formal organisational structure results in creation of superior-subordinate relations.
- (6) Formal organisational structure creates a scalar chain of communication in the organisation.

Advantages of Formal Organisation:

1. Systematic Working:

Formal organisation structure results in systematic and smooth functioning of an organisation.

2. Achievement of Organisational Objectives:

Formal organisational structure is established to achieve organisational objectives.

3. No Overlapping of Work:

In formal organisation structure work is systematically divided among various departments and employees. So there is no chance of duplication or overlapping of work.

4. Co-ordination:

Formal organisational structure results in coordinating the activities of various departments.

5. Creation of Chain of Command:

Formal organisational structure clearly defines superior subordinate relationship, i.e., who reports to whom.

6. More Emphasis on Work:

Formal organisational structure lays more emphasis on work than interpersonal relations.

Disadvantages of Formal Organisation:

1. Delay in Action:

While following scalar chain and chain of command actions get delayed in formal structure.

2. Ignores Social Needs of Employees:

Formal organisational structure does not give importance to psychological and social need of employees which may lead to demotivation of employees.

3. Emphasis on Work Only:

Formal organisational structure gives importance to work only; it ignores human relations, creativity, talents, etc.

INFORMAL ORGANISATION:

In the formal organisational structure individuals are assigned various job positions. While working at those job positions, the individuals interact with each other and develop some social and friendly groups in the organisation. This network of social and friendly groups forms another structure in the organisation which is called informal organisational structure.

The informal organisational structure gets created automatically and the main purpose of such structure is getting psychological satisfaction. The existence of informal structure depends upon the formal structure because people working at different job positions interact with each other to form informal structure and the job positions are created in formal structure. So, if there is no formal structure, there will be no job

position, there will be no people working at job positions and there will be no informal structure.

Features of informal organisation:

- (1) Informal organisational structure gets created automatically without any intended efforts of managers.
- (2) Informal organisational structure is formed by the employees to get psychological satisfaction.
- (3) Informal organisational structure does not follow any fixed path of flow of authority or communication.
- (4) Source of information cannot be known under informal structure as any person can communicate with anyone in the organisation.
- (5) The existence of informal organisational structure depends on the formal organisation structure.

Advantages of Informal Organisation:

1. Fast Communication:

Informal structure does not follow scalar chain so there can be faster spread of communication.

2. Fulfills Social Needs:

Informal communication gives due importance to psychological and social need of employees which motivate the employees.

3. Correct Feedback:

Through informal structure the top level managers can know the real feedback of employees on various policies and plans.

Strategic Use of Informal Organisation. Informal organisation can be used to get benefits in the formal organisation in the following way:

1. The knowledge of informal group can be used to gather support of employees and improve their performance.
2. Through grapevine important information can be transmitted quickly.
3. By cooperating with the informal groups the managers can skillfully take the advantage of both formal and informal organisations.

Disadvantages of Informal organisation:

1. Spread Rumours:

According to a survey 70% of information spread through informal organisational structure are rumors which may mislead the employees.

2. No Systematic Working:

Informal structure does not form a structure for smooth working of an organisation.

3. May Bring Negative Results:

If informal organisation opposes the policies and changes of management, then it

becomes very difficult to implement them in organisation.

4. More Emphasis to Individual Interest:

Informal structure gives more importance to satisfaction of individual interest as compared to organisational interest.

Socialization practices through formal and informal organizations refer to the ways in which institutions and social groups transmit cultural norms, values, and behaviors to their members. These practices occur within structured settings (formal organizations) and less structured environments (informal organizations), each playing a significant role in shaping individuals' understanding of societal expectations and roles. Here's a breakdown of how formal and informal organizations contribute to socialization:

Formal Organizations:

Education Institutions (Schools and Colleges):

Curriculum and Textbooks: Formal education systems prescribe curricula that include subjects and materials that reflect societal norms and values, including gender roles and expectations.

Teacher-Student Interactions: Teachers and educators serve as role models and authority figures who reinforce or challenge traditional gender norms through their behaviors, feedback, and expectations of students.

Policies and Practices: Educational institutions implement policies that may promote gender equity and inclusivity, such as anti-discrimination policies, gender-neutral facilities, and inclusive educational practices.

Workplaces:

Organizational Culture: Workplaces have their own cultures and norms that influence how gender roles are perceived and enacted among employees. This includes expectations related to leadership roles, career paths, and work-life balance.

HR Policies: Human resource policies and practices, such as hiring, promotion criteria, and pay equity measures, can impact how gender roles and identities are valued and supported within the organization.

Training and Development: Workplace training programs on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias can help employees recognize and mitigate gender biases in their professional interactions and decision-making.

Government and Legal Institutions:

Legislation and Policies: Government institutions develop laws and policies that shape societal expectations around gender equality, rights, and opportunities. This includes laws addressing discrimination, reproductive rights, and family structures.

Public Services: Government agencies provide services that may be gender-specific or influenced by gender norms, such as healthcare, social welfare programs, and legal services.

Informal Organizations:

Family and Peer Groups:

Family Dynamics: Families socialize children into gender roles through parenting styles, expectations, and the distribution of household responsibilities. Siblings and extended family members also contribute to socialization through their interactions and relationships.

Peer Interactions: Peer groups provide a context for socializing norms and behaviors related to gender. Children and adolescents learn about gender through friendships, group activities, and peer pressure, which can reinforce or challenge societal expectations.

Media and Popular Culture:

Representation: Media platforms and popular culture portrayals influence perceptions of gender through representations of characters, narratives, and stereotypes. This includes advertising, television shows, movies, and online content that shape societal attitudes and norms.

Religious and Community Organizations:

Cultural Norms: Religious institutions and community organizations often uphold cultural norms and values related to gender roles, relationships, and behaviors. They may promote specific beliefs about family structure, gender roles, and moral conduct.

Online Communities and Social Networks:

Digital Spaces: Online platforms and social networks provide spaces where individuals can explore, challenge, and express diverse gender identities and experiences. These digital communities can support social movements and advocacy efforts for gender equality and inclusion.

In summary, socialization practices through formal and informal organizations are integral to transmitting and reinforcing cultural norms, values, and behaviors related to gender. These practices occur through structured institutions like education and workplaces, as well as through less formal settings such as families, peer groups, media, and community organizations. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting inclusive socialization practices that support diverse gender identities and contribute to greater equality and understanding in society.

Self- Check Exercise-4

Q.1 Which of the following is an example of socialization through a formal organization?

- A) Peer group interactions
- B) Family dynamics
- C) Workplace policies
- D) Media representations

Q.2 In _____ organizations, socialization practices are often guided by explicit _____ and _____ that shape attitudes and behaviors related to gender.

6.7 Summary

Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex. Sociologists explain through gender socialization why human males and females behave in different ways: they learn different social roles. For example, girls learn to do different household chores than boys; girls learn to bake and clean, and boys learn to mow lawns and take out garbage. Gender socialization occurs through such diverse means as parental attitudes, schools, how peers interact with each other, and mass media. Sometimes gender roles lead to inequality; for example, women's social roles were once more restricted regarding politics, and United States law prohibited women from voting. Some researchers believe that biological differences underlie some behavioral differences between males and females; others disagree.

6.8 Glossary

Gender: The social and cultural roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities.

Formal Organization: A structured group with established rules and procedures designed to achieve specific goals and objectives.

Informal Organization: The network of personal and social relationships that arise spontaneously as people associate within a formal organizational structure.

6.9 Answer to Self-Check Exercises

Exercise-1

Answer1: B) Identifying as a combination of both male and female

Answer2: A) Cisgender

Answer3: **Non-binary**

Answer4. a) Gender Bias

Exercise-2

Answer1: D) Verbal encouragement

Answer2: **gender**-specific and gender **roles**.

