
UNIT 1 WOMEN'S PLACE AND ROLE (DEMOGRAPHIC AND FIRST TEACHER)

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The basic tenets of every civilisation and religion accord men and women 'a place of equality to enjoy the nature and to preserve the order of the nature'. In Indian civilisation and culture, women enjoyed equal rights in religious and cultural ceremonies including non-household chores and vocations. However, socio economic and political contexts and situations have always provided maneuverability to males to create a special place for masculine gender and establish its dominance over its counterpart- the feminine gender. The women's issues became most debated in the societal reforms over time and regions. Throughout the history, gender has been constructed and reconstructed through reform movements, moral codes, normative values, education and ethics to meet social aspirations and compulsions of time. The making of gender has remained a dynamic construct as the meaning attached to the social roles assigned to men and women kept on changing from society to society and across time. But the societies have always come up with *producing* and changing gender differences to favour male over female through various social process: socialisation, the active social institutions and interaction among people. The man-woman dynamics is in every vision of civilisation too. Their role, relationship, obligations, duties and place in society has been discussed and debated since ages. Various theories and viewpoints have been put forward throughout the civilisation on this issue. This Unit

deals with some of the major propositions as to why and how the dichotomy of gender has shaped the male-female discourse.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- The role of women in society in general
- Various strands of thought and viewpoints regarding the status of women
- The extent of gender discrimination within a country and among the countries.

1.2 WOMEN IN SOCIETY

1.2.1 Ancient Cultural Perspective

In Indian ethos God has been conceptualised as Godmother. Developed as cult of Shaktism, the concept can be traced back to Vedas and Purans. This conception of God as divine mother eugolises and elevates the status of woman in society. Sankar is regarded as one of the greatest exponent of Vedic and Pauranik wisdom. The principle of Advait propagated by him upholds the reality of Brahman alone and believes in the identity of Atman and Brahman. He and his disciples have developed vedanta to be emulated as a way of life.



What is of interest to us is the unity of existence which brooks no dichotomy. According to Swami Shivanand, 'one soul resides in all. There is one humanity, one brotherhood. None is high (superior) and no one is low (inferior), all are equal'. This gives us a clue as to male and female being equal in their independent role in society. The Swami exhorts us to break the man-made barriers (male-female dichotomy and inequality) to realise peace in the world. Thus in practical vedant, distinctions made on ground of gender or sex are not justified. According to Swami Vivekananda, the downfall of India in great measure was due to neglect and negligence of women. In the mid 19th Century, India saw women- the mother power shackled and degenerated to mere child producing machine. Thus "a bird (society) that flies with one wing (male power) crashes down on the ground", observed Swami Jitatmanand. He further goes on to say that India has been no exception to this. We may thus conclude that Indian cultural mooring, as embedded in vedantic tradition, allows equal role to man and woman in the society *relatively true of male dominating viewpoint*.

The position of women in western theology was, however, different. Eve is depicted as

made from the supernumerary bone of Adam. Thus humanity is male and male defines woman not as 'She' but as relative to himself. She is not regarded as autonomous being and hence prejudicial outlook towards her downgrades her in relation to man. This position was further strengthened by Aristotle remarking 'a female is a female by virtue of certain lack of qualities'. We should regard the female nature as afflicted with natural deficiencies. She was also termed as 'imperfect man'.

Compared to this, in Islam men and women are equal in the eyes of God and both have equal rights. In fact, it propounded a higher status for women than contemporary status in some respects. In marriage their rights were restricted, yet their economic condition was safeguarded through the 'Meher'. The marriage ritual was not sacrament, women could inherit but not in equal measure compared to men. However, the women enjoyed relatively greater freedom in higher strata of Muslim society. We thus find that women in India were subjected to patriarchal rule, as elsewhere in the world, received the position of respect through marriage and motherhood -this was to be their strength as also their nemesis whenever cataclysmic political changes occurred. In times of uncertainty, they regressed and during stability they progressed. One thing, however, never changed for them that is the lack of possession of political and economic power as men always remained at the commanding heights of the economy as well as the polity (Seth, 2001).

1.2.2 Existentialist Perspective

No doubt there are biological differences among man and woman, the social conditioning accentuates these differences. It is these views that led Simon de Beauvoir to produce "Second Sex" (1949), a critique of woman in society based on concepts of *existentialism*-the philosophy of existence. She rejects the Freudian explanation of woman's oppression as well as Marxist explanation of woman exploitation based on capitalist markets. She looked at the woman oppression in the continuing patriarchal institutions and myths. Beauvoir criticised the prevalent essential qualities of sacrifice and narcissism provided and nurtured by these myths. These were most detrimental to woman's identity. These explained the existence of woman and her behaviour is a male conditioned and nurtured order. Man thus deprived woman of its subjectivity. According to her, the change in attitude towards woman in the 19th Century was welcome but it was still conditioned by the age old attitude and behaviour created and nurtured by man. *They (women) have gained only what men are willing to grant. They have taken nothing, they (women) have only received.* Explaining the inability of woman to improve their lot, Dorothy Parker observed, 'they (women) have no past, no history, no religion of their own and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as the other exploited class like proletariat. They live dispersed among the males...through relations and (in the) society developed by males'.

1.2.3 Gandhian Perspective

Gandhi's views place man-woman discourse much closer to our times. Gandhi is a multifaceted thinker and has written forcefully on socio-economic, political, religion and ethical issues and concerns. Gandhi's view on women – their place in society and their identity- is greatly influenced by his theistic and moralistic approach. He observed, "of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is as degrading, so shocking or shameful as his abuse of the better half of humanity". He observed, "to me women is not the weaker sex, she is nobler of the two, for even today she is the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge. He exhorts women to follow the

path of self-help and self-sufficiency to acquire a *subjectivity* of their own, independent of the creation of man. He believed women can make a rightful place in society by their own efforts based on principle of Satyagraha. He does not want woman to consider herself as the object of lust for man, to adore herself even for her man, for then she will succumb to the order created by man and will become an object instead of subject. Gandhi treats man and woman as one, their problems are in one essence and they live the same life. Thus Gandhi wanted woman to be active agents and not passive and he emphasised the need of education for woman for gaining their rightful place in society.

1.2.4 Marxian Perspective

After the advent and spread of Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, industrial growth and employment far exceeded the traditional agriculture and commerce. The centre of economic power also shifted from traditional classes to captains of industry and finance. Expansion of productive power also required women labour participation in productive endeavour. Although woman labour force participation increased, they were given left handed deal in wages, job responsibility and freedom in decision making as compared to man. While Marx and his colleagues and followers developed a critique of capitalist development as a general strategy of social change based on primacy of economic factors and forces, their argument also rationalises the secondary and subservient role of women in the scheme of production and their practices and status in society.

Marxian argument conceives of class in society based on how and who owns property and means of production. Thus we have those who 'own' and those who do 'not own' i.e., proletariat. In the same way man-woman relation is also looked upon. Socially constructed and nurtured institutions allow man to possess property by virtue of institutions of ownership and push women out of ownership due to their secondary status.

Engel observed, "the savage, the warrior and hunter had been content to occupy second place in the household and women enjoyed the supremacy. It is easy to see that in this stage of social evolution, production was for consumption and women wielded the public authority." But as concept of private property and accumulation strengthened, the production became the object of surplus creation and exchange, a new economic relation based on exchange in market was developed. This allowed men to push women out of domain of public authority and the economic power in decision-making passed into the hands of men. With growing development of property and division of labour, the supremacy of women was eclipsed and patriarchal form of society came into existence. According to Engel, the administration of household lost its public character. It now became a private service. The wife became the first domestic servant in the family. He became the bourgeoisie and the wife represented the proletariat. Therefore, it can be seen that while vast majority of women have been economically productive, the differing forms of power held by women has depended upon the production relations in various stages of development. As women have been deprived of private property their fate has been no different than that of unorganised labour.

As markets became dominant and started influencing the character of State, the gender differences hardened against women. They lost their bargaining power. Perpetuation of this inequity got further strengthened in modern times with collapse of Soviet Union and the end of Cold War. The diminishing of the command economy and socialist institutions, expansion of international capital and technological revolution, particularly in communication has unleashed a strong wave of globalisation.

The leftists reject the view that globalisation has taken long strides to redeem women from male domination by opening up of new vistas of employment, decision-making and sharing power. They call globalisation a new form of patriarchal hegemony, wherein a woman has been reduced to a commodity- an object to sell and promote new ideas for larger profits. Even a girl child is treated the same way to promote social acceptance of a product for larger profit. It cannot be denied that fruits of globalisation have been asymmetrical to women in recent times of economic adversity. Thus women have more job loss, more forced holidays, wage cuts and experienced harsher working condition than men, not only in West but also in China and India.

1.2.5 Feminist Ethics

Understanding the suitability of gender situation and relation as it obtains in the society is generally called feminist ethics. Feminist movement in the 20th Century has called to do away with the male domination of a patriarchal culture. Feminists call upon to end the sexual oppression and injustice as a moral imperative. To them, many facts of human life such as care, trust, friendship, mothering, nursing and emotions in relation to women flow from the male dominated order in society and are treated as constraints on independent feminine existence. Feminist do not accept the conduct based on such traits. They call to correct these forms of male bias. These structures reduce females as objects and wipe out their subjectivity- the conditions to live independent of male dominated values.

While feminist are not united as to how the correction in male-female relation be carried out, they are unanimous to reject the superiority of male over female. They argue that woman is capable of taking a subjective view point, of making moral judgment and exercising will and controlling desire. Women ought to make decisions about conception, birth, abortion, mothering, nursing etc away from the influence of male shadow and conditioning.

Feminist critique is about the very existence of social system by which male and female are assigned to form distinct classes. Man describes himself and treats the woman as 'other'. This allows men to dominate over women and condition their behaviour. Therefore, according to feminism, all moral theory will have to be transformed to take into account experience of woman, *because history of ethics has not been gender neutral*. We shall illustrate this by giving a few examples.

Feminists argue that the split between reason and emotion is the most familiar of philosophical conception created to the detriment of women. A society defined by male associates' reason with male endeavour and emotion with female and as a weakness. Maleness is active, determinate, the defining entity, femaleness is passive, indeterminate and inferior. To feminists the very conception of woman is loaded against her and ethics has not been *unbiased*.

Feminist argue that the dichotomy of public/private created by man is also to the detriment of female person. Thus man is privileged to be in the public domain of State, law and market, but the experience of women in these realms are discounted and treated to be natural and hence time invariant. Again mothering has been seen as a pure biological activity even when performed by human's and no moral theory has questioned the inequality built into it, women's behaviour has been regarded as natural, driven by instinct and thus treated beyond the domain of morality and moral principles.

Feminists have apprehension that while no women morality theory is in place as yet, it

is easy to see that if woman enter the world as equal partner, there are fears that the foundation of family, mothering and nurturing, marriage and trust will be shaken. Much of woman movement has now experienced the headwinds of 'empowerment' about which you will learn more in other units. At this moment let us note: Are women's rights equal to men or women's rights are the rights especially attending to the needs of women?

1.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The outstanding feature of the first quarter of the 20th Century is not the Great War, nor the Russian Revolution but the change in the status of woman (Durant, 1953). The unequal treatment of male and female is not confined to developing countries and certain religions and cultural identities. The cry against unequal treatment meted out to females was raised in Europe, North America and Canada through various feminist organisations. Numerous movements highlighting various causes of gender discrimination ultimately converge on the concept of gender mainstreaming and developing a 'gender perspective'.

Gender mainstreaming is the public policy for assessing the different implications of any planned policy action for women and men. According to United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997) mainstreaming gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislative policies or programme in any and at all levels. It is a "strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation and monitoring and in all political and economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally— and ensure gender equality".

Thus gender mainstreaming is a *deliberate intervention* on the part of political process and the intelligentsia to bring the issues and concerns of women's movements from the periphery to the centre of development decision-making. It has emerged as a major approach in ensuring gender justice specially through creating an enabling environment for making female an equal partner and beneficiary of development process and all socio-economic activities. Some of the women's issues and problems were highlighted through conferences, conventions and meets such as:

1. Mexico Plan of Action 1975
2. Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1993
3. World Convention on Women and Beijing Platform 1995
4. 22nd special session of General Assembly on Women on Gender Equality, Development and Peace 2000.

1.4 MEASURES OF GENDER STATUS

The UNDP has developed several measures to internationally compare status of women among countries. In recent times, along with **Human Development Index, Human Poverty Index, Gender Inequality Index, and Gender Empowerment Measure** prepared by UNDP since 1995 has emerged as a powerful medium for the advocacy of gender justice. Gender mainstreaming of the HDI has been done through analytical and empirical evidence on gender issues as well as highlighting the gender concerns in the structural analysis of education, health, livelihood, governance and participation in political process. Among the important measures of socio economic development are Human

Development Index and Gender Inequality Index annually published by UNDP as part of globally tracking development among nations and accordingly highlight the areas of concern for correction. The Human Development Index (HDI) is based on 3 variables, a) Constant Dollar Per Capita Income (a measure of standard of living); b) Literacy Ratio (a measure of education and a measure of available choices); c) Life Expectancy at Birth (a measure of access to health). The relative poor performance of India is reflective of general backwardness of a traditional society coming out of the burdensome colonial past and particularly deplorable position of women population whose socio-economic conditions are dismal.

Similarly, Gender Inequality Index is indicative of loss in achievements due to gender disparities in the area of reproductive health, empowerment and labour participation rate in relation to women. India stands at 122 among 168 countries of the world in 2008. It may be noted that higher the value of Gender Inequality Index, higher the loss due to discrimination (Gender Inequality Index of 1 is the maximum loss which society can suffer due to discrimination). GDI is a composite index of 3 variables, namely, a) long healthy life based on infant mortality rate and life expectancy at age 1; b) an index of knowledge based on literacy rate at mean years of education; and c) a decent standard of living based on earned income. For India, the value of GDI was 0.514 in 1996 and it has improved to 0.590 in 2006. Despite multi pronged attack on ending gender discrimination and sustained efforts to improve the lot of women and girl child, vast regions of country are lagging behind.

1.5 FEMALE DEMOGRAPHY

As the role and importance of women in all aspects of society and its development has been recognised and grown, information and facts have proliferated about attributes of female population and its socio-economic attributes. Development and recognition of women agency and policy action on it also requires accurate and detailed information about all aspects of female life and activity which is termed as "Female Demography", a branch of population science which is particularly related to study of female traits.

Thus Female Demography includes:

- Growth rate of female population over time,
- The composition of population as measured by sex ratio,
- Birth and death rates, infant mortality rate, child mortality rate.
- Women are the important agency for population propagation hence various measures of fertility are also included in it.
- Life expectancy for females is another important concept in Female Demography.