Exercise-3

Answer1: B) Peer interactions

Answer2: **curriculum**, **teachers**, and **stereotypes**.

Exercise-4

Answer1: C) Workplace policies

Answer2: **formal**, **policies** and **procedures**

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6.11 Terminal Questions

- Q.1 What is difference between formal and Informal Organisation in socialization practices
- Q.2 What is the role of family and school in socialization of child?

UNIT- VII: SCHOOLING OF GIRLS; INEQUALITIES AND RESISTANCES, ISSUES OF ACCES, RETENTION AND EXCLUSION (INFRASTRUCTURE AND HIDDEN CURRICULUM)

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Learning Outcomes
- 7.3 Schooling of girls
Self-check Exercise-1
- 7.4 Inequalities and Resistances
Self-check Exercise-2
- 7.5 Access, Retention and Exclusion
Self-check Exercise-3
- 7.6 Infrastructure and Hidden Curriculum
Self-check Exercise-4
- 7.7 Summary
- 7.8 Glossary
- 7.9 Answer to self- check Exercises
- 7.10 References / Suggested Readings
- 7.11 Terminal Questions

7.1 Introduction:

Female education is a catch-all term for a complex set of issues and debates surrounding education (primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, and health education in particular) for girls and women. It includes areas of gender equality and access to education, and its connection to the alleviation of poverty. Also involved are the issues of single-sex education and religious education in that the division of education along gender lines as well as religious teachings on education have been traditionally dominant and are still highly relevant in contemporary discussions of educating females as a global consideration.

Higher attendance rates of high schools and university education among women, particularly in developing countries, have helped them make inroads to professional careers with better-paying salaries and wages. Education increases a woman's (and her partner and the family's) level of health and health awareness. Furthering women's levels of education and advanced training also tends to lead to later ages of initiation of sexual activity and first intercourse, later age at first marriage, and later age at first childbirth, as well as an increased likelihood to remain single, have no children, or have no formal marriage and alternatively, have increasing levels of long-term partnerships. It can lead to higher rates of barrier and chemical contraceptive use (and a lower level of sexually transmitted infections among women and their partners and children), and can increase the level of resources available to women who divorce or are in a situation of

domestic violence. It has been shown, in addition, to increase women's communication with their partners and their employers, and to improve rates of civic participation such as voting or the holding of office.

7.2 Learning Objectives

After going through this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Describe the status of the Schooling of Girls.
2. Describe the different barriers in the education of girls.
3. Find out the effects of reform movements to enhance the women education.

7.3 Schooling of Girls

Education is a basic human right that should be exercised fully in all nations, but for many girls in India, attending school is not an option. A girl's education is an essential starting point in establishing equality everywhere. Despite the Indian Constitution guaranteeing equality before the law and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, India remains a patriarchal society. Male inheritance and property ownership, early marriage, dowry, honor crimes, lack girls' education, witch hunting, violence against women, and trafficking are all serious issues in the country. There are schools, but most girls do not attend, often because of religious reasons or cultural pressures.

A study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau states that three out five girls receives primary education versus three out four boys. There should not be differences in the numbers of such a basic, universal human right. The law of the land makes it clear that both boys and girls have an equal opportunity to attend school from the age of six through fourteen, and that primary education is a fundamental right (Indian Constitution, Art 21). If the constitution does not make it clear enough, there is also an article in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defining that education is a universal human right (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art 26). Girls are not receiving equal access to primary education in rural India and therefore are not achieving equality.

Limited access to laws and rights

The laws governing education in India are remarkably similar to the laws of western nations. These laws are accessible to the citizens of India, but many of the citizens are unsure of how to properly live them out and where to go with complaints. Complaints usually fall on deaf ears and the citizen is told that there is equal access but that they are not fully utilizing it.

In addition to national laws, there are also international laws that also govern these states. These laws, however, are harder to access for the average citizen. The citizens are only able to access these laws through local NGOs. However, the NGOs are not usually located in rural India. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a clear article outlining that the access to education is a basic human right (Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, Art 26). These declarations should give more power to the government to provide access to education to all children.

Education is the crux

The impact of education on girls is extraordinary. Education sustains human values. It forms the foundation for learning and critical thinking. Education also provides skills for girls to become more self-reliant and provides them with more opportunities. Thinking into the future, education also provides them with the knowledge to manage health problems. A girl understanding her own body can make the difference between an unwanted pregnancy and an illegal abortion. Having the knowledge beforehand is crucial to saving and protecting lives.

Education does impact human development, as mentioned, along with economic development but the greatest impact is on democracy. Education is the only way a girl can be an informed citizen, leading the way for her to having her voice heard in society. Education also provides a better overall quality of life. Research has shown the life expectancy rises by as two years for every one percent increase literacy (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). When women have a voice there can be changes made to existing laws changing the future for young girls.

WHY GIRLS ARE PULLED OUT OF SCHOOL:

The first reason why girls are pulled out of school is because of family responsibilities. Girls provide free labor at home for the family. Home is also where they learn to be a better housewife. Many girls are kept at home because it is a better payoff than going to school. Having the girl attend school is not valuable to the whole family. This problem is lucidly evident in India, even in urban areas, but more prevalent with poorer families. Girls can be found doing everything from farm work to household chores.

The family plays a central role in a girl's life and shaping her future. Respect is given to elders in all situations and no decision can be made without consulting an elder. This often leads to the practice of arranged marriages. The decision is entirely up to the family and the girl often does not even see her future husband until the day of the wedding. Compared to American norms, individuals growing up in India are much more dependent on their families, especially parents.

The second reason why girls are kept from receiving a primary education is because they are pulled out early to protect family honor. This also can affect the dowry when the girl is married. The boy's side of the family can raise the dowry if they suspect she has been in school with boys during puberty. The practice of dowry is illegal, but laws are not always implemented. If the dowry cannot be paid, the bride runs the risk of being ruined, or worse, being killed. Honor killings are prevalent among the poor.

The third reason for inequality during primary education is because girls can't attend school due to inadequate facilities. Schools are unable to provide safe and sanitary facilities for young girls to attend, and with the population increasing at a rapid speed the priority for new facilities is given to boys. In many cases, though, this is exacerbated by basic infrastructural problems: roads, running water, and electricity are often scarce.

The fourth reason girls are kept from school is because of the shortage of female teachers. The problem can be solved, but it starts with first educating girls so they can aspire to be teachers. The government, however, does not see this as a problem and continues to deny that there is gender inequality within the education sector. There have been efforts, as listed earlier, by the government to enroll more girls but this has not been for the nation of India, but rather for international recognition and numbers.

It seems that although the prevalent ethos and the legislation (including the Right to Education Act of 2008) in India nearly guarantees that every Indian student will start schooling, it does not yet have the abilities to ensure that the environment to actually attain an education exists.

The effect of this problem is indeed exacerbated where women are concerned, as effective literacy rates in 2011 was at about 82.14% for men, versus 65.46% for women. So why do girls, in particular, leave school?

SELF CHECK EXERCISE-1

Q.1 -----Provide a better overall quality of life.

Q.2 Girls are kept from schools because of shortage of teachers. (T/F)

7.4 Inequalities and Resistances

There is not obviously any single good answer, nor is there conclusive data to show us which factors relatively impact girls the most. However, we can identify a range of possibilities that could suggest specific reasons for the marginalization of girls from the schooling system.

1. Expectations of Domesticity

To start with, girls are expected to contribute to the household far younger than boys are – the implicit understanding being that a girl is being trained for a role as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law, whereas boys are being trained for an occupation. Girls get married younger than boys do – a Harvard School of Public Health survey conducted studies in Gujarat looking into rates of child marriage, and found that of girls aged 14-17, 37% were engaged and 12% married. On the other hand, for boys in the same age range, only 27% were engaged and 3% married. The same study found strong correlation between marital status and school attendance rates (in which married children were over twice as likely to not attend school as single children), but also marriage proved to be worse for the educational prospects of girls than boys.

Besides, families often think that the cost of education, both monetary and psychological is wasted on a girl because of her decreased earning potential and this selfsame expectation of domesticity. The economic benefit thereof is not immediately apparent to most families. Overall, the expectation of the girl child's participation in family life seems to be a hindrance in her participation in schooling.

2. Safety

Safety of girls travelling alone is a major concern for Indians – the prevalent discourse surrounding recent events has brought to the forefront a longstanding problem. We also see a fear that educating girls causes excessive independence, and this is seemingly manifested in the attitude that parents take to a girl's education.

In an article, the Guardian told the story of a girl in Delhi who was being taunted by boys on the way to school. She was afraid to tell her parents, for she thought that they would prevent her from attending school if she did. She was right – her family was, in the words of the author, 'worried about the effect on their "honor" if she was sexually assaulted.' These stories are not isolated; rather, this is an endemic and very gendered problem in economically disadvantaged India, be it rural or urban.

3. Infrastructure Barriers

The Right to Education bill has set forth some norms and standards in this regard – it codifies expectations and requirements of norms and standards relating inter alia to pupil-teacher ratios buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours. Therefore, we do see legislators are at the very least, considering this area of concern further. It is also one of the easier aspects to tackle, as it falls within the purview of Education Departments in the Centre and in States. However, it is commonly perceived that girls suffer for various reasons from the lack of infrastructure much worse than boys do—for instance, as of 2012 40% of all government schools lacked a functioning common toilet, and another 40% lacked a separate toilet for girls. This in fact creates even more reluctance to allow for girls to be educated.

Although including girls in the scheme of Indian universalized education, these causes seems to make one thing clear – the causes are ingrained in systems that are larger than education. While temporary solutions are rampant and popular, it will take attention on the long-term scale to ensure that girls across India are able to freely, safely, and consistently attend school and access an education.

The Solution

All of these contribute to the issue of unequal access to education for girls along with many more issues. These four issues have many underlying issues that contribute to the overall problem. And to solve this issue we can look to three conclusions: NGOs and nonprofits, and the government's response.

First, NGOs and nonprofits can offer the most helpful solution to this problem because of grassroots movements across rural India. Many of the past efforts have come from reviewing previous reports. NGOs and nonprofits work at a local scale where a

difference can be made, whereas the government has worked on a larger scale with less success.

Second, the government's response can help the whole process of providing primary schools for girls. The Indian government has recognized the problem has been slow to act on the issue. As mentioned earlier, education is not a priority for the government right now; rather the government is focused on the economy. Without girls being involved in the future economy, the government is taking a risk and putting the issue off for another generation.

EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:

Education systems vary in administration, curriculum and personnel, but all have an influence on the students that they serve. As women have gained rights, formal education has become a symbol of progress and a step toward gender equity. In order for true gender equity to exist, a holistic approach needs to be taken. The discussion of girl power and women's education as solutions for eliminating violence against women and economic dependence on men can sometimes take dominance and result in the suppression of understanding how context, history and other factors affect women (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). For example, when past secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, referenced the tragedies of Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan and the girls kidnapping in Chibok, Nigeria as comparable, using girls' education as the focus, history and context were ignored. What led to the shooting of Malala was reduced to being solely about her educating herself as a girl. United States interference, poverty, and government corruption and instability were not addressed

Current policies:

Before and after Independence, India has been taking active steps towards women's status and education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, has been a path breaking step towards the growth of education, especially for females. According to this act, elementary education is a fundamental right for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The government has undertaken to provide this education free of cost and make it compulsory for those in that age group. This undertaking is more widely known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Since then, the SSA has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of Indian education as a whole, including schemes to help foster the growth of female education.

The major schemes are the following:

- **Mahila Samakhyas Programme:** This programme was launched in 1988 as a result of the New Education Policy (1968). It was created for the empowerment of women from rural areas especially socially and economically marginalized groups. When the SSA was formed, it initially set up a committee to look into this programme, how it was working and recommend new changes that could be made.

- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV):** This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where literacy level for females is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) females.
- **National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL):** This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the "hardest to reach girls". This scheme has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, "model schools" have been set up to provide better opportunities to girls.
- One notable success came in 2013, when the first two girls ever scored in the top 10 ranks of the entrance exam to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Sibbala Leena Madhuri ranked eighth, and Aditi Laddha ranked sixth.
- In addition, the status and literacy rates between West Bengal and Mizoram were found to be profound; a study compared the two states as they took on politically different approaches to helping empower women (Ghosh, Chakravarti, & Mansi, 2015). In West Bengal, literacy rates were found to be low even after fulfilling the 73rd amendment from 1992. The amendment established affirmative action by allotting 33% of seats at panchayats, or local self-governments, to women. Mizoram chose not to partake in the 73rd Amendment but has seen greater literacy rates, it is second highest in the country, and also has a better sex ratio. It was thus found that affirmative action's steps alone were not enough. Women also need to be given the opportunity to develop through formal education to be empowered to serve and profit from holding these public leadership roles.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q.1 What does 'Gender Mainstreaming' involve?

- A) Promoting gender-specific roles in education
- B) Evaluating and addressing the implications of policies for all genders
- C) Focusing only on women's issues in policy development
- D) Ignoring gender differences in policy making

Q.2 What does the term 'Inclusive Education' refer to?

- A) Education that only focuses on academic achievements
- B) Education that provides access to all learners, regardless of their background
- C) Education that separates students based on their abilities
- D) Education designed exclusively for gifted students

7.5 Access, Retention and Exclusion

Access, retention, and exclusion in schooling of girls are critical issues that highlight disparities and challenges in educational opportunities based on gender. Here's an exploration of these concepts:

Access:

Barriers to Entry: Access to education for girls can be hindered by various barriers such as cultural norms, economic constraints, geographic location (distance to schools), lack of infrastructure (safe transportation and sanitation facilities), and early marriage or pregnancy.

Government Policies: Efforts to improve access include policies aimed at reducing financial barriers (such as school fees), providing scholarships, building schools closer to communities, and addressing cultural norms through awareness and advocacy.

Retention:

Factors Affecting Dropout Rates: Girls often face challenges that lead to higher dropout rates compared to boys. These include household responsibilities (such as caregiving and domestic chores), societal expectations regarding gender roles, lack of sanitation facilities (especially during menstruation), and inadequate support for continuing education beyond primary levels.

Interventions: Retention strategies include mentorship programs, providing financial incentives for families to keep girls in school, creating safe and supportive learning environments, and implementing comprehensive sexuality education to address early pregnancies.

Exclusion:

Forms of Exclusion: Exclusion can occur through systemic discrimination, cultural biases, and policies that limit girls' educational opportunities. This includes exclusion from certain subjects or career paths perceived as 'male-dominated,' unequal distribution of resources and educational facilities, and gender-based violence in and around schools.

Addressing Systemic Bias: Efforts to combat exclusion involve promoting gender-sensitive curricula, training teachers on gender equality and inclusive teaching practices, advocating for inclusive policies and legislation, and empowering girls through leadership and advocacy programs.

Global Efforts and Progress:

International Commitments: Globally, initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality), aim to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, with a focus on eliminating gender disparities.

Community Engagement: Community involvement is crucial in overcoming barriers to girls' education, fostering partnerships between governments, NGOs, local communities, and international organizations to create sustainable solutions and promote gender equality in education.

Future Directions:

Empowerment and Advocacy: Empowering girls through education not only enhances their individual opportunities but also contributes to broader societal benefits, including economic growth, improved health outcomes, and reduced poverty.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs are essential to identify gaps, measure progress, and ensure that interventions effectively address the needs of girls and promote their full participation in education and beyond.