The socio-economic conditions of female population is measured through

- Their access to education as described through literacy rates and
- The health status as described through maternal mortality rates, infant mortality rates, child sex ratio, access to safe delivery, balanced diet and nutrient supplementation etc.

- Finally, female work participation rate, their representation in socio political management sheds light on their constructive role and participation in society.

1.5.1 Growth of Female Population

In our country reasonably reliable estimates of population data is available since 1901, based on decadal Census. A perusal of these Censuses reveals three phases of population growth. From 1901 to 1951, annual growth rate of population increased from 0.56 percent in 1901 to 1.25 percent in the decade 1951. However, in the second phase, the growth rate of population accelerated to 1.96 percent in 1961, 2.22 percent in 1971 and maintained itself at 2.20 percent per year in 1981 Census. Since then, intense population control and family welfare programmes and civic awareness has slightly reduced the growth rate of population to 2.14 percent in 1991 and 1.95 percent in 2001. As per the figures released by 2011 Census Report, the population of India has increased from nearly 102 crores in 2001 to 121 crores in 2011. It has recorded a lower decennial growth rate of 17.64 percent compared to 21.54 percent in earlier decade.

However, in the decade 1971, the female population growth rate at 24.03 percent was slightly less than male population growth rate of 25.52 percent. But in 1991, the female growth rate was slightly more at 23.06 percent compared to male growth rate of 22.76 percent for males. The male-female differential in growth rate got accentuated more at state level. Female population growth rate was slowest at 9.43 percent for Kerala, 11.72 percent for Tamil Nadu and was as high as nearly 25 percent for Haryana, Rajasthan and Bihar.

1.5.2 Sex Ratio

Sex ratio measures the overall distribution of population between male and female. It represents number of females per thousand males. In India, sex ratio was at all time high of 972 in 1901 and has continuously declined since then to reach the level of 945 in 1941 and 946 in 1951. After being stable for these 20 years, it has again declined to 941 in 1961, 930 in 1971. It improved a little bit to 934 in 1981 to again decline to 926 in 1991. There has been some increase in the sex ratio to 933 in 2001. This has further increased to 940 in 2011. From this, it is not difficult to conclude about a declining trend in sex ratio for the past 100 years. This trend in India is indicative of some systemic factors which impose upon this outcome. It is indicative of:

- Poor physical and mental care of women
- Poor nutritional access and intake, unsatisfactory health and sanitary conditions.
- Deliberate preference accorded to males over females.

During the decade 1991-2001, 70 districts across 16 states and UT's in India, recorded a more than 50 points decline in the sex ratio compared to national average. Fatehgarh sahib district of Punjab earned the dubious distinction of recording the lowest district sex ratio at 754. Further, the child sex ratio at birth dropped to 880 during the period 2003-05. It was further lower for Punjab at 793, Delhi at 865, Haryana at 820 and Gujarat at 878. Child sex ratio ranges between 798 and 845 for Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Chandigarh; it is as high as 960 for Kerala, 942 for Tamil Nadu, 946 for Karnataka and 961 for Andhra Pradesh.

1.5.3

Missing women:

In 1980's Prof. Amartya Sen propounded a thesis about the diminishing proportion of women in the population in some parts of the world and gave it a name "Missing Women". The idea goes like this- due to biological reasons, women are more resistant to disease and enjoy better life expectancy compared to males if other things remains the same. By other things he means that women are treated equally with males in healthcare, nutrition and general ambience of life. This is reflected by male to female ratio of 1.04 to 1.06 for Scandinavian countries and North America. Sub Sahara Africa where it was found to be 1.06 and even in this African region women are treated with less discrimination than men.

Taking Sub-Sahara male female ratio as benchmark, Prof. Sen estimated that female deficit in China amount to nearly 44 million, in India upto 37 million. Taking some other parts of Asia and other countries, Sen concluded that nearly 100 million women are missing in the world as a whole. Sen observed that this phenomenon can be explained in terms of cultural preferences of the society which prefers a male child to a female child this deeply embedded prejudice against a female child goes into making girl child prone to ill-effects of lesser care including malnutrition and maltreatment. In a more sophisticated study Stephen Classen in 1994 estimated the extent of missing women to 89 million. Emly Oster in 2005 explained the phenomenon through the relatively dense presence of killer virus Hepatitis B in women as compared to men. However, in her 2008 exhaustive study on Chinese women, she did not substantiate her earlier conclusion.

Besides cultural preferences, another explanation advanced for missing women is the nature of gender construction and appreciation in the western and eastern civilisation. In short, western societies are less sexist than eastern societies and hence the differentiated gender treatment resulting in adverse circumstance for women in general. Another explanation relates to stage of economic development in which various societies find themselves. Women are prevented or deprived of gainful employment and hence are made to feel less important and suffer neglect, discrimination in family and society. Missing women found in these societies which are male dominated are known as patriarchal societies. It may be noted that in India, Kerala has a male female ratio of 1.03 comparable to social contexts which treat women with greater acceptability and care.

1.5.4 Dynamics of Population Growth

Natural growth rate of the population is the difference between the births and deaths that take place in a year. It is measured as a difference between the crude birth and death rate per thousand of population in a year. Migration 'in' and 'out' can be another factor affecting the rate of growth of population in a region or country. It plays important role under special circumstances among nations. Normally population migration is controlled through various entry limitations and visa requirements. However, within the country there are strong trends of migration due to climatic, economic and social factors which have a bearing on regional population growth. Still the relative movement of birth and death rates accurately describe the dynamic aspects of population overtime.

The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) in India has experienced a decline albeit slowly. CBR fell from 39.9 per thousand of population in 1951 to 25.4 in 2001 and subsequently to 22.5 in 2009-10. It is attributed to economic development resulting in higher level of income and standard of living, spread of literacy and social awareness for small family norms. Similarly, the Crude Death Rate (CDR) in India has also declined at a faster rate. Thus CDR declined from a high of 27.4 per thousand population in 1951 to 8.4 in 2001 and further to 7.3 per thousand in 2009-10. The fall in CDR is in line with the success of epidemics controls, better access and management of health facilities and improved medical attention and care (Seth, 2001).

The above macro trend of movement in birth and death rate hides the disturbing picture of high incidence of death of females at the time of child birth and also the deaths of infants at the time of birth. These events are measured through Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). Although MMR in India has continuously declined from 398 in 1997-98 to 301 in 2001-03 and further to 250 per lakh of population in 2005-09, it is still at a high level compared to other developed countries and countries at a similar level of development as India.

Infant Mortality Rate in India was as high as 116 per thousand in 1961 with Male Infant Mortality Rate at 122 and Female Mortality Rate 108. This has declined to 53 per thousand in 2008 with male mortality rate at 52 compared to female mortality at 55 per thousand. The female infant mortality has increased in recent times due to indifferent attitude to birth of a girl child leading to poor care at infancy, ignorance and social taboos. 11th Five Year Plan notes 'the child sex ratio (0-6years) plummeted from 945 to 927 (p.186) the implication is that factors that militate against the existence of female child got spread and strengthened.

Infant Mortality Rates differ among the states reflecting the social awareness level, the success of public health programmes, spread of literacy and education and urbanisation. Madhya Pradesh had highest IMR at 150 in 1961, followed by UP at 130, and Kerala has lowest IMR at 52 per thousand. In 2008 also Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have recorded higher than national average IMR at 70, 67 and 63 per thousand. *A disturbing feature is that all states of Indian Union have recorded higher IMR for females than for males in 2008.* In the country still 51 percent deliveries are un-institutionalised and unsafe. It indicates systematic socio-economic and cultural factors at work to explain this unwelcome situation.

1.5.5 Fertility Rate

Birth rate of a population over a period of time is the reflection of a family choice about the size of the family to be raised by a couple. The prevailing religious orthodoxy (a women must bear a child and a male child on top of that), and low chance of survival of a child in infancy and at a later age, may force a women to agree to raise a large family. Further poverty, ignorance and indifferent lifestyle forces a family to rationalise for a larger family size which may be seen as a better division of labour and larger flow of income (the larger the number of heads, the larger the income).

Among the developing countries, the average female has a higher fertility. Fertility is indicative of the number of children that would be born to a woman if she experiences the current fertility pattern in her life time. Fertility is generally used to indicate the actual reproductive performance of a woman or a group of women as the case may be. There

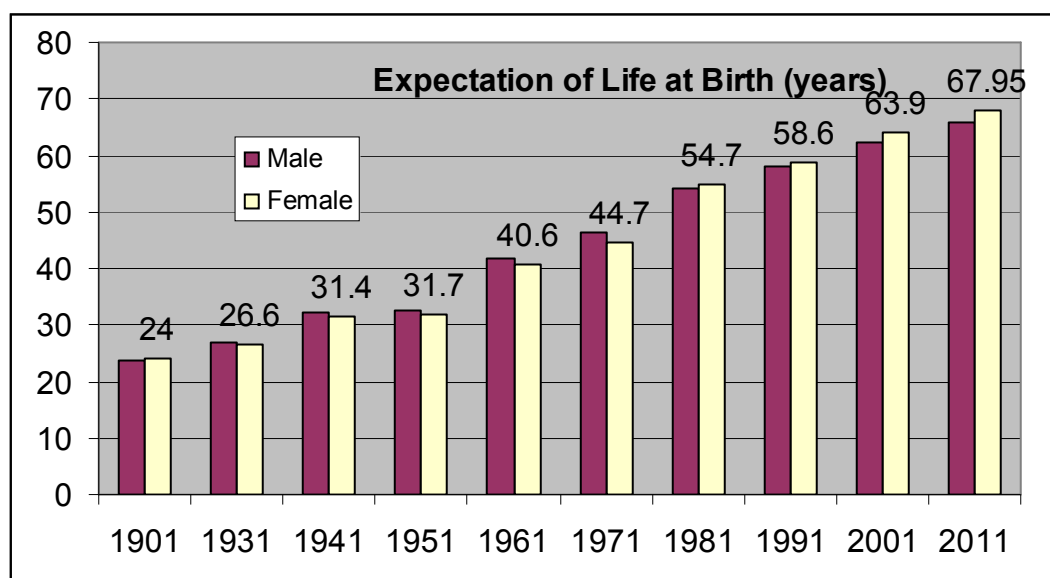
are several measures of fertility prevalent in the study of population. More prominent of these are GFR- General Fertility Rate which is the ratio of number of child birth per year per thousand females in the age group 15-49 years. A variation of this is age-specific fertility rate to account for the affect of age on child-bearing capacity which is generally very high during the age group 18 to 33. The most common measure of fertility is total fertility rate (TFR). It is a derivation of age-specific fertility rates and is a hypothetical rate that indicates the total number of children that would be born to a group of women through their reproductive span of life with the experienced fertility rates of each year of age. TFR reflects the power of propagating the population through time. There are two other concepts of fertility, viz, Gross Reproduction Rate which is based on total fertility rate and derived by multiplying TFR with the ratio of female births to total number of births. It is thus a measure of weight of female in the propagation of population. A further concept that is used is a Net Reproduction Rate (NRR) which is a ratio of number of females expected to be born to 1000 new born girls. It measures the speed with which the population will replace itself over a period of time.

Developing countries have experienced a high rate of fertility in their population. South Asia, home to largest number of poor in the world, had a high TFR of 3.9 compared to 3.4 for the developing nations in 1995 and these figures declined to 3.0 and 2.8 respectively in 2005. India had a high TFR of 3.6 live births per female in 1995 which has declined to 2.9 in 2005. As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) in 2005-06, TFR in Urban India was 2.07 and for rural India it was 2.98. This indicates that relatively high illiteracy and traditional attitude force a higher burden of larger family on females.

The relation between literacy and fertility is well documented and accepted. Thus for illiterate women All-India TFR was 4.0 in 2004 and the values for illiterate rural and urban women were 4.1 and 3.3. For literate women, the same figures were 2.3, 2.5 and 1.9. For females educated upto class XII and above, the figure were 1.7, 1.9 and 1.6 respectively.

1.5.6 Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is a function of income level, awareness and management of basic health facilities, access to and ability to have better medical care. It is a state policy in regard to control of diseases, epidemics and general medical facilities. India has made considerable progress overtime in these areas and life expectancy at birth was 32.1 and has continuously increased to 41.9, 46.4, 50.9, 58.6 and 61.6 years at the end of each decade till 2001. During the period 2002-06, life expectancy at birth was 63.5 years. Since 1981, females enjoyed a slightly higher life expectancy at birth compared to males. There exists considerable variation in the life expectancy among the states because of diverse socio-economic features. Thus life expectancy at birth during 2002-06 was higher in Kerala at 71.4 years followed by Punjab at 68.4 years to nearly 58.60 years for Assam, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. For females, life expectancy at birth was highest at 76.3 years in Kerala, 68 years in Punjab to 59 - 60 years in Assam, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.



Socio-Economics Characteristics of Female Population in India

In this section we shall briefly discuss the educational, health and economic characteristics of Indian population. Our endeavor would be to see how female have fared in these spheres.



1.5.7 Literacy Rates

The close relationship between education and economic development and social well-being has been firmly established. India inherited a dubious record of widespread illiteracy when it became independent. Eradication of illiteracy has been in the forefront of the goals of economic plans in India¹. There is an inverse relationship between literacy and fertility. A literate and educated woman gives rise to fewer children compared to illiterate women. Since 2001, the government has launched a massive programme of literacy: **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**. Efforts of state and civil society have been largely successful in this regard.

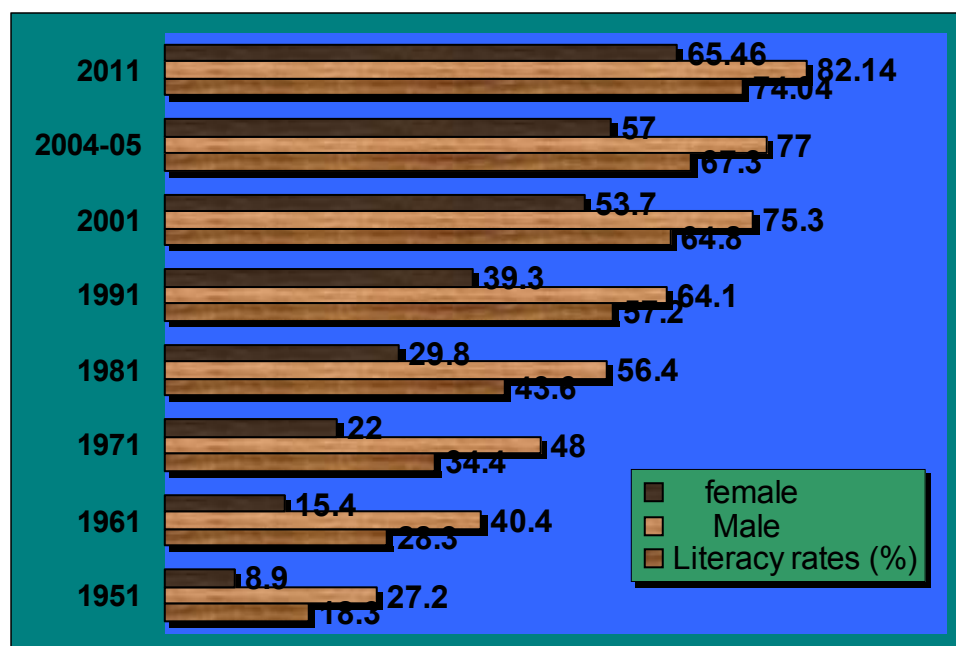
The following Table describes the trends in literacy rates in India

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2004-05	2011
Literacy rates (%)	18.3	28.3	34.4	43.6	57.2	64.8	67.3	74.04
a) Male	27.2	40.4	48.0	56.4	64.1	75.3	77.0	82.14
b) female	8.9	15.4	22.0	29.8	39.3	53.7	57.0	65.46

A comparison of country's literacy rate with China highlights the extent of backwardness in India. In 1990, 68% of women in China were found literate, higher than what India attained in 2006. In China, the gender gap in literacy fell from 19% in 1990 to 6% in 2009 and in the process attained 91% female literacy.