In conclusion, addressing access, retention, and exclusion in schooling for girls requires multifaceted approaches that encompass policy reforms, community engagement, and empowerment initiatives. By prioritizing gender equality in education and ensuring inclusive practices, societies can unlock the full potential of girls and achieve sustainable development goals.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q.1 Which of the following is a common barrier to access to education for girls?

- A) Cultural norms
- B) Physical fitness
- C) Social media
- D) Music preferences

Q.2 In many contexts, girls face challenges in _____ to education due to cultural norms, lack of _____, and _____ responsibilities.

7.6 Infrastructure and Hidden Curriculum

The role of infrastructure and hidden curriculum in schooling can significantly impact girls' educational experiences and outcomes. Here's an exploration of these concepts:

Infrastructure:

Physical Facilities:

School Proximity: Access to schools within a reasonable distance is crucial for girls' attendance, as long travel distances can pose safety risks and logistical challenges, especially in areas with limited transportation.

Sanitation Facilities: Adequate sanitation facilities, including separate and safe toilets for girls, are essential to ensure their comfort and dignity, particularly during menstruation.

Classroom Environment: Well-equipped classrooms with proper lighting, ventilation, and resources (such as books, desks, and technology) create conducive learning environments that benefit all students, including girls.

Safety and Security:

Safe Transportation: Reliable and safe transportation options to and from school are critical, especially in rural or underserved areas where walking long distances may be unsafe for girls.

Security Measures: Schools should implement security measures to protect students from gender-based violence, harassment, and other safety concerns both within school premises and during travel.

Community Infrastructure:

Community Support: Collaboration with local communities to improve infrastructure and ensure schools are accessible and safe for girls is essential. This may include building partnerships for infrastructure development and maintenance.

Hidden Curriculum:**Gendered Expectations and Roles:**

Implicit Messages: The hidden curriculum consists of implicit messages conveyed through school policies, practices, and interactions that reinforce societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles.

Division of Labor: Schools may inadvertently reinforce traditional gender roles by assigning certain tasks or responsibilities based on gender, influencing girls' perceptions of their capabilities and future aspirations.

Representation in Curriculum:

Role Models: The lack of female representation in leadership positions, historical narratives, and STEM fields within the curriculum can shape girls' perceptions of what is achievable for them academically and professionally.

Subject Choices: The hidden curriculum may steer girls towards or away from certain subjects or career paths based on perceived gender suitability, limiting their exposure to diverse educational and career opportunities.

Teacher Expectations and Bias:

Bias in Assessment: Teachers' expectations and biases can impact girls' academic performance and self-esteem. Research shows that gender bias in grading and feedback can affect girls' confidence and educational outcomes.

Classroom Dynamics: The organization of classrooms, seating arrangements, and group activities may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about girls' abilities and interests.

Inclusive Practices:

Gender-Sensitive Teaching: Educators can promote gender equity by adopting inclusive teaching practices that challenge stereotypes, encourage critical thinking about gender roles, and provide diverse role models and narratives.

Policy and Advocacy: Advocacy efforts for gender-sensitive policies and inclusive curriculum reforms can help address systemic biases and promote equitable educational experiences for girls.

In conclusion, addressing the roles of infrastructure and hidden curriculum in schooling is essential for creating inclusive and supportive environments that enhance girls' access to education, promote their academic success, and empower them to achieve their full potential. Efforts should focus on improving physical facilities, ensuring safety and security, challenging gender stereotypes embedded in the curriculum, and fostering inclusive educational practices that benefit all students, regardless of gender.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Q.1 Which aspect of infrastructure is critical for enhancing girls' access to education?

- A) Access to social media
- B) Proximity to schools
- C) Availability of video games
- D) Number of shopping malls

Q.2 The _____ curriculum in schools includes implicit messages that reinforce _____ norms and expectations regarding gender roles.

7.7 Summary

In India, there are more than 12 million 10-year-old girls, far more than in any other country. Based on secondary school-progression data, nearly 900,000 - about 9 per cent - of these 12 million girls, while already having access to basic education, are at risk of not continuing on to secondary school," the report said. According to estimates, as much as USD 21 billion a year dividend for developing countries can be unlocked if all 10-year-old girls complete secondary education. UNFPA warns that forced marriage, child labour, female genital mutilation and other practices undermining girls' health and rights threaten the world's ambitious development agenda.

It noted that of the 125 million 10-year-olds today, 60 million are girls who are systematically disadvantaged at the global level as they move through adolescence into adulthood. Girls are less likely than boys to complete formal schooling at the secondary and university levels, are more likely to be in poorer physical and mental health, and will find it harder to get paid jobs.

The past two decades have also seen extremely rapid changes in the proportions of children attending school; dramatic declines in maternal, neonatal, and infant deaths; and a slow transition to greater gender equality. If these improvements continue and we collectively invest in developing this cohort in ways that allow them to maximise their potential, 10-year-olds may well prove pivotal to transforming the world for the better.

7.8 GLOSSARY

Empowerment: The process of increasing individuals' or groups' control over their lives, decisions, and resources, leading to greater autonomy and self-efficacy.

Gender Equality: The state in which individuals have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of their gender, aiming to eliminate discrimination and disparities.

7.9 Answers to Self-Check Exercises

Exercise-1

Answer1: **Education**

Answer 2: False

Exercise-2

Answer1: B) Evaluating and addressing the implications of policies for all genders

Answer2: B) Education that provides access to all learners, regardless of their background

Exercise-3

Answer1: A) Cultural norms

Answer2: **accessing, resources, and household**

Exercise-4

Answer1: B) Proximity to schools

Answer2: **hidden and societal**

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7.11 Terminal Questions

1. Explain the meaning of inequality and resistances.
2. Describe the concept of schooling of girls. Explain schooling of girls are important for the better society
3. What are the measure reasons for The Marginalization of Girls From the Schooling System?

UNIT-VIII: ROLE OF EDUCATION IN DEALING WITH SOCIAL ISSUES

Structure

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Learning Outcomes
- 8.3 Domestic Violence against Women
Self- check Exercise-1
- 8.4 Female Foeticide and Infanticide
Self -check Exercise-2
- 8.5 The Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act; 2005
Self- check Exercise-3
- 8.6 Summary
- 8.7 Glossary
- 8.8 Answer to self -check Exercises
- 8.9 References / Suggested Readings
- 8.10 Terminal Questions

8.1 Introduction

The Indian society has evolved through the ages and advancements have taken place in diverse fields. You have also read about social reforms in the Indian society. However, in every society there are socio-cultural issues that need to be addressed and tackled. Security of people, particularly of the vulnerable sections, such as women, children and the elderly people is a major concern in the contemporary Indian society. In this lesson, we will read about the major issues that need our immediate attention, if we have to preserve our social and cultural values. Some of the important socio-cultural issues that need to be addressed today are dowry, female foeticide and infanticide, Domestic violence etc. The issues discussed here are not comprehensive. There are many other issues faced by the nation in general and regions and communities in particular, that all of us should think about.

8.2 Learning Objectives

After going through this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Discuss the various socio-cultural issues in contemporary India.
2. Describe the causes and remedies for domestic violence against women.
3. Find out the reasons/causes of female foeticide and infanticide among Indian society.

8.3 Domestic Violence Against Women

This form of domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. Though women today have proved themselves

in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against them are much larger in number than against men. The possible reasons are many and are diversified over the length and breadth of the country. According to United Nation Population Fund Report, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 per cent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. In India, more than 55 percent of the women suffer from domestic violence, especially in the states of Bihar, U.P., M.P. and other northern states.