The growth rate for female literacy in the last decade (1991-2000) has been 3% higher than the growth rate for male literacy resulting in a decline in the absolute number of illiterate women- from 200.7 million in 1991 to 190 million in 2001. Gender differential in education however, continues to be high at 21.7%. This can be attributed to a number of factors - lack of access to schools, high fee charged by private schools, parents feeling insecure in sending girls to school, poor quality of education in government schools etc.

Increasing feminisation in agriculture, the pressure of looking after young siblings, collecting cooking fuel, water and looking after household chores prevent girl child from attending the school. While at macro level, the literacy rates have continuously increased overtime, there are substantial differences in these rates at state level. Only Kerala, Mizoram and Lakshadweep obtained more than 80% female literacy in 2001. A measure of variation in literacy can be understood through a female literacy rate of 33% in Bihar to 88% in Kerala in 2001. Major states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Chhattisgarh all have a higher gender literacy gap than the national average.



1.5.8 Health Status of Women in India

It is important to note that the gender discrimination against women and girl child has persisted over a period of time, despite some letup under the State initiative, spread of literacy and education. The health status of females and girl child at all stages presents an alarming picture of working health and nutrition deficit. India continued to grapple with unacceptably higher MMR, IMR, increasing rate of anemia and malnutrition. NRHM (**National Rural Health Mission**) was launched in India in 2005 to provide quality health services to rural areas with emphasis on poor persons in remote areas (refer to Box 11.7 on p.285 in Economic survey, 2009-10, Government of India). Despite massive efforts by the governments, both at central and state level, as per NFHS, incidence of anemia has risen from 49.7% to 57.9% in pregnant women and from 51.85 to 56.2% in ever married women within a period of seven years, i.e., 1998-99 to 2005-06. Anemic women are the prime cause of anemia in children. For the siblings it has risen by 5 percentage point during the above cited period, resulting in high MMR of 53 per thousand (in 2008). The Child Mortality Rate (0-4 years) has experienced a sharp decline to 16.0 per thousand in 2007, compared to 41.2 per thousand in 1991.

According to the 11th Five Year Plan, the pitiable condition of women throughout their life is due to lack of healthcare facilities, paucity of resources, and persistence of age old practices which deny large number of women access to good nutrition and care before and after child birth. Sick and malnourished mother gives birth to a sick and vulnerable child, who again grows into an anemic and malnourished mother. The cycle goes on. As against a MMR of 301 per lakh of live births in 2001-03, India missed the 10th Plan

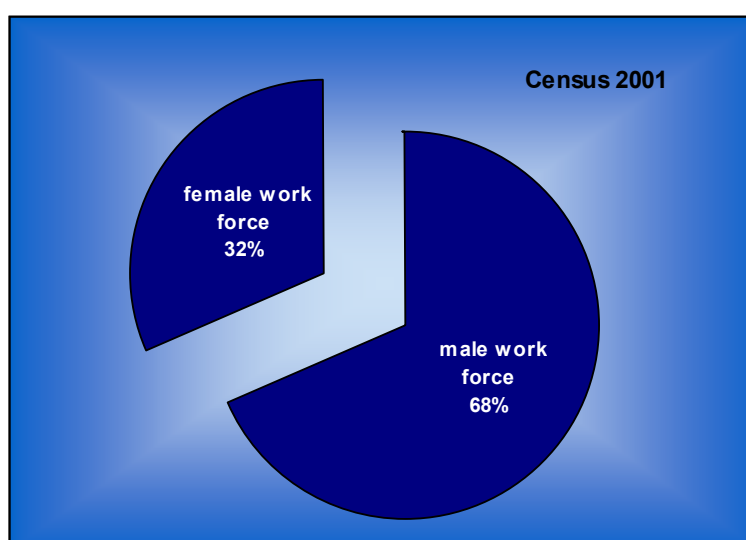
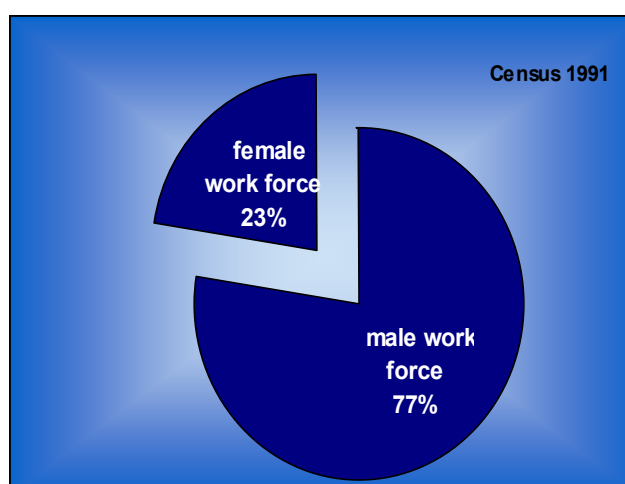
target of reducing it to 200 per lakh of live births. It is much larger at 707 for Uttar Pradesh, 517 for Uttaranchal, 409 for Assam and 498 for Madhya Pradesh, reflecting the adverse effect of diverse socio-economic factors.

1.5.9 Mean Age of Marriage

Due to enactment of legislation against child and early marriages, greater awareness among society about its ill effects, the mean age of marriage in India has risen from 15.5 years in 1961 to 19.5 in 1997, yet 44 percent of women are still married off by the age of 18. States like Jharkhand (61.2 percent), Bihar (60.3 percent) and Rajasthan (57.1 percent) have much higher percentage of under age marriages among girls. This results in longer fertility period for women, early pregnancy and takes its toll on the life of young mothers and child.

1.5.10 Work and Employment Status of Women

Labour force growth in India has doubled from 18.07 crores in 1971 to 40.25 crores in 2001. Thus the average rate of increase of labour force was 2.71% per year and it was higher than the population growth rate of 2.11%, thus creating pressure for creation and expansion of employment opportunities. According to 11th Plan, labour force in 2006-07 on the basis of (current daily status) was 43.89 crores and is likely to rise to 48.37 crores in 2010-11 or 40% of the total population.



The percentage of male workers in Indian population has declined from 70.95 in total working population to 68.4% in 2001. During the same period, the percentage of female working population has increased from 20.1% to 31.6% of working population. Thus the annual growth rate of female workers during the 30 year period 1971-2001 was much higher at 4.26% compared to 2-18% for male workers. Due to

entrenched patriarchal norms and customs, women's work goes unnoticed and is also unpaid for. The double burden of work placed on her (unrecognised household work and low pay in recognised work) coupled with social norms that prevent her from getting the required educational and technical skills result in a low female work participation rate, either real or statistical.

With spread of education, urbanisation, rising expectation of family to command better quality of life and women preferring professional employment has been resulting in the gradual rise in urban women employment. Yet the concentration of population in rural areas and lack of skills have forced rural women to earn income through agricultural labour. As per Census 2001, there were 32.9% women cultivators and 38.9% women agricultural labourers as against 20.9% male agricultural labourers.

We may also note that the female work participation rate in India at 28% in 2004 was lower compared to 30% for Sri Lanka, 37% for Bangladesh and 38% for South Africa. So far as the work participation rate is concerned, it has been consistently lowering for females than for males both in rural and urban areas. It has fluctuated more for female workers in rural areas due to seasonality and vagaries of agricultural performance. The percentage of women employed in household industry is only 6.5%. Further much of the increase in employment for women has been in the form of self-employment at 48% in urban areas and 64% in rural areas.

With the slight increase in female work participation rate in the last three decades, more females are working as marginal workers. According to Census 2001, out of the 3130.05 lakh total workers, female workers are 728.58 lakh and in the marginal workers category, out of 892.3 lakh total workers, female workers are 543.63 lakh. Women are agents of change; so they also need to be involved more and more in the decision-making process at all levels of household and government activities. This will also lead to reducing the economic dependence of female population as compared to males, which is in the ratio of 472: 884 (according to the NSSO 60th Round January-June 2004). According to NFHS-3 (2005-06), 52.5% females are active in household decision-making and their participation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions is also 40%, but in the National Parliament it is only at 10%.

1.6 WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE AND GROWTH

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms and reflects in the continuously declining female to male ratio in population over a period of time. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and social levels are the other manifestations of gender discrimination and exploitation. Gender disparity also perpetuates and widens due to social attributes towards women about their non-household activities. Modern women have traditionally worked on non-wage employment, the contribution of which is still not monetised.

We may note that although women in India have actively participated in national movement and the policies of nationalism provide ample ground to glorify India's past and has tended to defend everything traditional the women have been portrayed as ethical agents. Otherwise also the women were disadvantaged precisely through the talk of self-sacrifice.

Gender in India has therefore emerged as a representation of Indian culture and traditions which made women safe in the four walls of the house and to shut them off from the new ideas, culture and traditions of modernising influence of the West based on liberal ideas, education, equality and equity of rights. A modern girl was more of a drain on society'. Such notion of female in society is not particular to India but also to large number of societies, cultures and economies which have clung to tradition and dogma, have become laggard in economic development and confined to old traditions of life and style.

The new perspective of women based on equality with males and influence of modernisation bestows them with more important roles. With education, training and skill, women have discharged duties and fulfilled job conditions at par with their male counterparts. Woman represents vast pool of dedicated labour ready to be harnessed for achieving larger development goals. It is for this reason that Indian Plans have successively laid larger attention on women empowerment and development.

1.7 WOMEN IN INDIAN PLANS

In the earlier phase of development planning, the concept of women's development was mainly welfare-oriented. During the sixties, women's education, received priority along with the measures to improve maternal and child health and nutrition services. During the seventies, there was a definite shift in the approach from welfare to development and recognised women as participants of development process. The eighties adopted the multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment. Accordingly, priority was given to implementation of programmes for women under different sectors of agriculture and allied activities of dairying, poultry, animal husbandry, handlooms, handicrafts and small-scale industries etc. The nineties saw more emphasis on training-cum-employment-cum-income generation programmes for women with ultimate objective of making them economically independent and self-reliant.

The Ninth Plan specifically adopted a strategy of Women Component Plan under which not less than 30% of funds/benefits earmarked in all the women related sectors. The Tenth Five Year Plan has undertaken to further strengthen the Women Component Plan through a task force on women and children which was established in August 2002. Through its report in 2003, the Task Force, interalia, recommended the setting up of an inter-ministerial standing committee in the Department of Women and Child Development (now a ministry) to review and monitor gender mainstreaming in government.

Even after pushing of UN Convention on ending all forms of discrimination against women and the rights of the child, women and children continue to be victims of violence, neglect and injustice. In the Eleventh Plan these concerns of gender occur as a cross-cutting theme. It attempts to recognise the women's agency and the need for women empowerment. 11th Five Year Plan underscores their role as agents of change: a woman who is educated has vastly more choices open for her and is capable of decision-making at home and for family. The women can bring about significant changes at family, community or society level. They can contribute to family health care with their eye on safe drinking water, wholesome food and the focus of children on schooling.

The vision of the Eleventh Plan is to end the multifaceted social exclusions and discriminations faced by women and children to ensure that every woman and child in the country is able to develop to her/his full potential and share the benefits of economic growth and prosperity. The success will come by adopting a participatory approach that makes women and children partners in their own development. The approach to gender equity is based on the recognition that interventions in favour of women must be multi-pronged and they must: (i) provide women with basic entitlements, (ii) address the reality of globalisation and its impact on women by prioritising economic empowerment, (iii) ensure an environment free from all forms of Violence Against Women (VAW)—physical, economic, social, psychological etc., (iv) ensure the participation and adequate representation of women at the highest policy levels, particularly in Parliament and State Assemblies, and

(v) strengthen existing institutional mechanisms and create new ones for gender mainstreaming and effective policy implementation.

1.8 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The promise of gender equality and protection of women's rights have been the prime concerns in Indian thinking since Independence. Our Constitution has paid due attention to these aspects. Article 14 confers equal rights and privileges to women and men in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race and caste etc. Article 15(3) empowers State to take action against discrimination of women. Again Article 16 provides equality of opportunity in the matter of public appointments for all citizens. Further Article 39 allows State to direct its policy for providing to men and women equally the right to means and livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Article 42 directs State to provide good and human conditions of work and maternity relief for women. Again Article 15(A) (e) imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to remove the practices dissatisfactory to the dignity of women. To make them operational, special legislations have been enacted from time to time.

National Policy for Empowerment of Women

India has committed to the Beijing Declaration in 1995 that brings into realm of practice all the various constitutional provisions provided for women *in the preceding section*. This emerged as a benchmark plan of action on women rights and affairs. Consequently, national policy delineates a few goals and objectives, policy prescriptions and operational strategies. National Policy on Women has to be operationalised holistically and calls upon various government departments and relevant agencies to draw upon a time bound action plan. These policies are suggested to include:

- Measurable goals to be achieved by 2010
- Identification and commitment of resources
- Responsibilities for implementation of action plans.
- Effective monitoring, review and gender impact assessment of action plans and policies
- Introduction of gender perspective in the budgeting process

Under the above strategy, the 11th Five Year Plan sets following monitorable targets:

- ✓ Raise the sex ratio for age groups 0-6 from 927 per thousand in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and 950 by 2016-17
- ✓ Ensure at least 33% of direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children
- ✓ Reduce IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) from 57 to 28 and MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate) from 3.01 to 1.00% per 1000 live births.
- ✓ Reduce malnutrition among children in age group 0-3 to half of the present level.
- ✓ Reduce anemia among women and girls by 50% by the end of the 11th Plan.

The latest 2011 Census data reveals that India has failed in taking care of girl child during the decade when concern and care for girl child has been at the highest. The child sex ratio slipped from 927 to 914 girl child per 100 boys. In the present decade social preference has taken a decisive turn against girl child (not even allowing girl infant to come to life). The situation is particularly worse in the Northern States. Child Sex Ratio has fallen to a lowest value of 774 in Jhajjar district of Haryana in 2011.

A number of legislative measures strengthened the social status and position of women. Married Women Property Act, the Hindu Succession Act were amended and protection of women from Domestic violence Act 2005 was passed. The Union Budget 2005, for the first time highlighted the separate statement about budgetary allocation under 10 demands for grants. Gender budgeting cells have been set up in 52 central ministries/ departments to review public expenditure, collect gender disaggregated data and conduct gender based impact analysis. Women Component Plan ensured that not less than 30% budget allocation was earmarked for women affairs. The midterm review of 10th Plan revealed only 5% flow of women component allocated funds for women activities. In education sphere, the 9th and 10th Plan achievements have been much better.

The **Integrated Child Development Services** programme, started in 1975, has a major focus on children below age group 6 years and proper nutrition and health education of pregnant and lactating mothers. With 4891 Anganwadi Centres, it has been continuously expanded to cover 12.42 lakh Anganwadis by 31st August 2010. Provision has also been made to upgrade the supplementary nutrition programme upto WHO standards.

The government has launched Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls to empower the adolescent girls in the age group 11-18 years through improvement in nutritional and health status and upgrading their home skills, life skills and vocational skills. The project will be implemented in 200 chosen districts with Anganwadis as the delivery centers. The government has also launched a **Rajiv Gandhi Creche Scheme** for the parents in the lower income groups where immunisation and health care will be available. An Integrated Child Protection Scheme (launched since 2009-10) will provide safe and secure environment for comprehensive development of children. To further empower young women, a scheme called **Support to Training and Employment Programme** for women has been launched. It will provide updated skill and new knowledge in 10 sectors. Besides this, **Dhanalakshmi Scheme** has been initiated since March 2008 to prevent child marriage and to provide cash support to a girl child when she attains marriageable age. Finally **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh** (RMK) established in 1993 has emerged as a premier microcredit agency to aid and support for women and their empowerment through provision of credit for livelihood related activities. It provides financial help to governments, semi-government and voluntary agencies engaged to improve women by promoting financial inclusion and to enable them to earn independent income.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women has been set up to empower women socially, economically and educationally, by securing convergence of schemes/ programmes of different ministries/departments of the Government of India and State Governments. It monitors and reviews gender budgeting by ministries/departments for effective implementation of women's laws. Similar programmes have been launched for the SC/ST, OBC population including SC/ST women wherein SC/ST component is earmarked. Many of these have Centre/State partnership on implementation and monitoring.

1.9 SUMMARY

The women's issues became most debated in the societal reforms over time and regions. 'Gender' has been constructed and reconstructed through reform movements, moral codes, values, education and ethics to meet social aspirations. It has remained a dynamic construct as the meaning attached to the social roles assigned to men and women kept on changing from society to society and across time. But the societies have always come up with *producing* and changing gender differences to favour male over female through various social process: socialisation, the active social institutions and interaction among people. In India, various programmes have been launched to improve women's status and the Unit has dealt with atlength.

1.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Write briefly the effects of globalisation on women.
2. What do you understand by gender construction? Illustrate with suitable examples
3. What according to you explains substantial regional differences in women demographic indicators in India?

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(Footnotes)

¹ But the State efforts seemed to lag behind the growing population and the incidence of illiteracy in young and old population alike.

UNIT 2 WOMEN AS SURVIVORS, BENEFICIARIES AND PEACEMAKERS

Structure

2.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

2.2 Women's Stakes in Peace

2.3 Women as Survivors of Violence and Conflict

2.4 Women as Beneficiaries of Peace Process

2.5 Women as Peace Makers

2.6 Women's Contribution in Peace Building

2.7 Women's Agency in Peace Keeping

2.8 Summary

2.9 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls.”

– **UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan**

When faced with violence, women's predicaments as survivors and peacemakers are extremely complex issues. Women's complicity in perpetrating violence in case of female infanticide, female foeticide, dowry murders, during caste/communal/ ethnic violence and in the war-zones (Abu Grahیب prison in Iraq) are widely documented. Thus, the belief that 'women as inherently peace-lover' is contested by the human rights movement. Women are also carriers of culture of violence. At the same time, 5000 years of patriarchal control over women's sexuality fertility and labour makes mass of women as victims of violence. Social discrimination against women results in systematic neglect of women's health, from womb to tomb. Sexual assault, molestation, rape, sexual harassment at workplace, child sexual abuse and nuisance calls cause psychological disturbances among girls and women. The trauma of sexual violence sparks off tension and anxiety at a dangerous level. Their mental health problems are manifested in anxiety, fear, avoidance, guilt, loss of efficiency, lack of coordination, depression, sexual dysfunction, reliving the traumatic incidents through memory, suicidal attempts, eating disorders, disturbed sleep patterns, fear of encountering such situation once again. It is found that women who undergo extreme sexual violence experience a loss of self and self-esteem following the shock inflicted on them. When there is a continuous period of traumatic stress, it becomes chronic, lessening the individual's ability to do any kind of constructive work. This form of male violence towards women is an issue that demands public attention. Women's organisations have taken up this issue at local, national and global level. Discourse on

mental health of women in the family situation gained serious consideration in the context of campaign against violence against women. In domestic violence situations, predicament of women is determined by their position in power-relations vis-à-vis the rest of the family members. Many social work researches which attribute deviant behaviour of adolescent girls to their working mothers guilt trip women by narrowly focusing on single parameter and ignoring factors such as peer-pressure, media, overall standards of morality in our society and power relations in the nuclear/ joint family. Such researches are used by some counsellors to cage women into domesticity and divert the attention from generation of genuine support system for developmental needs of the daughters of working mothers. Women's rights organisations which are doing support work for women in distress have started giving due importance to counselling for peace building. The quest for peace is an eternal pursuit for human fulfilment. Peace or absence of antagonistic, violent, or destabilising conflict is essential for existence to become life, for survival to become human.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to understand

- Women's stakes in peace
- Women as survivors of violence and conflict
- Women as beneficiaries of peace process and as peace makers

2.2 WOMEN'S STAKES IN PEACE

Peace can have two faces or two forms- Public and private. Peace in the community, go hand-in-hand with the peace in the family life. Hence the need to deal with domestic violence and women's grievances. There may be an apparent stability and absence of conflict in situations of successful intense repression-beating, abuses, psychological torture wherein all dissent is brutally, immediately, and surgically suppressed. This is a condition in which only one group (men, in-laws, bully neighbours) dominates, in which women's views and dignity is not allowed to exist. The other situation is one in which democracy and human rights reach their pinnacle in each and every core of the community and domestic lives. In this, there are always avenues of settlement of differences and disputes without a breakdown of the framework of mutual respect, recognition of the rights of the other, and belief in good faith of the 'adversary'. In this negotiations and persuasion are the methods of overcoming even major digressions in points of view. Here people have the right to be different and where difference is not denied.

Human beings can become human and humane only in conditions of peace. Creativity, spirituality, individual and collective achievements attain grandeur and glory only when there is peace. Qualities of compassion, forgiveness, love, sharing and universal solidarity become cherished and sought after virtuous attributes only when a community, society or nation is at peace – within and without. War on the other hand, internal or external, civil or military, declared or undeclared valorises bravery – the capacity to kill or be killed – the destruction of human life and accomplishments; it mocks compassion and conscience; it belittles refusal to erect artificial walls that divide human beings in the name of one identity or the other; it glorifies the destructive principle and devalues the principles of creation and life. The war-mongers are invariably persons with few qualms of conscience, ever ready to eliminate and exterminate human life, emotions, thought, ideas, and achievements.

In this context, for empowering harmony at the individual and community level, liberal humanism needs to be backed by solidarity, service and authority. Social activists would want us

- To organise and mobilise men, women and children to reiterate and reinforce the importance of secular values for a harmonious coexistence.
- To create pressure groups to condemn acts of violence and exclusion and to propagate actions and initiatives to promote peace and inclusion.
- To encourage, facilitate and establish similar networks/coalition of citizens to promote secular values, religious tolerance, democracy and human rights and accelerate women's participation in secular movements striving for equality and justice, to resolve conflicts with words rather than swords.

2.3 WOMEN AS SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT

Eyes raining, without mere control,
 Scruples hurt, thus dew drops roll.
 Lightened, piercing, still with grief,
 Forever, staring in disbelief.

Hearts melting, defenses down,
 Afflicted feelings, all around.
 Timeless moments, of unending sorrow,
 Darkened scars, that none can borrow.

Deep in hurdles, full with distress,
 Pleasures replaced, by pure sadness.
 Love's demise, of responsive pain,
 A day's repose, then it starts again.

This poem by a survivor of violence & conflict, Ms. Lara Jesani portrays the pain and agony that every woman faced with domestic violence, communal/caste/ethnic violence and violence as a result of war.

Peace Begins from Home... *A Case Study of Women's Grievances Cell of Mohalla Committee Movement, Mumbai*

Mohalla Committee Movement (MCM) in Mumbai was formed with a firm understanding that the quest for peace is an eternal pursuit for human fulfilment. MCMs were formed in Mumbai to counter communal frenzy during Bombay riots in 1992-93. Its founder member Julio Francis Ribeiro remarks: "After the riots in Mumbai in 1992, a long term, interventionary and developmental solution was deemed necessary. The creation of Mohalla committees was one of the solutions proffered and their proliferation in various areas of Mumbai has made a measurable difference in the life of this metropolis. These committees were seen as simple, people-centred and appropriate mechanisms through which peoples' participation in the peace process is highlighted." MCM made a crucial contribution to restore peace and confidence among different communities. It promoted developmental activities such as education, civic issues and programmes for youth and

students. As MCM has a gender-sensitive approach and does not believe that 'Women's issues can wait', it decided to focus on women- both in the community as well as in the domestic arena. The MCM initiated a project- Women's Grievance Redressal Cells (WGRC) in March 1997, first at the MIDC and on 2nd April 1998 in Andheri (E) to enable women of different communities to come together on a common platform.

Distressing Condition of Women in the Community

While working in the community, MCM activists realised that women were doubly oppressed, both socially and economically and hence needed an outlet to voice their grievances. Most of the women led submissive lives and suffered in silence. Though communal harmony prevailed in the area, marital conflicts disturbed the peace and tranquillity of the families and many of them faced physical violence in their personal lives. They were apprehensive of lodging a complaint at the police station, either out of fear of society or due to fear of retaliation/ backlash from the family members, especially husbands. Therefore, the members of MCM along with the police conceived the idea of WGRC in order to help women in distress.

These Cells made the people aware of a common link between women and the community they live in. Effective outreach programmes were developed and major extension activities were initiated to promote peace, communal harmony and constructive activities for area development. These Cells are working in collaboration with the local police and 3 NGOs functioning twice a week at the MIDC and Andheri (E) police stations. Inspiring experiences of these two Cells, motivated the members of MCM to start similar Cells in Bandra, Nagpada and Worli.

Objectives of WGRC

1. To work with individual women and men, families, groups and communities to create harmonious gender relations and to promote ethos of cultural pluralism.
2. To give the women a listening ear and to take cognisance of the offences perpetrated on them.
3. To coordinate with the police in cases of crimes against women.
4. To conduct training programmes/workshops for women as well as the family members on wide range of issues and themes concerning multicultural existence, developmental problems and skill and capacity enhancing projects.
5. To network with women's organisations and other like-minded organisations for collaborative work.
6. To facilitate and mediate out of court settlements and if needed, to organise legal services for women at affordable rates.

Approach of the WGRC

As the thrust of the Cell is on mediation and reconciliation, all the parties concerned are invited to the Cell and given a fair chance to voice their grievances against each other. Some of the meetings can be very time consuming. In some cases, redressal process is shorter and cases quickly get resolved. Due to consistent activities of MCM in the community, the Women's Cell could get easily established and legitimised as many women who approached the Cell were also the members of MCM and attended MCM meetings regularly in their respective beats.

The following examples delineate the procedure dimension of WGRC's intervention:

a. Easing of tension between Hafeeza Shaikh and Vimal Pawar (MIDC)

For several years, Hafeeza and Vimal were at loggerheads. Even though their fights revolved around issues such as garbage and drainage, their anger and hatred towards each other was immense. Both had lodged complaints and counter complaints against each other at the police station. But to no avail, the animosity between the two continued to prevail. Finally, the duty officer at the police station asked them to visit WGRC.

On visiting the WGRC, both complained bitterly against each other. While Vimal blamed Hafeeza of witchcraft, Hafeeza blamed Vimal for provoking the fights and instigating the neighbours against her. It was evident that both did not want reconciliation. It was a Herculean task for the members of the Cell to bridge the gap between the two as they belonged to two different communities. However, after a continuous dialogue with them at the end of the third session, both agreed to bury the past and forgive each other. The Cell members were jubilant as they were able to resolve the problem that existed for many years and most importantly they were able to bring about peace in the area, especially since Hafeeza's was the only family from the minority community living in a majority dominated area.

b. Reformed Swami and relieved Vasanthi (Andheri)

Vasanthi, a young girl, married C. Swamy in 2003. However, on the very next day of her marriage, her husband demanded money to set up his business. She was shattered. In order to keep her marriage intact, she borrowed a small amount of money from her father and gave it to her husband. Still he continued to harass her mentally and physically for more money. Moreover, he forcibly took her gold ornaments and sold them for a large amount of money. Torture by her husband was so unbearable that she left for her matrimonial home to live with her parents. Her parents felt so cheated by their son-in-law that they decided not to send Vasanthi back and decided to call off the marriage. It was at this point of time that distraught Vasanthi approached the Cell and related her woes to the members. Vasanthi's husband was subsequently called to the Cell and there was a major showdown between the spouses. The members made uphill effort to seek reconciliation between them. But it was only after the second session that Vasanthi's husband agreed to return the money and jewels and do a service job. After the third meeting both the spouses agreed to give their marriage a try and Vasanthi returned to her husband. They are in touch with WGRC and the Cell members have found that Swamy has changed for better.

Nature of Grievances

1. Marital conflicts (wife-beating, extra-marital relationships, alcoholism, unemployment, financial constraints)
2. Problems concerning in-laws
3. Disputes with neighbours
4. Conflicts with kith and kin

5. Sexual problems (impotency, violent sexual encounter, pervasive and lustful behaviour)
6. Love affairs resulting into elopement and marriage
7. Divorce, desertion, maintenance, illegal second marriages

Legal Intervention

The cases that could not be resolved through negotiation were either referred to the family court at Bandra or to individual lawyers. Some women filed their petitions in the family court for maintenance and divorce while others sought the help of their lawyers in connection with illegal marriages, child custody and dowry demands made by their husbands.