The most common causes for women stalking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of it, arguing with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children, going out of home without telling the partner, not cooking properly or on time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in-laws etc. In some cases infertility in females also leads to their assault by the family members. The greed for dowry, desire for a male child and alcoholism of the spouse are major factors of domestic violence against women in rural areas. There have been gruesome reports of young bride being burnt alive or subjected to continuous harassment for not bringing home the amount of demanded dowry. Women in India also admit to hitting or beating because of their suspicion about the husband's sexual involvement with other women. The Tandoor Murder Case of Naina Sahni in New Delhi in the year 1995 is one such dreadful incident of a woman being killed and then burnt in a Tandoor by his husband. This incidence was an outcome of suspicion of extra marital affairs of Naina Sahni which led to marital discord and domestic violence against her.

In urban areas there are many more factors which lead to differences in the beginning and later take the shape of domestic violence. These include – more income of a working woman than her partner, her absence in the house till late night, abusing and neglecting in-laws, being more forward socially etc. Working women are quite often subjected to assaults and coercion sex by employees of the organization. At times, it could be voluntary for a better pay and designation in the office.

Violence against young widows has also been on a rise in India. Most often they are cursed for their husband's death and are deprived of proper food and clothing. They are not allowed or encouraged for remarriage in most of the homes, especially in rural areas. There have been cases of molestation and rape attempts of women by other family members in nuclear families or someone in the neighbourhood. At times, women are even sexually coerced by their partner themselves against their will. They are brutally beaten and tortured for not conceiving a male child. Incidents like, ripping off a woman's womb for killing the female foetus when she disagrees for abortion have also come to light especially in rural areas. Female foeticide and female infanticide continue to be a rising concern.

Also as expressed by Rebecca J. Burns in the following lines, "When I am asked why a woman doesn't leave abuser I say: Women stay because the fear of leaving is greater

than the fear of staying. They will leave when the fear of staying is greater than the fear of leaving.” A common Indian house wife has a tendency to bear the harassment she is subjected to by her husband and the family. One reason could be to prevent the children from undergoing the hardships if she separates from the spouse. Also the traditional and orthodox mindset makes them bear the sufferings without any protest.

Other forms of physical abuse against women include slapping, punching, grabbing, burdening them with drudgery, public humiliation and the neglect of their health problems. Some of the other forms of psychological torment against them could be curtailment of their rights to self-expression and curbing the freedom to associate with the natal family and friends.

Domestic violence against women is a significant health problem in this country and worldwide. A group that has been neglected, however, in discussions of this problem are older women. Although one might assume that domestic violence against older women is included in discussions of elder abuse, that body of literature actually may obscure the problem for several reasons. This article discusses the background of domestic violence against older women in two contexts: long-standing wife abuse and abuse of aging caregivers. Suggestions for assessment and intervention are included.

Consequences Of Violence Against Women:

- Battered women have tendency to remain quiet, agonised and emotionally disturbed after the occurrence of the torment. A psychological set back and trauma because of domestic violence affects women’s productivity in all forms of life. The suicide case of such victimised women is also a deadly consequence and the number of such cases is increasing.
- A working Indian woman may drop out from work place because of the ill-treatment at home or office, she may lose her efficiency in work. Her health may deteriorate if she is not well physically and mentally. Some women leave their home immediately after first few atrocious attacks and try to become self-dependent. Their survival becomes difficult and painful when they have to work hard for earning two meals a day. Many such women come under rescue of women welfare organizations like Women Welfare Association of India (WWAI), Affus Woman Welfare Association (AWWA) and Woman’s Emancipation and Development Trust (WEDT). Some of them who leave their homes are forcefully involved in women trafficking and pornography. This results in acquiring a higher risk of becoming a drug addict and suffering from HIV/AIDS. Some of course do it by their choice.
- One of the severe effects of domestic violence against women is its effect on her children. It is nature’s phenomenon that a child generally has a greater attachment towards the mother for she is the one who gives birth. As long as the violence subjected to the mother is hidden from the child, he/she may behave normally at home. The day when mother’s grief and suffering is revealed, a child may become upset about the happening deeply. Children may not even comprehend the severity of the problem.

They may turn silent, reserved and express solace to the mother. When the violence against women is openly done in front of them since their childhood, it may have a deeper and gruesome impact in their mindset. They get used to such happenings at home, and have a tendency to reciprocate the same in their lives. It's common in especially in rural homes in India which are victimised by the evil of domestic violence.

- In cases of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), violence against women leads them to maintain a distance from their partner. Their sexual life is affected adversely. Many of them file for divorce and seek separation which again affects the life of children. Some continue to be exploited in lack of proper awareness of human rights and laws of the constitution.

The Protection Of Women Against Domestic Violence Act; 2005

This act provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family. The Act is not gender neutral as it is completely beneficial to women only. According to the Act any harm, injury to health, safety, life, limb or well-being or any other act or threatening or coercion, etc. by any adult member of the family, constitutes domestic violence. Any woman who is or has been in a domestic or family relationship, if it is subjected to any act of domestic violence can complain. Aggrieved or affected woman can complain to the concerned Protection Officer, Police Officer, Service Provider or Magistrate. Aggrieved has a right to be informed about the available services and free legal services from the protection officer etc. Shelter home and medical facilities can be provided to aggrieved woman. The proceedings of the complaint can be held in camera. Every aggrieved woman has a right to reside in shared household. The protection order by Magistrate can be given in favour of aggrieved woman. The monetary relief can be given to the aggrieved woman to meet expenses or losses. The appeal can be made to Sessions Court within 30 days from the order of concerned Magistrate. The imprisonment can be made up to 1 year or a fine up to Rs. 29,000 or both for breach of protection order by the opposite party. The Protection Officer can be prosecuted up to 1 year imprisonment or with a fine up to Rs. 20,000 or both can be imposed for failure of his duties.

This Act covers those women who are or have been in a relationship at a point of time and both parties have lived together in a shared household and are related by consanguinity, marriage, or through a relationship in the nature of marriage or adoption. In addition, the relationship with the family members, living together as a joint family is also included. Even those women who are sisters, widows, mothers, single women, or living with the abuse are entitled to legal protection.

This Act has been enacted keeping in view the rights guaranteed under "Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution of India besides the provisions made under sections 304B and 398A of Indian Penal Code Sometimes in the History of judiciary in India and elsewhere the judge interprets the law on many grounds viz., social customs,

relationship of parties, legislative intend etc. For such act of judiciary the law is corrected beforehand of new amendment or new legislation. The good judge who interpret a particular fact and issue with the sorrowing factors. Every Legislative drafting is not correct in full extend. Some drafting leaves the people to raise an eyebrow for comments. Specially the legislation on matrimonial issues requires many aspects of judicial interpretations. The sensitive judges do not forget the cause and effect of matrimonial, issues and its impact on contemporary society.

Remedies for Domestic Violence:

What exactly do we want?

A very important question in wake of domestic violence remedies is that what exactly we are looking for in the process of minimising their occurrences. Is it so that we want to gather more information about such cases for just expressing our concern over this issue with more accuracy, having facts and figures at hand? Or instead of just raising our voices, we want to clean up the mess with sheer force and determination?

Fighting the 'Domestic Violence' Evil

A recent study has concluded that violence against women is the fastest-growing crime in India. According to a latest report prepared by India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a crime has been recorded against women in every three minutes in India. Every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country. Every six hours, a young married woman is found beaten to death, burnt or driven to suicide.

The response to the phenomenon of domestic violence is a typical combination of effort between law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, the courts and corrections/probation agencies. The role of all these has progressed over last few decades, and brought their activities in public view. Domestic violence is now being viewed as a public health problem of epidemic proportion all over the world – and many public, private and governmental agencies are seen making huge efforts to control it in India. There are several organizations all over the world — government and non-government — actively working to fight the problems generated by domestic violence to the human community.