Teamwork between the Police and WGRC Members

In all the Cells, the presence of police constables helps WGRC to get a better insight on the problems faced by numerous women; it gives an opportunity to empathise with the victims in need of help. The police also play an important role by visiting the home of the victim and inviting the spouse to the Cell for mediation.

Follow-Up Work

WGRC visits the homes where the conflict is of serious nature so as to assess the prevailing situation. If the relationship continues to be strained, the spouses are once again invited to the Cell for further mediation.

Empowerment of Women through Human Rights Education

WGRC believes that public education is the major tool to women's empowerment. It organised five workshops on gender sensitisation at Bandra-Kurla police station for the police personnel of the west region. The team from the legal aid cell of Justice and Peace Commission conducted sessions on The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, laws related to women and crimes against women. The five-day workshop provided legal training to three hundred police personnel that included constables, sub inspectors, inspectors and assistant commissioners of police. Even women police took active part in the workshop that was divided into a lecture, a group exercise and a slide show. WGRC has also organised workshop on women and health, counselling, legal provisions, communication skills and unlearning communalism through creative methods of role-play, storytelling, group exercises, street plays, screening of films, vocational training programmes, haldi kumkum samaroha, rangoli and poster competitions and teaching precautions like first aid, fire extinguishing skills.

Commemoration of International Women's Day

8 March, International Women's day, that symbolises solidarity, sisterhood and strength of women, has been a focal point for women from all five Cells to meet and feel the empowerment. For the past seven years, the Cell has been celebrating this day with vigour and reflected in singing of group songs, experience-sharing, presentation of annual progress report, speeches of dignitaries and children's stage shows. These events have instilled a feeling of confidence and leadership qualities in women.

Pre-emptive Measures

Knitting Communities together has been the most effective tactic for preventing communal conflagration. Women Grievance Redressal Cell (WGRC) worked in Gujarat too and with the police, held meetings all across the city through the MCM. WGRC also participated in the MCM-organised painting competitions, cultural programmes on communal harmony, sports like volley ball, gymnastics and athletics, table tennis and 'cricket for peace' as friendly and healthy competitions to inculcate a spirit of recreation to counter disharmony and promote peace-making. After these programmes, many participants have expressed their feelings, 'Until now we were very scared and prejudiced about the police and did not feel we could approach them. But these past few days have helped us to overcome this.'

Study Rooms

The other strategy implemented by the Mohalla Committees has been in the setting up of study rooms, as in many slum colonies young students do not have a quiet space where they can study. Often many of them need help with their studies. By using the classrooms of local municipal schools, which are free and unused in the evenings, the Mohalla Committees have been able to provide a much-needed service to their communities.

Twelve steps (1997-2009) to Women's Empowerment

During the last twelve years of its existence, WGRC has played an important role in cementing the bonds between communities, spouses, neighbours and enlightened the youth. It is an acknowledged fact that WGRC has played a useful role in forging a meaningful relationship between individuals in the family and also expanded the meaning of family that encompasses the whole community. At the time of communal tension both police and the Cell members play a proactive role and display courage of conviction to diffuse the tension. This has been possible due to the close and constant co-operation between the police and the Mohalla Committees.

The work of MCM has been successful only in areas where police officers have taken personal interest and have ensured that the right kind of people are inducted in the Committee. After seven years of functioning of the WGRC, both the communities and the police have realised that the process requires constant vigilance and evaluation. WGRC member are torchbearers of women's dignity, bodily integrity and gender-justice. Activities of WGRC have brought women's issues on the agenda of MCM. Now, members in the community accept that women's rights are human rights. This experience of MCM needs to be replicated throughout the nation.

2.4 WOMEN AS BENEFICIARIES OF PEACE PROCESS

Peace process gives women freedom of movement and ensures their active participation in education, skill and enterprise development, better health status and in terms of employment and career option. Women leaders from different parts of globe provided different models of peace building through constructive work.

To Give Peace a Chance, Make Peace the Story

While reporting every media personality must have faith: "In every conflict, there is always something retrievable". It is very important to popularise peace journalism. Public felicitations

of persons involved in rescue operations and rehabilitation such as nurses of Cama Hospital in the midst of terrorist attack on 26-11-08 and many other unsung sacrifices. It is essential to popularise efforts of global, national and local networks involved in peace-making. For example, The Thousand Cranes Peace Network is made up of groups and individuals who are willing to fold a thousand paper cranes (or as many as they can manage) as a symbol of their hope for, and commitment to, peace and non-violence. A visit to the Peace Park and the Peace Memorial Museum allows the visitor a glimpse into the horror of the world's first use of the atomic bomb against people on 6 August 1945. It is a reminder that such a tragedy should never happen again.

2.5 WOMEN AS PEACE MAKERS

Women have built peaceful movements to fight against excesses of the dictatorial regimes in Philippines, Chile, Bangladesh, Burma and so on.

Aung San Suu Kyi was born on 19th June 1945 at Rangoon, capital of Burma (now Myanmar). Her father, Aung San was commander of the Burma Independence Army and was assassinated when she was two years old. Her mother, Daw Khin Kyi was appointed as Burma's ambassador to India during 1960. Suu Kyi accompanied mother to New Delhi and studied at high school and Lady Shri Ram College in New Delhi from 1960 to 1964. Her stay in India instilled in her a deep rooted belief in Gandhian philosophy. In 1964 she left India and studied further in University of Oxford. Her scholarly pursuits took her in subsequent years to United Nations, Kyoto University, Japan and the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. In 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi returned to Myanmar to nurse her ailing mother. There the mass slaughter of protesters against the brutal rule of military General Ne Win made her to speak out against him. She began non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights. She affiliated herself with the newly formed group, the National league for Democracy. The League won more than 80% of the parliamentary seats in the elections of 1991. However, the results of the election were ignored by the military government. For six years she was placed under house arrest by military rule and offered to release her if she agrees to leave Myanmar. She was ultimately freed from the house arrest in 1995. In recognition of her non-violent struggle for the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, she received several prestigious awards including Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. She also received Human Rights Prize in 1991. In 1995, India conferred the Nehru Award for International Understanding for Suu Kyi.

Five Priorities for Conflict Resolution and Peace

Practitioners involved in Conflict Resolution are unanimous in their conviction about five core principles and they are:

- **Dialogue, communication, networks-** Centre for Studies in Society and Secularism (CSSS), Mumbai has been doing this for past two decades through research, documentation and training of people.
- **Contemplation-Communalism Combat**, (Hate Hurts, Harmony works) a monthly magazine provides platform for debate and discussion on political economy of conflicts and ways to resolve them.
- **Community Life-** Moholla Committee Movement is doing illustrious work that must be replicated everywhere.

- **Justice, peace & integrity** of creation in solidarity with the most vulnerable- JPCs must attract all types of professions.
- **Simple living, Solidarity for Social/Economic Justice:** All approaches, from A to G advocate socio-economic and gender justice.

Approach of Conflict Transformation

Women's rights movement has contributed to conflict transformation through Media Development, Child Protection, Project Management, Humanitarian Assistance, Human Rights Protection, human development-Health, education, employment and accountability of refugees. There are three stages of Conflict Resolution.

- **Peace building** is the process of restoring normal relations between people. It requires the reconciliation of differences, apology and forgiveness of past harm, and the establishment of a cooperative relationship between groups, replacing the adversarial or competitive relationship that used to exist, e.g. OLAKH, PUCL & SAHIYAR (Vadodara, Gujarat).
- **Peacekeeping** is the prevention or ending of violence within or between nation-states through the intervention of an outside third party that keeps the warring parties apart. Unlike peacemaking, which involves negotiating a resolution to the issues in conflict, the goal of peacekeeping is simply preventing further violence. (The UN Peace Keeping Force, UNHCR in Afghanistan).
- **Peacemaking** is the term often used to refer to negotiating the resolution of a conflict between people, groups, or nations. It goes beyond peacekeeping to actually deal with the issues in dispute, but falls short of peace building, which aims toward reconciliation and normalisation of relations between ordinary people, not just the formal resolution which is written on paper. (Peace rallies, appeals, efforts through media).

Shirin Ebadi (1947)

She received Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her efforts for democracy and human rights. She focused her efforts especially on the struggle for the rights of women and children. She is the first Iranian to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her outspoken campaigns for human rights and democracy in her own country of Iran. Shirin Ebadi was born in the city of Hamedan, Iran in 1947. Her family was academics and practising Muslims. She graduated from Tehran University and went on to become Iran's first female judge, serving from 1975. However after the Islamic revolution of 1979 she was forced to resign, as women were no longer allowed to serve as judges. During a long period of unemployment Shirin wrote many books and articles on issues of human rights. In 1992 Shirin finally obtained a lawyer's certificate enabling her to set up her own practice. She defended many victims of child abuse and murder. Shirin Ebadi has also established two non-governmental organisations in Iran, the Iranian Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child and the Centre for the Defense of Human Rights. Her work has won her admiration and respect from humanitarian bodies across the globe but in Iran her promotion of human rights and politically sensitive issues has led to clashes with the conservative judiciary. In 2000 she was given a suspended jail sentence for promoting evidence that prominent conservative leaders were instigating attacks on pro-reform leaders. Her other awards include: An official Human Rights Watch Observer, 1996, the

selection of '*The Rights of the Child*' as Book of the Year by the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry and the Rafto Human Rights Foundation prize for human rights activities, Norway 2001.

2.6 WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION IN PEACE BUILDING

Through sports for peace, quiz for peace, songs for peace, debate/discussion on peace, painting for peace, theatre for peace, politics for peace, rereading history of wars and peace and interfaith dialogues the youth can be motivated towards philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam* (Whole world is my family) for local as well as global harmony. This concept - the world is but one family - culture of peace and global citizenship should be inducted into all aspects of human life and education, especially humanities. We should promote the spirit and philosophy of satyam, shivam, sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty) and live life purposefully and peacefully. There is a need to create Peace Museums and Peace Galleries to help promote a better understanding of other people and cultures around the world. Organisation of Peace Festivals and Peace Rallies has become a regular feature in the peace movement.

In this context, for empowering harmony at the individual and community level, liberal humanism needs to be backed by solidarity, service and authority. Educationists would like us to

- Organise and mobilise men, women and children to reiterate and reinforce the importance of secular values for a harmonious coexistence.
- To create pressure groups to condemn acts of violence and exclusion and to propagate actions and initiatives to promote peace and inclusion.
- To reaffirm secular values and multiculturalism for maintaining and strengthening democratic values based on respect for human rights.
- To encourage, facilitate and establish similar networks/coalition of citizens to promote secular values, religious tolerance, democracy and human rights and accelerate women's participation in secular movements striving for equality and justice.

2.7 WOMEN'S AGENCY IN PEACE KEEPING

Women who followed Gandhian philosophy like Nirmala Deshpande and Medha Patkar have galvanised hundreds of women into peace movement and have brought to the fore women's agency in peace keeping.

The international women's rights movement has decided to

- Counter violence on women, dalits, minorities, tribals and to contribute to the efforts for gender justice, social justice and distributive justice.
- Consistently raise our voices against fundamentalism and communalism and to initiate action against all forms of discrimination.
- Expose the consistent abuse of religion, tradition, national and cultural heritage by vested interest and to gain legitimacy and political power.

Mother Teresa (1910-1997) whose original name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, was

born on August 26, 1910 in what is now Skopje, Macedonia. On 29th November 1928, at the age of 18, she joined the convent in Ireland and took the name Teresa. The order immediately sent her to India. A few years later, she began teaching at St Mary's High School in Calcutta. In 1948 the Catholic church granted her permission to leave convent and work among the poor people. In the same year she took Indian citizenship. In 1952 she opened the Nirmal Hriday (Pure Heart) Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. She served the people abandoned by society and tried to help and comfort the poor. For over 45 years she helped the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, throughout India and then in other countries. In order to respond better to both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, Mother Teresa founded the *Missionaries of Charity Brothers* in 1963, in 1976 the *contemplative branch* of the Sisters, in 1979 the *Contemplative Brothers*, and in 1984 the *Missionaries of Charity Fathers*. Yet her inspiration was not limited to those with religious vocations. She formed the *Co-Workers of Mother Teresa* and the *Sick and Suffering Co-Workers*, people of many faiths and nationalities with whom she shared her spirit of prayer, simplicity, sacrifice and her apostolate of humble works of love. Mother Teresa never sought or expected recognition. Yet, she enjoyed universal acclaim as a living saint. In 1979, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor around the world. Her merit and devotion was recognised also by Indian government and awarded her *Padmashree* in 1962 and also the highest honour of the country- Bharat Ratna award on 22nd March 1980. Until her death on 5th September 1997, Mother Teresa continued her work among the poorest of the poor.

Source: <http://www.lucidcafe.com/library/95aug/motherteresa.html>

2.8 SUMMARY

Like Gandhiji's vision, women's vision of a harmonious society revolve around concerns such as social justice, gender justice and distributive justice. Prospects and possibilities for establishing harmony at the grassroots have increased due to multi-pronged efforts at community level, national and global efforts. Harmony for women's rights movement is

- Justice, Equality and Peace in the family and the world.
- Harmony at the grassroots is best promoted by those whose stakes are high: the rural poor women from Tribal, Dalit and Minority communities - discriminated thrice over by caste/ethnicity, class and gender.
- Putting women's concerns in center will ensure development is equitable and sustainable.

Women are adept at bridging ethnic, religious, political, and cultural divides. Under mature leadership they are collaborative, inclined towards consensus and compromise. Experiences of varied memberships in Mahila Mandals at the village level from different castes, religions, classes come together for common goals. Women are highly invested in preventing, stopping, and recovering from conflict, are motivated to protect their children and ensure security for their families. Despite being victims of violence at the times of conflict, the consequences of absence of peace are most felt by them. Hence, in all conflict situations, women continue to pursue peace processes.

2.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are women's stakes in peace? Explain and provide illustrations.
2. Describe women's predicament as survivors of violence and conflict.
3. Critically examine women's role as peace makers. Give two case studies.
4. Write a note on women's agency in peace keeping.
5. Show the relevance of Gandhian legacy for the contemporary women's movement.

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UNIT 3 WOMEN'S PLACE IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

The worth of a civilisation can be judged from the position that it gives to women. Of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture, one of the greatest is the honoured place ascribed to women. Manu, the great law-giver, said long ago, "*Yatra naryastu pujoyante ramante tatra Devata, yatra itaastu na pujoyante sarvaastatrafalaah kriyaah*" (Manusmriti, 3.56), which translated, reads, "wherever women are given their due respect, even the deities like to reside there and where they are not respected, all action remains unfruitful." According to ancient Hindu scriptures, no religious rite can be performed with perfection by a man without the participation of his wife. Wife's participation is essential to any religious rite. Married men, along with their wives, are allowed to perform sacred rites on the occasion of various important festivals. Wives are thus befittingly called 'Ardhangani' (betterhalf). They are given not only important but equal position with men. A society grows if the women grow, if they partake of the spirit of progress, for they are the proverbial domestic legislators, they are the matrix of social life.

The position of the women in ancient period was good. They enjoyed equal status and rights during the early Vedic period. However, later (approximately 500 B.C), the status of women began to decline with the Smritis (especially Manusmriti) and with the Islamic invasion of Babur and the Mughal empire and later Christianity curtailing women's freedom and rights. The Indian women's position further deteriorated during the medieval period when Sati, Child marriages and a ban on widow remarriages became part of social life in India. The Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent brought the purdah practice in the Indian society. Among the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Jauhar was practiced. In some parts of India, the Devdasis or the temple women were sexually exploited. Polygamy was widely practiced especially among Hindu Kshatriya rulers. In many Muslim families, women were restricted to Zenana areas.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to understand

- The place of women in Hinduism and Muslim society
- The place of women in Buddhism and Jainism
- The place of women in Christianity.

3.2 WOMEN IN HINDUISM

To understand the social and cultural life of the Hindus and their view on women, one must understand Hinduism. Hinduism is for the world and there is no 'unworldliness' in it. In Hindu society, every worldly activity is under the control of religion. It orders ceremonies throughout one's life and gives instructions to one's descendants, which they must follow in order that his happiness may be secured.

3.2.1 Women in the Vedic Period

The position of women in the Vedic period may be judged by the way in which the birth of a girl is received. The Vedic society was a patriarchal one, and hence father was the head of the family (Kapadia, 1966, p.82). All efforts were made to secure the birth of son. The birth of a daughter was looked upon with disfavour (Dutt, R. C, 1967, p.89).

There are numerous hymns in the Rig-Veda indicating, women were assigned a high place in the *Vedic* society. The *Rig Veda* (IX, 112) says: "A bard I am, my father a leech,/ And my mother is a grinder of corn,/ Diverse in means, but all wishing wealth,/ Equally we strive for cattle."

Ghosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Vishwara, Surya, Indrani, Yami, Romasha – all these names highlight the position and the esteem which Hindu women enjoyed in the Vedic period. 'Devi-Sukta' of the Rigveda is courtesy 'vac' (daughter of sage Ambhrna). In a theosophical debate between Shankaracharya and Mandana Mishra, the latter's wife was appointed to be the judge – obviously because of her superior knowledge and spiritual attainments. Vrihadaranyakopanishad (2.34) gives the evidence of Maitreyi opting for Brhamvidya rather than wealth and worldly pleasures. Women were also allowed to observe celibacy (Atharvaveda 12.3.17) and study Vedas. Not only this, the Ashvalayana and Gobhil Grihyasutras and Harit-Dharmasutra show even the sacred thread ceremony (the Upanayana Samskara) being performed for women. Women used to teach also (Paninikalin Bharat, p.281). Additionally, queens like Kaikeyi helped their husbands in the

battlefield. It would thus be seen that at that time there was not a single area where women did not take part or excel their male counterparts.

As far as the history of ordinary womenfolk goes, their position on the whole was free. Girls were normally not married till they were in their late teens and sometimes even later. They had a fair amount of choice in the selection of a mate, which is evidenced by the – then prevalence of the “*swayamvara-system*”. The cases of Sita, Damayanti, Draupadi, Shakuntala (the adopted daughter of sage Kanva) are the instances of the choice women enjoyed in choosing their husbands. From birth till death a Hindu had (and even today has) to perform hundreds of ceremonies and not even one of them could be performed without the presence of the wife (Rigveda 5.102).

3.2.2 Women in the Post-Vedic Period

The period after 300 B.C witnessed a succession of invasions and influx of foreigners such as the Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthian, the Kushans and others. The political misfortunes, the war atrocities followed by long spells of anarchy and lawlessness had a disastrous effect on the society. Fear and insecurity haunted the common people and householders. Sons were valued higher than the daughters because of the need for more fighting males, in order to survive the waves of onslaughts. It was also imperative to protect women from abductors. It therefore became necessary to curtail women's freedom and movements'. Early marriage was perhaps employed as a part of those defensive measures. The education of the girl child was no longer a priority. Sastras too compromised by accepting marriage as a substitute for Upanayanam and education.

3.2.3 Women during Medieval Period

During the 7th to the 9th century A. D, we find that the general level of the culture and position of women was high. Women, including those not belonging to the higher classes, had some opportunities for liberal education, as well as training in fine arts (especially those of painting, music and versification). Rajyashree (sister of the renowned king Harshvardhana) was a disciple of Lord Buddha and her advice was sought on various important matters. Rajshekhar (Kavya-Mimamsa) quotes examples of princesses, daughters of high officials, of courtesans, and of concubines who were poetesses as well as adepts in sciences. Avantisundari, the wife of the poet Rajshekhar, was an exceptionally accomplished woman. Rajshekhar's *Karpurmanjari* was produced at her request and Hemachandra quotes three of her stanzas. The dramas and prose romances of this age also illustrate the contemporary state of learning among women. Here we find that court ladies and even the queens' maids-in-waiting are capable of composing excellent Sanskrit and Prakrit verses. Shila-Mahadevi, wife of Rashtrakuta emperor Dhruva, probably ruled jointly with her husband and enjoyed the privilege of granting large gifts. Several queens of the Kara dynasty ruled in Orissa. Sugandha and Didda of Kashmir administered extensive kingdoms as dowager queens.

The political condition also appears to have had their impact on the status of women. The political reverses, the atrocities due to war and the decline of prosperity, produced a detrimental effect on the society. The preaching of Upnadishism, Buddhism and Jainism started spreading and the status of widow was badly affected. Remarriage of widows was stopped and they were asked to devote themselves to an ascetic life at home. The tonsure (shaving of head) of the widow was enforced by about the eighth century A.D; the purdah system was widely used in the middle class families. There was a marked deterioration in the status of woman in the medieval period (Altekar, 1966, p.13).

3.2.4 Women in Modern Period

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the status of women was improved by the untiring efforts of the following social reformers among others:

- i. Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833)
- ii. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar (1820—1871)
- iii. Dayanand Saraswati (1827-1883)
- iv. Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884)

The important reason of the change in the social status of women in the nineteenth century is the acceptance of the tenets of liberal philosophy from the Western civilisation. It emphasised the principle of contract not the status, a rational outlook of life and its problems, freedom of speech, criticism of authority, authenticity of dogmas and insistence on the rights of man as opposed to his duties.

For the first time in India, social legislation was enacted by the Government in nineteenth century. Rammohan Rai informed Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, that there was no mention of sati in the ancient Hindu religious books. Accordingly, in 1829, he abolished sati and made it a crime. Ram Mohan Rai established Bramasamaj and advocated the principle of freedom of women and equality of sexes. The untiring effort of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar promulgated the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 and thus widow remarriage became legal. The great leaders of the nineteenth century saw the pathetic condition of thousands of child widows because of the practice of early marriage that was prevalent throughout the society.

In the last decade of the century, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) also gave a great impetus for the liberation of women from seclusion and bondage. He said, “That country and that nation which did not respect women have never become great nor will ever be in the future.” He advocated the liberation of women and equality on the basis of the vedantic ideals that state: “One and the same self is present in all beings.” According to him, the helplessness and dependence of women on man are due to the training given to her by men. In case she is not governed tyrannically her hidden power will make her a lioness. He emphasised that proper education will enable her to solve her problems and have independent thinking.

In 1917, Annie Besant (1847-1933), enlightened British women who settled down in India since 1803, launched the Home Rule agitation for the liberation of women. She was elected the President of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress. In 1918, The Calcutta Session opined that the eligibility to all elective bodies concerned with the local Government and Education. In 1919 the Nagpur Session was attended by about 200 women delegates. This was also a striking evidence of the political awakening of the Indian women. Mahatma Gandhi encouraged thousands of women to participate in the political movement. Gandhi’s fundamental faith in the equality of women was based, “on non-violence, women have a much right to establish her own destiny as man has to establish his.” He contradicted the preaching of Dharama Sastras for the injustice done to women. He expressed his opinion about the religious texts written after 300 B.C. that they advocate social inequality, promotion of child marriage and widowhood till death. According to Gandhi only the preaching of the Dharmasatras need to be followed that

advocate social equality and social justice, between man and man and between man and woman. He openly said, "I passionately desire utmost freedom of our women" (Gandhi, M. K, 1968).

3.3 WOMEN IN BUDDHISM

Buddhism rose as a protest against the steadily rigidifying Brahmanism. In the post-Vedic period the dominance of rituals increasingly grew, thereby giving indomitable power to the Brahmins. Buddhism emphasised the superfluity of any intermediary between God and man and further opened the portals of religion to all human beings without any distinction.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Buddha was the first religious teacher who gave women equal and unfettered opportunities in the field of spiritual development. Although he had pointed out on several occasions the natural tendencies and weakness of women, he had also given due credit to their abilities and capabilities. He truly paved the way for women to lead a full religious life. They were able to develop and purify their minds and realise the bliss of Nibbana just as men were. The testimonies of the Theris (Nuns) in the days of the Buddha speak amply to this fact. Gautama Buddha permitted women to join his monastic community and fully participate in it, although there were certain provisos or *garudhammas*. As Susan Murcott comments, "The nun's sangha or *bhikkhuni sangha* - the Order of Nuns – was a radical experiment of his time that truly opened to women new avenues of culture and social service and ample opportunities for public life"(Murcott, Susan, 1991, p.4).

3.3.1 Social Attitude towards Women at the Time of The Buddha

The social attitude towards women in the pre-Buddhist days can be traced from the early Vedic literature, such as the Rigveda. A woman was looked down upon as a mere possession or a thing. Her place was the home, under the complete whims and fancies of her husband. She not only had to perform all the domestic chores, but also had to bring up a large family. Some of the priestly caste Brahmins married and lived with their wives, yet regarded food cooked by women as impure and unfit to eat. A myth was built up - that all women were regarded as sinful and the only way to keep them out of mischief was to keep them endlessly occupied with the task of motherhood and domestic duties.

According to what the Buddha taught about the Law of Karma, one is responsible for one's own action and its consequence. The well-being of a father or grandfather does not depend upon the action of the son or grandson. They were responsible for their own actions. Such enlightened teachings helped to correct the views of many people and naturally reduced the anxiety of women who were unable to produce sons to perform the 'rites of the ancestors'.

In the early Buddhist period, an unmarried girl could go along, unabused, contented and adequately occupied in caring for parents and younger brothers and sisters. She might even become the owner of great possessions and rich fields; as did Subha, the daughter of a goldsmith, during the time of the Buddha. But when the Dhamma was taught to her by Mahaprajapati, Subha realised the nature of all fleeting pleasures and that 'silver and gold lead neither to peace nor to enlightenment', with the result that she entered the Order of Buddhist Nuns. This act was a great boon to unmarried women.

3.3.2 Woman's Nature

Despite the fact that the Buddha elevated the status of women, he was practical in his observations and advice given from time to time in that he realised the social and physiological differences that existed between men and women. These were depicted in the Anguttara Nikaya and Samyutta Nikaya. It was clearly mentioned that a man's duty is his unending quest for knowledge, the improvement and stabilisation of his skill and craftsmanship, and dedication to his work and ability to find the wherewithal for the maintenance and sustenance of his family. On the other hand it was stated, as a matter of fact, that it was the woman's duty to look after the home, and to look after her husband.

The Anguttara Nikaya contained some valuable advice which the Buddha gave to young girls prior to their marriage. Realising that there were bound to be difficulties with the new in-laws, the girls were enjoined to give every respect to their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, serving them lovingly as they would their own parents. They were requested to honour and respect their husband's relatives and friends, thus creating a congenial and happy atmosphere in their new homes. They were also advised to study and understand their husband's nature, ascertain their activities, character and temperament, and to be useful and co-operative at all times in their new homes. They should be polite, kind and watchful in their relationship with the servants and should safe-guard their husband's earnings and see to it that all household expenditures were properly regularised. Such advice given by the Buddha more than twenty-five centuries ago, is still valuable today.

Although in certain sections of the Tripitaka some caustic comments were made on the wiles and behaviour of women, the Buddha, in the Samyutta Nikaya, did bring forth many redeeming features: under certain circumstances, women are considered more discerning and wise than men and women are also considered capable of attaining perfection or sainthood after treading the noble Eightfold path.

The Buddha's attitude towards women can also be seen when the news of the birth of a daughter was brought to his friend, King Kosala. The King was displeased at the news as he expected a son, but the Buddha, unlike any other religious teacher, paid a glowing tribute to women and mentioned certain characteristics that adorn a woman in the following words:

"Some women are indeed better (than men). Bring her up, O Lord of men. There are women who are wise, virtuous, who have high regard for mothers-in-law, and who are chaste. To such a noble wife may be born a valiant son, a Lord of Realms, who will rule a kingdom" (Horner, I. B., 1975, p.66).

3.3.3 Real Religious Freedom for Women

The establishment of the Bhikkhuni Sangha - the Order of Nuns, in the 5th year of the Buddha's ministry, really paved the way for full religious freedom for women in the days of the Buddha. It was a splendid success. There arose many eminent nuns who shone brilliantly in the study and practice of the Dhamma. In the eyes of the world, Buddhism was raised to a very high level. The Psalms of the Sisters (Therigatha) containing 77 verses by individual nuns is one of the prides of Buddhist literature.

The Buddha did not place any restrictions on the nuns in the matter of teaching and preaching of the Dhamma. The Bhikkhuni Order produced a remarkable number of

brilliant preachers and exponents of the Dhamma e.g. Sukha, Patacara, Khema, Dhammadinna and Maha Prajapati (the foster mother of the Buddha). Buddhism never shared the Brahmin's view that a son was essential for the father's passage to heaven. Daughters became quite as good as sons and marriage was no longer a compulsory necessity. Women, under Buddhism, had the liberty to lead an independent life and go about their own business. The Buddha by granting women an active share in the religious life also helped to raise their status in secular life as well.

3.3.4 Towards Equality and Freedom

Real freedom is freedom from all forms of bondage that can be achieved only through proper spiritual development and purification of one's own mind - purging and cleansing oneself from all taints of greed, hatred and delusion. No amount of public debates, demonstrations and universal charters could bring true freedom - except through one's own diligence and heedfulness by the regular practice of meditation as taught by the Buddha.

3.4 WOMEN IN JAINISM

In the time of Mahavira, Jainism brought a more enlightened attitude to Indian religious culture. Jainism is a religious equality, devoted to recognising the rights of all living creatures; so not surprisingly it accepts that women are able to play their part on the road of liberation.

The Mahavira period, regarded best in the Jain community for the status of women, who made then a crucial revolt against the existing tradition and extended his solid support to uplift this very important but most neglected organ of the family where they became least powerful and most disregarded and controlled bitterly by men in each and every sphere. Considering all these nefarious practices and alimentative attitude of men towards women, Mahavira stood against these pernicious social elements and freed them from indignation for their own progress in all walks of life.