Need for Stringent Laws

In 1983, domestic violence was recognised as a specific criminal offence by the introduction of section 498-A into the Indian Penal Code. This section deals with cruelty by a husband or his family towards a married woman. The main legislative measures at the national level for the children who become a victim of child labor include The Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act -1986 and The Factories Act -1948. The first act was categorical in prohibiting the employment of children below fourteen years of age, and identified 57 processes and 13 occupations which were considered dangerous to the health and lives of children. The factories act again prohibits the employment of children less than fourteen years of age.

The Government of India passed a Domestic Violence Bill, 2001, “To protect the rights of women who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.

An act called Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 [DVA, 2005] also has been passed”. This Act ensures the reporting of cases of domestic violence against women to a ‘Protection Officer’ who then prepares a Domestic Incident Report to the Magistrate “and forward copies thereof to the police officer in charge of the police station within the local limits of jurisdiction.

Unfortunately, at present there is no single law in the Indian Constitution which can strictly deal with all the different forms of ‘Domestic Violence’ as discussed in this essay. There is an urgent need for such a law in the country. In fact, there has also been misuse of section 498-A and DVA, 2005 because of restricted definition of cruelty subjected to married women.

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS):

The role of non-governmental organizations in controlling the domestic violence and curbing its worse consequences is crucial. Sakshi — a violence intervention agency for women and children in Delhi works on cases of sexual assault, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse and domestic abuse and focuses on equality education for judges and implementation of the 1997 Supreme Court’s sexual harassment guidelines. Women’s Rights Initiative — another organization in the same city runs a legal aid cell for cases of domestic abuse and works in collaboration with law enforcers in the area of domestic violence.

These NGOs continue to spread awareness amongst people regarding the legal rights they have in hand for fighting against the atrocities they are subjected to. They are encouraging more and more people to report any case of domestic violence so that proper action may be taken against the culprits.

Police and Health Care

Police plays a major role in tackling the domestic violence cases. They need to be sensitized to treat domestic violence cases as seriously as any other crime. Special training to handle domestic violence cases should be imparted to police force. They should be provided with information regarding support network of judiciary, government agencies/departments. Gender training should be made mandatory in the trainings of the police officers. There should be a separate wing of police dealing with women’s issues, attached to all police stations and should be excluded from any other duty.

Authorities should take steps to recognize Domestic Violence as a public health issue. A crisis support cell needs to be established in all major Government and Private Hospitals with a trained medical social worker for provide appropriate services. Training programmes must be organized for health professionals in order to develop their skills to provide basic support for abused people. Documentation on the prevalence and the health consequences of domestic violence should be undertaken by the concerned

government departments, health care institutions, NGOs and counselling centres. A nodal agency should also be set up for the annual consolidation of the documented work and publish the same for wider publicity among the masses for increasing awareness.

Self- Check Exercise-1

Q.1 Violence against _____ has been on a rise in India.

Q.2 A working Indian Woman may drop out from work place because of the _____

8.4 Female Foeticide and Infanticide

The sex ratio is defined as the number of females per 1000 men. It is a useful indicator to understand women's health and position in a society. India, along with china and few other South Asian countries, has a deficit of females for a long period. The sex ratio in India, according to the Census of 2011, stands at 940, which is a marginal increase from 933 in 2001.

Juvenile (0-6 age group) Sex Ratio:

The sex ratio in the 0-6 age group in India shows a more disturbing situation. It has declined from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. A number of reasons like poverty, illiteracy, culture and preference for male child are held accountable for the continuous decline in this ratio.

In a country like India where most of the population is still steeped in feudal mindsets, the obsession for a son has led to an adverse sex ratio with the situation becoming particularly alarming in some states. A number research studies conducted in different parts of the country reveal that the main causes of juvenile female sex ratio is the practice of female foeticide/infanticide.

Female Foeticide/Infanticide:

The term female foeticide means killing the female foetus in the mother's womb. It is the result of an unholy alliance between the traditional preference for sons and modern medical technology coupled with other factors like the increasing greed of doctors, the rising demand for dowry that makes daughter a financial burden, the ineffective implementation of the Pre-conception and Prenatal Diagnostic Act and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, and most important of all, the lack of serious involvement of civil society in fighting the menace.

Causes of Female Infanticide in India:

In India the basic cause of female infanticide is illiteracy and poverty. I could be over simplifying a much more complicated issue. But illiteracy and poverty form a vicious circle, leading to not only female infanticide but many other crimes in India. People who are uneducated still consider daughters as a burden on their families, they think that they'll have to spend money to raise the girl, pay for their education and ultimately marry

them off without getting anything in return. A boy on the other hand will fend for the family and bring a “return on investment”. So, a boy any day is a safer bet.

Some families do it out of will and some are forced to do this because of financial constraints.

What we as a people need to realize is that a girl can be independent and self-sufficient when empowered with education. Not only will she stand on her feet, she'll happily provide for her family too. Our system is also to be blamed for this considering the fact that our government has not been able to curb dowry system and deaths.

The day parents feel that a daughter is not a liability on them but an asset, that's when female infanticide will end. The cause for female infanticide is poverty as well as or society. Our society has always thought a boy to be the heir of the family. It is usually considered that a son will take care of the family as well as the family business and bring riches to the family.

- Upon marriage, a son makes a daughter-in-law an addition and asset to the family providing additional assistance in household work and brings an economic reward through dowry payments, while daughters get married off and merit an economic penalty through dowry charges.

- A woman is considered a **financial obligation**, as money spent on bringing her up, educating her, marrying her will not be repaid – as she will go to her husband's house after marriage, and the benefits of all that ‘investment’ shall go to his family.

- A boy shall grow up to be the head of the family, and he shall offer a sense of security to his aging parents – take care of them, serve them and take over the responsibility of running the family. He shall also continue the name of the family (whereas, the girl shall take up her husband's last name). A male is considered to be a **producer**, whereas a female is considered to be a **consumer**. All this is mainly due to the patriarchal form of the Indian society. One simple assumption that can be made is that this preference is based on the form of society and families, a couple of decades back. Back then, a male was expected to work and earn, whereas a female was supposed to sit at home, cook, and manage the house and children. This made a male child desirable, as he was, then, the only source of income and respect.

This system was abolished – today, females work nearly as much as men – but the **thinking remained unchanged**.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

yatra naryastu pujoyante ramante tatra devatah.

This is what we think of our women, making them as respectable as gods as gods choose to stay there only, where women are revered. We have a good female-male ratio at national level and in some states, it is quite higher. We have had woman President and Prime Minister and are having woman Governors, Chief Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Judges, Chairmen and what not. The blame is baseless. People are seeking daughters, are educating them like sons, loving and caring for them sometimes

more than their sons. Maybe some stray cases had come to notice somewhere, sometimes, due to poverty, ignorance or superstitions, but it is being blown out of proportions to give a wrong impression of our society and culture.

Measures to Control Female Foeticide:

Government policies coupled with grass root efforts are required to curb the social evil of female foeticide.

To reinforce, the various measures required to fight this social evil are:

- i. More effective implementation of PC and PNDT Act;
- ii. Active monitoring of birth ratios;
- iii. Detailed medical audits of all ultra sound examination carried out by registered clinics including sale-purchase records of ultra sound machines and to make these record public;
- iv. Sustained social campaigns, financial incentives to parents giving birth to a female child, free educational scholarships, reservation for females in educational institutions and jobs; and
- v. Active involvement of community, NGOs and other voluntary organisations and SHGs with support from the government are needed.

Self- Check Exercise-2

Q.1 What is the primary motivation behind female foeticide and infanticide?

- A) Cultural celebration
- B) Gender preference
- C) Educational advancement
- D) Economic prosperity

Q.2 Which of the following is a consequence of female foeticide and infanticide?

- A) Gender equality
- B) Population growth
- C) Decreased healthcare costs
- D) Increased maternal mortality

Q.3 In which regions or countries is female foeticide and infanticide most prevalent?

- A) Western Europe
- B) North America
- C) South Asia
- D) Australia

Q.4 What is one ethical concern associated with prenatal sex determination?