Some reservations had, of course to be observed due to the slight physical incapability of women. Hence, some special rules were prescribed for nuns. Though they used to be heads of their units as Pravartini and Ganavacchedini, similar to Acarya and Upadhyaya, there were entirely responsible to the Acaryas, Candana, Puspacula, Subarata, and other well-known nuns of long ago, are referred to this context. Even the patriarchal form of the society was developed and nuns were treated as slightly inferior to monks in certain respects. This however, does not hold women as anything less than human beings who, like all souls, have the right and capability to attain salvation.

Although Jainism is in many ways dedicated to equality, for some Jains a woman's femaleness creates spiritual inequality. The Digambara Jain sect believes that women cannot achieve liberation without being reborn as men first. The Svetambara sect disagrees.

Women in Jainism are treated within the same code of ethics as that is prescribed for men. Jainism advocates the code of ethics comprising of the five virtues of non-violence (AHIMSA), truth (SATYA), non-stealing (ACHAURRYA), purity of body and mind (BRAHMACHARYA) and non-possessiveness (APARIGRAHA). These codes of ethics are same for men and women. As per Jainism both men and women are supposed to

play their common roles of helping each other, working for the common welfare of all humanity, and protecting the environment. Each is responsible for his/her moral conduct.

Jainism considers men and women as equals. In reality because of the gender stereotyping that has taken place for thousands of years in a patriarchal society and inherent biological differences between men and women, the roles prescribed for men and women are different especially in a social and cultural setup. Nevertheless, men and women are equal in the eyes of Jainism for the concerns of welfare of their children and family and the roles played by them are equally important.

3.5 WOMEN IN MUSLIM SOCIETY

Women in Islam culture is a contentious issue. However, in many places the Quran says women are equal before God. The treatment of women in Islamic countries varies; while not directly commanded by the letter of the Qur'an, religious arguments are used to justify Islamic women's rights.

The complex relationship between women and Islam is defined in both Islamic texts and the history of culture of the Muslim world Sharia (Islamic Law) provides for differences between women's and men's roles, rights and obligations. Muslim-majority countries give women varying degrees of rights with regards to marriage, divorce, civil rights, legal status, dress code, and education based on different interpretations.

Islamic law is the product of Quranic guidelines, as understood by Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), as well as of the interpretations derived from various traditions of Muhammad (hadith), which were also selected by a number of historical Islamic scholars. Followers of Islam are broadly divided into a) Sunnis (overwhelmingly adherents of the teachings of Imam Abu Hanifa) and b) Shias (predominantly mainline Twelve Imamites). They are roughly 5:1 in proportion. Sunnis and Shias accord the same status to their women folk. Women are clearly subservient to men, but not commodified as they are in Wahabi households.

To analyse the impact of Islam on the status of women we have to look at the immediate pre-Islam Meccan society. It was tribal but had an active mercantile class. Mecca was at the crossroads of caravan routes and its denizens were exposed to diverse cultures. It was, of course, male dominated, but there were note-worthy women too. The prophet's first wife was a businesswoman; the prophet had actually been her employee. The first Umayyad ruler's (Muaviya) mother Hinda actually controlled her clan and incited them to fight against Muslims. Women used to openly propose to men. Infact when the prophet accompanied by his uncle, was going to visit his future wife Bibi Khatija to propose to her, a woman stopped him on the way and offered him a hundred camels if he would marry her.

Noah Feldman, a law professor at Harvard University, notes: "As for sexism, the common law long denied married women any property rights or indeed legal personality apart from their husbands. When the British applied their law to Muslims in place of Shariah, as they did in some colonies, the result was to strip married women of the property that Islamic law had always granted them — hardly progress toward equality of the sexes"(Noah Feldman, March 16, 2008).

During the early reforms under Islam in the 7th century, reforms in women's rights affected marriage, divorce and inheritance. Women were not accorded with such legal

status in other cultures, including the West, until centuries later. The Oxford Dictionary of Islam states that the general improvement of the status of women included prohibition of female infanticide and recognising women's full personhood. "The dowry, previously regarded as a bride-price paid to the father, became a nuptial gift retained by the wife as part of her personal property." Under Islamic law, marriage was no longer viewed as a "status" but rather as a "contract", in which the woman's consent was imperative. "Women were given inheritance rights in a patriarchal society that had previously restricted inheritance to male relatives." William Montgomery Watt states that Muhammad, in the historical context of his time, can be seen as a figure who testified on behalf of women's rights and improved things considerably. Watt explains: "At the time Islam began, the conditions of women were terrible - they had no right to own property, were supposed to be the property of the man, and if the man died everything went to his sons." Muhammad, however, by "instituting rights of property ownership, inheritance, education and divorce, gave women certain basic safeguards." Haddad and Esposito state that "Muhammad granted women rights and privileges in the sphere of family life, marriage, education, and economic endeavors, rights that help improve women's status in society"(Haddad, Esposito, 1997, p.163).

Women are allowed to work in Islam, subject to certain conditions, and even recommended to do so if they are in financial need. This is supported by the Quranic example of two female shepherds; Islam recognises that the society needs women to work for the sake of development. In general, women's right to work is subject to certain conditions:

- The work should not require the woman to violate Islamic law (e.g., serving alcohol), and be mindful of the woman's safety.
- If the work requires the woman to leave her home, she must maintain her modesty.
- A woman may not remain in isolation with an adult male, because as per Hadith, the third one among them is the devil, thus chances of going astray will be avoided.
- Her work should not affect more important commitments, such as those towards her family.

According to a saying attributed to Muhammad, women are allowed to go to mosques. However, as Islam spread, it became unusual for women to worship in mosques because of fears of unchastity caused by interaction between sexes; this condition persisted until the late 1960s. Since then, women have become increasingly involved in the mosque, though men and women generally worship separately. Separation between sexes ranges from men and women on opposite sides of an aisle, to men in front of women (as was the case in the time of Muhammad), to women in second-floor balconies or separate rooms accessible by a door for women only.

3.6 WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY

The image of woman in one particular religion, in this case Christianity, is far from being uniform; it always includes several aspects, possibly exclusive of each other. At certain times, some traits may become more prominent than others due to extraneous reasons. As the earlier views on women seem to be more differentiated than later ones when positions have become more fixed and rigid, we tend to react strongly against the image of the most immediate past, the image of woman closest to us (Tavard, G. H., 1973).

Two quite different images of the nature and status of woman can be inferred from the two accounts of creation in the Old Testament. The two divergent traditions can be followed right through Biblical literature. Social conditions assigned an inferior position to women but Jesus's behaviour, as recorded in the Gospels, does not follow traditional Jewish reserve. To his companions' surprise, he speaks with the Samaritan woman at the well. He heals women as well as men, entertains relations of friendship with Martha and Mary. The group of his followers includes both married and unmarried women. His teaching on marriage implies the equality of man and woman. This will be of great importance for the concept of womanhood in the early Church; it was at variance with the mainstream of the rabbinic tradition (Ibid., p. 20).

However, the ambiguity of the status of women comes out strongest in the writings of St. Paul. There are those texts which clearly express the subordination of women. For centuries, Pauline teaching that woman is the glory of man and that women are not allowed to speak in Church was taken as the scriptural justification of woman's subjugation to man and the exclusion of women from liturgical activity in Christian Churches. The married woman stands at the bottom of a hierarchy at the top of which is God. Christ and husband mediate in between, so that the woman seems further removed from Christ and from God than her husband (Ibid., p.28).

The striving for an acting out of spiritual freedom found in baptism, and for a realisation of the kingdom of God on earth in tension with the given social environment, characterises much of the history of early Christianity. In principle, there was the equality of women with men found through baptism; in practice, however, the living out of this spiritual freedom could only be realised through strong asceticism and lived by an ascetic elite. Logically, the spiritual freedom given to woman in baptism should have been followed by her complete emancipation in the world. This consequence, however, is only coming into force today.

3.6.1 Ideals of Asceticism

Historically, the freedom of venture and new experiment was soon curtailed when the immediacy of the coming of the kingdom of God receded into the background as only a remote possibility. Christians became settled; the church had to accommodate itself to the world at large. Injunctions for the behaviour and status of women were modelled on the example of the Hellenistic and Roman environment; women were assigned to their customary, subordinate position. Liberation, found in the New Testament through the experience of baptism, was now only possible through the strictest asceticism, a path theoretically open to both men and women. However, many ascetic writings also reflect a strong anti feminist character. The view of woman, as an embodiment of evil and at the root of all, sexual evil gained strong support. Woman was seen as a creature of imperfection and congenital weakness.

It is equally important to remember that only relatively late in the early history of Christian thought did marriage come to be considered a sacrament. In the first centuries, marriage was mainly a family and civic affair. The ordinary Christian woman had the status assigned to her by society. Only the consecrated virgin could claim equality with men as a member of an ascetic elite. Both Western and Eastern Christianity promoted the life of consecrated virginity but the Western Church tended to separate, much more than was ever the case in the East, the liturgical service of the Lord from contact with women. In the West, the marriage of priests was abolished by the decision of a Council in the twelfth century;

instead of the custom dying out, however, we find much clerical concubinage in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the desire of priests to marry reappeared. The Protestant Churches of the reformation all allowed their ministers to marry whilst the Council of Trent reiterated the prohibition of clerical marriage in the Catholic Church, this time with a great deal of success. New questioning of this decision is only recurring in our own day.

3.6.2 No Adequate Model of Woman

The double typology of womanhood – subordination or equality – is reflected in many contemporary Christian writings, both Catholic and Protestant. Referring to various Catholic models of womanhood, the central problem was the open schizophrenia they imply. There is the presence of contradictory streams of thought to see woman as weak and as a symbol of temptation, and to idealise her as a symbol of transcendent goodness.... Encomiums of the feminine ideal and praises of the Virgin Mary notwithstanding, the position of woman reflects the idea of her debility rather than any other of the elements of the total Catholic tradition.... Thus it happens that Catholics who wish to promote the rights of women today confront us with the humanistic tradition of Simone de Beauvoir, with Freudian reconstructions or, at a lower level of sophistication, with statistical data on women in and out of wedlock (Ibid., p.149).

The conclusion to be drawn from a survey of the Christian tradition is that there exists no fully adequate Christian model of woman which would meet modern women's requirements and this can be said of the traditional image of woman in all religious traditions.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have learnt about the position of the women in different periods of civilisation- ancient, medieval and modern period. In the ancient ages, women enjoyed equal status and rights, especially during the early Vedic period. However, later (approximately 500 B.C), the status of women began to decline with the Smritis (especially Manusmriti) and with the Islamic invasion and the Mughal empire and later Christianity curtailing women's freedom and rights. The Indian women's position further deteriorated during the medieval period when Sati, Child marriages and a ban on widow remarriages became part of social life in India. The Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent brought the purdah practice in the Indian society. The status of women as accorded in various religions was exclusively dealt with in this Unit.

3.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the role of women in different cultures.
2. Compare and contrast the role of women in Hinduism and Islam.
3. Compare and contrast the role of women in Buddhism and Jainism.

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UNIT 4 PEACE BUILDING: WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE

Structure

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Peace Building involves establishing normalised relations between ordinary citizens on both sides of a conflict. Although it can be done at any time, Peace Building efforts usually follow peacekeeping (the enforced prevention of further violence) and peacemaking (the forging of an actual settlement agreement). Unlike peacekeeping which can be implemented relatively quickly, and peace-making, which can occur over a period of a few months, Peace Building usually takes a number of years. John Paul Lederach, an expert on Peace Building, has observed that it takes people at least as long to get out of a conflict as it does to get into one- and some of the conflicts have gone on for decades, or even centuries (John Paul Lederach, 1997). So Peace Building is a very long, slow process.

Peace Building usually involves efforts to increase "normal," co-operative contacts between opponents. Stephen Ryan explains that peacekeeping "builds barriers between warriors," while Peace Building "builds bridges between the ordinary people." Efforts are made to open channels of communication, get people involved in joint projects, work with the media and the educational system to try to break down stereotypes and reduce prejudice and discrimination. The goal of all of these efforts is reconciliation- getting the people to accept each other as part of their own group or be reconciled to mutual co-existence and tolerance.

At the heart of the notion of peace building is the idea of meeting needs: for security and

order, for a reasonable standard of living, and for recognition of identity and worth. Conflict, whether cross-border or in country, typically begins, and continues, when important interests or needs of one or more parties are frustrated, threatened or remain unfulfilled. Of course many of the strategies are there for identifying needs and interests and seeking so far as possible to accommodate and reconcile them. But whereas there the focus is on resolving a particular dispute or conflict, here it is more general: on creating the conditions that will ensure that problems needing such attention would not occur, or recur, at all.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to understand

- The concept of Peace Building;
- Contrast between Peace Building, peacemaking and peacekeeping;
- The role of women in Peace Building.

4.2 MEANING OF PEACE BUILDING

The term peace building is a semantic innovation, but the idea behind it has roots in old religious and moral teachings. Part of the doctrine's foundations found expressions in the writings on the 'law of Nature', in the concepts of human touch in the time of the Renaissance, and later on the postulates of the young bourgeoisie attacking the privileges of the Church and the absolute rule of emperors. The French Revolutions were influenced by these writings and the postulates of the enlightenment, as well as by the formulations of "Bills of Rights" concerned with equality and liberty as the factors of war prevention and assertion of peace (Collins Jr. E.,1970).

Peace Building, or post-conflict reconstruction, is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building and political as well as economic transformation.

Peace Building initiatives are not limited to the post-conflict environment. Most of the tasks described above are effective tools to prevent conflicts. Furthermore, a negotiated peace-agreement should include an agenda for reconstruction to secure sustainability. And during peacekeeping missions the first steps into post-conflict reconstruction can be taken. Reconstruction should be multidimensional and multi-sectoral.

Peace Building is complex and results materialise only in the medium and long-term. A great number of agents engage in a wide variety of reconstruction efforts. These efforts include addressing the functional and emotional dimensions of Peace Building in specified target areas, such as civil society and legal institutions, among others. Evaluating the success and failure of Peace Building efforts is therefore especially challenging.

4.2.1 Pre-conflict Peace Building

Preventive peace building within states, in which both the international community and individuals states themselves have mutually supportive roles to play, should aim to achieve progress in reducing the gap between rich and poor, to extend basic human rights to all people (including minorities), to promote sustainable development and to advance a just

and fair society which does not discriminate on grounds of gender and race. Preventive peace building at this level also seeks to promote adherence by states to the established standards of good international citizenship. Good internal government is the necessary foundation of good global governance.

4.2.2 Post-conflict Peace Building

All the strategies appropriate to pre-conflict peace building are just as applicable to post-conflict situations, but there are some additional things that often need to be done- again through a combination of national effort and international support- to meet the special needs of countries and people shattered by warfare. The task in these situations will often be no less than the total reconstitution of broken and devastated societies.