- A) Gender diversity
- B) Reproductive rights
- C) Family planning
- D) Medical advancements

8.5 Dowry System in India:

In the early days dowry was an institution in which gifts and presents were given to a girl at the time of her marriage when she was required to leave her parents' home and join her husband's household. But, in course of time, it became a crude institution resulting in female infanticide, suicide, bride-burning and other indignities and cruelties.

The problem of dowry has become a serious social evil among the upper castes and middle classes both in towns and villages. The rules of marriage, namely, caste endogamy and clan exogamy, and anuloma (hypergamy) and pratiloma (hypogamy), have been misinterpreted and misused for maintaining the dowry system. These rules restrict the choice of mate selection, as marriage takes place within one's caste and outside one's clan.

Further, a girl needs to be married to a boy who belongs to a family with a status higher than that of her family. This practice of marriage alliance is known as hypergamy or anuloma. When a girl is married to a boy whose family status is lower than that of the girl's, it is known as hypogamy or pratiloma. Thus, anuloma has restricted choice and created a desire to give away a girl through marriage to a superior family.

A boy becomes a more valued object than a girl. The net result, therefore, is dowry: the giving of material goods and cash to the parents of the boy at the time of fixing the marriage, at the performance of marriage and even afterwards on several other occasions. This practice has become a serious social problem.

Magnitude of the Problem:

In India, and particularly in Delhi and other metropolis, dowry murders and suicides have become a matter of great concern. In Delhi alone, a bride was burnt to death every twelve hours. A total of 162 cases of burning of women were reported in Delhi between 1 April and 30 June 1983. This was an all-time high number of such incidents, and dowry was the most prominent cause of such a phenomenon.

The problem of dowry is experienced by all sections of Indian society, but it has become a chronic evil particularly among the educated middle classes engaged in salaried jobs and trade and commerce. Women's organisations, voluntary associations, the intelligentsia and the media have expressed their serious concern for finding legal and reformatory remedies to curb the menace of this social evil. Incidences of the dowry-related atrocities and crimes have receded recently as a result of the social awakening created by various groups and organisations.

Dowry is not a 'gift', a 'return gift', an 'exchange' or a 'reciprocal gesture'. It is considered more as an expenditure on the marriage of a girl, which parents are required to incur by force. Parents of a boy of marriageable age, who possesses the qualifications that the parents of a girl are looking for, demand a dowry according to what they think is the 'value' of their son. There are no references to dowry (as we know it today) in the Sanskrit texts.

However, there are references to bride-price in the context of the traditional forms of

marriage. There are certainly references to ornaments given to the bride. The Smritis also do not mention dowry. Dowry is a phenomenon which emerged in the medieval period. The Rajput princes, thikanedars and jagirdars gave away gifts to their daughters at the time of marriage with a view to exhibit their prosperity and superior status. In course of time the practice filtered down from the rich Rajputs and other twice-born castes to other sections.

Social Dimensions of Dowry

English education and white-collar jobs have accentuated the problem of dowry. A boy with good education and employment becomes much sought-after match for a girl. If anything has kept some pace with wider social and economic changes in India, it is the increase in dowry in terms of cash and material goods. Whatever new products come to the market, such as motorcycle, car, music system, DVD player, television, refrigerator, household goods, electrical appliances, clothes, ornaments, furniture, etc., have become a part of dowry.

If parents of moderate economic standing cannot meet dowry demands, their daughter remains unmarried; or if they manage to give a dowry, they get into heavy debt. Demands for more dowries after marriage have become a source of conflict between families of the boy and that of the girl. When the demands are not met, brides are harassed, tortured, burnt, or they commit suicide.

Dowry has also become a symbol of prestige for both the dowry-givers and the dowry-takers. It is considered a matter of dignity to give more dowry than one's kinsmen and caste-fellows and others. Parents of a boy boast that their son fetched a very high amount of dowry, including a car, a plot of land or a flat, a video and all other luxury and household goods. Both givers and takers of dowry talk about these things and value them with a feeling of pride.

What is Dowry?

It is not easy to define dowry as it does not refer to cash and material goods alone. It has been defined as a share of a daughter or a sister in parental property, given to her at the time of her marriage. But dowry is not really given as an amount equivalent to a daughter's share vis-a-vis her brothers.

Even if there is no substantial family property to be shared, there is a tendency among people to borrow money to meet the expenses of marriage and dowry. The number of people in the marriage party [barat], the number and quality of meals, presents to the baratis, etc., are all part of the marriage deal along with dowry. Thus, dowry is not simply the giving of cash and material goods.

Another view is that dowry is a gift, a token of love, given to one's daughter or sister at the time of her marriage. Dowry, as a token of love, keeps her attached to the parents' family even after marriage. It has become customary to give dowry. Marriage without dowry has become almost unthinkable. In south India, dowry is called stridhanam.

In north India, it is considered as a gift or dahej. Whatever conception or name is given

to dowry, it is certain that dowry is not the right of a-girl who leaves her parents' house after getting married. But it is also a fact that since a girl joins her husband's house in Hindu patriarchal society, she is given due compensation in the form of dowry. Dowry is a gift, a dan. Even a girl is given as a dan. This is called kanyadan.

There is also an element of reciprocity because parents of the groom are expected to give gifts and presents, including clothes and ornaments to the bride.

However, this is an unequal exchange in two ways:

(1) The parents of a groom spend much less on the gifts compared to what the bride's parents spend on dowry; and

(2) The gifts given to the bride remain with the groom's family as the bride joins her in-law's family permanently, and dowry also becomes the property of groom's family.

Therefore, there is not really an equal exchange or reciprocity in the system. Today, the fact is that parents want to give their daughter to a family of high repute and to a highly educated boy with a lucrative job or who is likely to get a good job.

Dowry is the price for these two attributes. Parents do not think simply in terms of giving gifts at the time of marriage, nor do they think of dowry as their daughter's share in the family property to be given to her at the time of marriage. They try to ensure good future of their daughter, which is entirely dependent upon the qualities of the groom and his parents.

The giving of gifts and help to a daughter was quite a normal activity in ancient India. It was voluntary and not demanded. However, in medieval India, Mughal rulers and Nawabs demanded high dowries. The Rajput kings gave dowries to ensure that their daughters lived comfortably after their marriage. Dowry was demanded rather than voluntarily offered. However, the system was confined to the ruling classes, Rajputs and Brahmanas.

The lower castes had, on the contrary, a system of bride-price. Among the lower castes, a female member was considered an asset for family useful for agricultural labour and other traditional occupations. Hence, the question of dowry did not arise.

In the wake of sanskritisation, the lower castes imitated the practice of dowry. Even, the poor borrowed money to give dowry. The poor Rajputs in Rajasthan started killing newly born female children due to fear of dowry. Bengal also had this evil of dowry in a pronounced form because of the institution of hypergamy.

Social Structure, Social Change and Dowry:

The nationalist leaders and social reformers condemned the institution of dowry during the freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi writes: "Any young man who makes dowry a condition for marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood. Young men who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold should be excommunicated from society." However, these efforts did not minimise the evil to any noticeable extent.

The growth of education, salaried employment, migration to cities and towns, and

scientific and industrial advancements not only increased the incidence of dowry but also changed its dimension and magnitude. Educated boys, with administrative and professional jobs, became the most prized prospective husbands.

Those who worked in towns and cities were preferred as life was more comfortable in cities than villages. Motorbike, car, music system, television, DVD player, refrigerator, furniture, electrical appliances and household equipment's have become a part of the dowry package among the upper sections of society, in addition to cloths, ornaments and cash.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 provides girls with the legal right to a share in the parental property, but rarely do girls demand their share nor are they given. The law is redundant. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 has utterly failed to check the growing menace of dowry.

The girl does not make a claim for her share in parental property, but the parents spend a lot on her marriage. The Act of 1961 prohibits dowry. Despite this, the practice of dowry is widespread. It has even spread to the communities, castes and regions which were hitherto unaffected.

Dowry varies from caste to caste and from region to region. It varies depending upon urban, rural, caste and family background. Dowry is a socio-structural phenomenon. Variations in social structure, in terms of caste, class, ethnicity, religion, region and culture, result in variations of the system of dowry.

There is, however, a clear difference between the bride-givers and the bride-takers because of the rules of marriage practised in most parts of India. The communities in which bride-price exists or where patriliney is weak, dowry have not become a social problem.

One who is a bride-giver remains socially inferior to the bride-taker throughout his life, and, in fact, for several generations to come. It is not that the bride-giver gives dowry only once at the time of marriage, but it is a continuous process. The bride receives gifts and presents throughout her life. The quality and amount of these gifts and presents depend upon the status and economic position of the bride-giving family.

Dowry is generally given to the parents of the groom, but in recent years, particularly in the urban areas, dowry is claimed as a 'right' by the couples, particularly in the form of those items which are specifically meant for them and their newly established households. Some parents give dowry in the name of their daughters, fearing its use by the parents of the groom. Several cases of tension and disharmony have come up because of such steps by the bride-givers.

The problem of dowry is not acute in matrilineal societies and in the societies which are guided by the prescription of cross-cousin marriages. Both are found in south India, and therefore, the problem of dowry is less acute there compared to north India. The Nayars, Tiyyars and the Nangudi Vellalars are traditionally matrilineal societies in south India. The Nayars of Kerala pay neither bride-price nor give dowry. The Nayars are a

matrilineal and matrilineal society, with an institution of visiting husbands. The visiting husband occasionally offers nominal gifts, as a token of his love and affection.

The Tiyyars have the system of paternal cross-cousin marriage, that is, the girl is married to her father's sister's son. The bride-taker gives some gifts to the bride. In case the girl is married in violation of this rule, the bride's family is required to pay a fine. The Nangudi Vellars also have the same pattern of marriage as that of the Tiyyars. A girl is given a patch of land as a gift at the time of her marriage.

These are not really variations of dowry. Matrilineal and rules of marriage in south India have not allowed asymmetrical relations to develop between the bride-givers and the bride-takers, as we notice in north India. However, dowry in its modern form has started appearing in south India also. Matrilineal and matrilineal system of family has eroded in modern times. Patrilineal is being accepted as a natural way of living. Dowry is also becoming a fact of life in the erstwhile matrilineal societies.

In north India, bride-takers are not only superior in status, but practically dictate terms to the bride-givers. They dictate the items to be given in the dowry and the arrangements to be made at the time of marriage. One often hears in north India: "What can we do, we are on the side of the bride (ladkiwalas)." "If a girl is born, you accept your defeat in this world." If anything goes wrong or is against the desire of the groom's parents, it becomes a life-long curse for the bride and her parents. It becomes the cause of her torture by in-laws and, sometimes, even by her husband.

Dowry, therefore, is not considered today as a dan [gift] but a unwritten haq (right) of a boy and his parents. There are instances of a groom's parents giving accounts of what they have spent on the education and upbringing of their son, and on other things, including the marriage. All this is included in the amount of dowry.

Some have even stated that the bride's parents are required to spend a certain amount of money (often a couple of lakhs), and how this is spent would be left to them. Dowry does not include cash and material goods for the bridegroom and groom's parents alone, but it also includes gifts and cash for all the primary kinsmen and some other secondary and- remote relatives.

The groom's father exhibits the dowry to his kinsmen and fellow-beings with a sense of pride, expressing his superiority and high status. In north India, the girl's parents would not accept water and food at their son-in-law's residence as it would be considered a sin, even after giving an enormous dowry. However, today, enlightened girls and boys insist upon taking water and meals by the parents of girls at their residences.

WHY DOWRY?

It is difficult to suggest a set of factors responsible for the custom of dowry, but we can think of a tentative list. These include rules of marriage (including hypergamy), caste hierarchy, patriarchy, primogeniture, low status of women, modern education and employment, a false sense of prestige, and economic prosperity of some people. Since dowry has become a complex phenomenon and a social problem, it needs quick and far

reaching remedial measures.

Only legislation would not be sufficient. Legislation has several lacunae, and it is not easy to overcome them. Some voluntary agencies have started movements against the institution of dowry. These agencies have organised demonstrations against the incidents of dowry homicides, suicides, torture and harassment. Social boycott has also been done in some cases.

What we need today is a crusade against this evil, which has, intact, ruined several families and has been destroyed lives of thousands of women year after year. There is a need to chalk out a programme having both curative and preventive measures and long-term and short-term devices. The curative and long-term measures would include inculcation of a new ideology and a value system which guarantees a place of honour to women and their parents.

Young men of marriageable age do not become marketable commodities sold by their parents to the parents of brides in return for dowry. Egalitarian values are the only substitute for caste-based hypergamous marriages. Inter-caste marriages should be encouraged. Arranged marriages with demands of dowry must go.

The preventive and short-term devices would include immediate action when incidents of dowry deaths, harassment and humiliation occur. The victims of dowry should be provided legal and social protection. Media – both print and electronic – should highlight such incidents with all seriousness to curb the menace in future.

Street corner plays should depict such incidents as serious matters of life and not as a source of entertainment. Political leaders, government officials, businessmen and others must not be allowed either to take or give dowry in any form, not even in the form of gifts and presents.

It has become a vicious evil. A man who gives dowry to his daughter plans to take more dowry for his son. If such a thing continues, there will be no end to this social evil. Hence, the measures suggested above are the only way out to reduce the magnitude of the problem.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q.1 The dowry system is a cultural practice where the bride's family provides _____ and _____ to the groom's family during marriage.

Q.2 What is one consequence of the dowry system?

- A) Gender equality
- B) Financial burden on bride's family
- C) Educational opportunities
- D) Cultural celebration

Q.3 Which of the following is a contributing factor to the persistence of the dowry system?

- A) Legal prohibitions
- B) Gender equality laws
- C) Cultural beliefs
- D) Economic prosperity

Q.4 The dowry system is often associated with _____ and _____ of daughters, as families strive to meet cultural expectations.

Q.5 The dowry system is legally accepted and regulated in many countries. (T/F)

8.6 Summary

Having looked at a sensitive topic of “Domestic Violence in India”, we can sense the importance of discussion of such a topic. The varying causes which can spark the violence within the four walls of homes need to be analysed carefully and a wise study of the factors causing the violence may prevent a family to suffer from the menace of domestic violence. The domestic violence may have a far wider and deeper impact in real life than what has been covered in this essay. What is required is to see closely the association of the factors provoking a particular form of domestic violence. If these factors can be controlled then more than one form of violence can be prevented from harming an individual or our society and India would be a much better place to live in.

8.7 Glossary

Domestic Violence: Any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse directed at an individual within a household, typically involving intimate partners or family members.

Female Foeticide: The practice of aborting a fetus because it is female, often due to cultural preferences for male children.

8.8 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

Exercise-1

Answer 1: Women

Answer 2: Violence

Exercise-2

Answer1: B) Gender preference

Answer2: D) Increased maternal mortality

Answer3: C) South Asia

Answer4: B) Reproductive rights

Exercise-3

Answer1: **money, gifts, and property**

Answer2: B) Financial burden on bride's family

Answer3: C) Cultural beliefs

Answer4: **financial stress** and **devaluation** **Explanation:**

Answer5: False

8.9 References / Suggested Readings

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8.10 Terminal Questions:

- Q.1 What is the role of education to stop the female foeticides and dowry?
- Q.2 What are different Social Issues against women? Explain the consequences of domestic violence.
- Q.3 Relate Education and Women's Empowerment