4.3 UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENT: AN AGENDA FOR PEACE

According to the United Nations (UN) document *An Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali), Peace Building consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation and societal transformation. Peace Building is a long-term process that occurs after violent conflict has slowed down or come to a halt. Thus, it is the phase of the peace process that takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping. Former Secretary-General Boutros Ghali put the point with absolute clarity in “An Agenda for Peace”: “The authority of the United Nations system to act in this field would rest on the consensus that social peace is as important as strategic or political peace. There is an obvious connection between democratic practices – such as the rule of law and transparency in decision making and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order” (Boutros-Ghali, Boutros, 1993, pp.323-332).

Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), on the other hand, understand Peace Building as an umbrella concept that encompasses not only long-term transformative efforts, but also peacemaking and peacekeeping. In this view, Peace Building includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements and the establishment of peace zones.

In the narrower sense, Peace Building is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. This consists of a set of physical, social, and structural initiatives that are often an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

It is generally agreed that the central task of Peace Building is to create positive peace, a “stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war.” Sustainable peace is characterised by the absence of physical and structural violence, the elimination of discrimination, and self-sustainability (Luc Reycklerr, 2001, p.12). Moving towards this sort of environment goes beyond problem solving or conflict management. Peace Building initiatives try to fix the core problems that underlie the conflict and change the patterns of interaction of the involved parties. They aim to move a given population from a condition of extreme vulnerability and dependency to one of self-sufficiency and well being (John Paul Lederach, 1997, p.75).

4.4 WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING

There are various ways to attempt to coordinate peace-building efforts. One way is to develop a peace inventory to keep track of which agents are doing various peace-building activities. A second is to develop clearer channels of communication and more points of contact between the elite and middle ranges. In addition, a coordination committee should be instituted so that agreements reached at the top level are actually capable of being implemented. A third way to better coordinate peace-building efforts is to create peace-donor conferences that bring together representatives from humanitarian organisations, NGOs, and the concerned governments. It is often noted that “Peace Building would greatly benefit from cross-fertilization of ideas and expertise and the bringing together of people working in relief, development, conflict resolution, arms control, diplomacy, and peacekeeping.” Fourthly, there should be efforts to link internal and external actors. Any external initiatives must also enhance the capacity of internal resources to build peace-enhancing structures that support reconciliation efforts throughout a society.

Lastly, with the discussion on women’s role in peace building at the 2005 World Summit, the world leaders reaffirmed the important role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. They called for the full and effective implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security and, for the first time, accepted the inter-linkages across development, peace and security and human rights. This new resolve for integrated approaches to peacebuilding became a core rationale for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In making gender equality the PBC’s only thematic mandate, a new doctrinal imperative was created for ensuring systematic attention and resources to advancing gender equality within transitional recovery, reintegration and reconstruction efforts. Since peacebuilding aimed to reconstitute various structures, it had the potential to remedy previous structural gender inequalities, while constructing a more just society. Since gender inequities sometimes shaped forms of violence used in conflicts, addressing them had the potential to prevent future violence. It was important to take advantage of post-conflict opportunities and resist efforts to return to the pre-conflict status quo that may have been discriminatory towards women.

Indeed, the reality for women in post-conflict situations has grown increasingly brutal as the scourge of HIV/AIDS accumulates and interacts with the effects of poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation. Today, women in the aftermath of crisis have perilously little protection or access to services, justice, economic security or citizenship. Delivery to meet basic needs and safeguard fundamental rights is unrepentantly lacking. A recent assessment of the United Nations Development Programme’s work in crisis prevention and recovery exposed an exhaustive failure to integrate a gender perspective into the United Nations (UN) system’s approach to early recovery, transition and reintegration.

Justice and security sector reform is the arena in which women’s needs are greatest and gaps in response most glaring. Despite increasing violence against women in conflict’s aftermath, their protection typically receives less attention than higher profile street crimes, homicides, political corruption, gangs, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) initiatives. Although recent attention has been given to rape and sexual torture as weapons of war, these very same violations - when committed after a ceasefire - and often by the very same perpetrators, tend to be recast in peace-building processes as private, domestic concerns. Most often, women’s security is considered a ‘human rights’

or 'women's issue' rather than a security sector imperative. Yet undeniably, in many post-conflict settings, the formal security institutions charged with women's protection, namely the military, civilian police and even peacekeepers, are sometimes among the perpetrators of violence against them and fail to serve as accountability institutions to which women can turn for redress and security.

Within and across post-conflict situations, there are sharp inconsistencies in the support provided by the international community to women's machineries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In transitional recovery, women's increased care-burdens and the gender specific impacts of macro-economic, labour and social protection policies are largely unaddressed. The considerable variance in the standards of basic and emergency health services provided to women in different countries is often associated with the ideology, funding source and/or political affiliation of the funding partners.

4.5 GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE ON GENDER AND PEACE BUILDING

As a relatively new field, unmet demands and huge gaps persist in knowledge on gender and peacebuilding and in how it is created and used intellectually, politically and in meeting practical needs. From management skills to infrastructure, technical expertise to resources, capacity is lacking within women's peacebuilding institutions, and within and outside of government and the multilateral system. In the context of peace processes there is a systematic absence of gender expertise, conflicting UN positions on women's human rights issues such as quotas and emergency reproductive health care, and an under-representation of women in decision-making.

In the few cases where consensus on gender issues had been reached at the early stages of negotiations, implementation has been thwarted by the absence of public support and sufficient resources. Unequivocally, involving women and gender expertise in peacebuilding activities is essential for reconstituting political, legal, cultural and socio-economic and social structures so that they can deliver on gender equality goals. Gender equality brings to peace-building new degrees of democratic inclusiveness, faster and more durable economic growth and human and social capital recovery. Indeed, peacebuilding may well offer the single greatest opportunity to redress gender inequities and injustices of the past while setting new precedents for the future. But these opportunities can be enhanced significantly – or constrained – by how the international community sets its priorities for recovery and uses its resources for peacebuilding.

4.6 THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION'S GENDER MANDATE

This Unit explores the early experiences and potential of the Peacebuilding Commission in integrating a gender perspective into its work. Although the gender equality mandate of the PBC and Security Council are complementary, their structures and functions denote very different opportunities for making women and gender issues central to the UN's peacebuilding agenda.

As an advisory body, the PBC has a broad mandate to bring together the UN's capacities and experience in peacebuilding, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and longer-term development. The PBC is a central

node for helping to create and promote comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding, both in general terms and in country situations. Its mandate to integrate a gender perspective into all of its work, therefore, represents a crucial opportunity for developing policy guidance and ensuring adequate resources for early recovery activities that both fully engage women in their design and implementation, and redress structural inequalities that existed prior to and during the conflict, and which may have also shaped the forms of violence used. Gender equality speaks directly to the PBC's aim of "focusing attention and consolidating good practice on vital cross-cutting issues...for which effective programmes must draw on the capacities and plans of actors across the full range of political-security-humanitarian-development activities."

4.6.1 Gender within the context of the PBC Frameworks for Sierra Leone and Burundi

This assessment of opportunities for strengthening support for women and peacebuilding within the context of established PBC priorities is based on a review of the PBC Strategic Frameworks, Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Priority Plans, Project Summaries and Reports for Sierra Leone and Burundi, contributions from civil society consultations, academic and policy research on the PBC itself and in the field of gender and peacebuilding.

4.6.1.1 Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework

- (a) Encouraging efforts have been made to engage women at various levels within PBC processes for Sierra Leone. In particular, a National Consultation for Enhancing Women's Engagement with the UN's Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone, convened by UNIFEM and PBSO in January 2007, proved effective in informing women leaders and civil society organisations about the PBC, and for helping establish a national peacebuilding agenda for women. The engagement of the PBSO and UNIFEM HQ in the Consultation ensured information flow and appropriate technical support. Also the selection of the Mano River Women's Network for Peace as one of two civil society representatives on the PBF National Steering Committee was a significant demonstration of commitment to women's participation in the PBC processes.
- (b) The PBC has played an effective role in facilitating gender-aware legal and judicial reform and is credited with providing much needed political support to ensure the long overdue adoption of a legal framework that outlaws domestic violence, ensures women's right to inheritance and to own property. Moreover, Sierra Leone's Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (Framework) specifies the need to increase women's access to courts, help ensure property rights and, most crucially, provide alternatives to the customary court system. Sierra Leone's Framework commits increased support to Family Support Units of the national police to address sexual and gender based violence and other crimes against women.
- (c) The PBC's future support to Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission should emphasise appropriate reforms and strategies to increase women's participation and representation in elected positions, including through voter registration, civic education, election observation, electoral system reforms, constituency development, training, party and media codes of conduct and gender sensitive policy research and legislative reform. In this regard, the Women's National Consultation recommended specialised

physical and psycho-social and economic support for survivors of sexual violence, including immediate access to fistula surgery, testing and treatment for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

- (d) Although Sierra Leone's Life Expectancy at Birth is 41, the government of Sierra Leone and the Peace Building Cooperation Framework define youth to be between the ages of 15-35.

This recognises that those who are currently 35 would have been 18 when the conflict commenced, while those who are 15 would have been 2 years older. Effective youth empowerment and employment strategies will clearly need to respond to different needs across the development cycle and the very different impacts that the conflict had on boys and girls.

In this regard, the women's consultation drew attention to the needs of children born of rape and recommended the creation of safe houses for young women survivors of SGBV (Sexual and Gender Based Violence) and training for female counsellors to support them. They also recommended 50% quotas for participation in Youth Employment Schemes, and special programmes for young girls not reached by the DDR process.

- (e) Urgent needs in the energy sector underpin many of Sierra Leone's growth and recovery challenges. As the PBC supports short-term emergency needs for the generation, distribution and management of electricity supply to Freetown and its surrounding areas, a gender energy needs assessment should be carried out to take account of the different energy needs of men and women. Giving priority to women's energy needs – safe transportation, lighting and energy – will go a long way toward ensuring their safety. The management and governance of natural resources for the benefit of the people of Sierra Leone must also engage women and ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all related decision-making.

4.6.1.2 Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi

- (a) The participation of women in the Arusha peace process was crucial for ensuring the centrality of gender equality to Burundi's framework for democratic governance and peacebuilding. But the lack of sustained financial support to build on this momentum and women's exclusion from many of the implementing mechanisms limited the potential impact of their initial engagement. In October 2006, UNIFEM and the Ministry of Gender and a number of civil society organisations organised a consultation on gender and peacebuilding in order to influence the preparations for the PBC and PBF engagement. The consultation resulted in a number of recommendations which informed the PBF project dealing with gender and peacebuilding. Despite these early efforts, Burundian women's organisations relied heavily on international NGOs to provide access to information.
- (b) In government, however, women are well represented. The introduction of quotas in the peace agreement and in the new constitution was highly effective in increasing women's participation in governance. Women now account for 30% of parliamentarians and seven of 20 ministers. For the first time, women were elected as chiefs of communes. Burundian women have called for support to reinforce the work of women's machineries within all ministries, to ensure effective gender mainstreaming.

- (c) Despite constitutional guarantees of gender equality, Burundian women continue to face discrimination in family law, property, inheritance and criminal law, employment and taxation: the Family Code legalises forced and early marriage following rape or coerced sex. Despite these challenges, the Peacebuilding Strategic Framework makes no references to the need for capacity building for gender-sensitive judicial reform or for gender responsive security sector reform nor within deliberations about opportunities for transitional justice.
- (d) The Strategic Framework calls attention to risks posed by security forces who commit violations against civilians and underscores the need to ensure demobilisation and reintegration, and redefine security mandates and create a police force responsible for citizens' security. Yet the only engagements to respond to these risks are listed under the commitments of women's organisations themselves.
- (e) Although Burundi's PRSP speaks to a range of privatisation strategies, the Strategic Framework expresses concern that economic reforms, such as the privatisation of public enterprises may cause a deterioration of social conditions and generate conflicts. The Framework calls for economic and land reforms to be implemented concurrently with basic social protection reforms. This is particularly relevant for the resettlement and reintegration challenges faced by internally displaced and refugee women and children. The Framework points to increased risk of sexual violence among widows in particular because they have been forced to engage in transactional and coerced sexual relations in exchange for protection, housing and family survival.
- (f) Burundi's PBF Priority Plan explicitly focuses on strengthening peace and social cohesion through the role of youth and women. Although it recognises the special needs of displaced women, those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and their entitlements to land and other sources of production, it gives no indication of strategies for responding to these needs.
- (g) Burundi's Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism provides a model template for developing gender sensitive indicators and benchmarks for achieving gender equality goals. It should be expanded and used as a basis for monitoring progress and assessing obstacles membership on the Joint Steering Committee and in the PBC support office.

4.7 STRENGTHENING THE AGENDA FOR WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING

4.7.1 Substantive Gender Gaps within the Peacebuilding Commission's Agenda

4.7.1.1 Military to Civilian Transitions

Despite growing awareness of the psycho-social needs of survivors of violence in conflict, effective responses have yet to be developed. But even less attention is given to the psycho-social consequences of war-induced stress among veterans and former combatants in their transition from military to civilian life. Clearly, unhealed psychic wounds, particularly among combatants and survivors increase the risk of family, community and societal violence and rupture. Decades of studies of returning veterans in the United States have established links between combat trauma and higher rates of unemployment, homelessness, gun ownership, child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, suicide, homicide and criminality. While there are clearly lessons to be learned from Western experiences, there

is no equivalent body of literature or experience in post-conflict settings. Nascent efforts to respond to the psycho-social impacts of war on children and of sexual violence on men and women draw from non-conflict settings and are based on western, clinical, psycho-therapeutic approaches. Urgent attention – intellectual and programmatic – is needed to address the psycho-social issues of recovery from violence and its perpetration.

4.7.1.2 Social Protection

For women – especially those who have been cast away from their families as a result of the violence perpetrated upon them - expanded social insurance packages and basic living allowances can prevent their engagement in survival, transactional or commercial sex or other exploitative situations. These programmes can guarantee women's access to medical care and unemployment insurance (for which they are typically excluded since they had never been among the registered employed). They can also reach women and elder caregivers, who, just at the point in their lives when they expect to be taken care of by their children, are forced to take in relatives, orphans, and even their own adult children who may have HIV/AIDS or be otherwise incapacitated. The expansion of child-care facilities and provision of transportation can contribute enormously to easing these burdens. In this regard, priority must be given to developing social security and protection systems.

4.7.1.3 HIV/AIDS

Every country in sub-Saharan Africa affected by conflict also has a generalised HIV/AIDS epidemic – two-thirds with prevalence rates above 5%. Many of the forces driving conflict are also those driving HIV/AIDS – poverty, famine, environmental degradation, human rights violations and weak governance systems. The Security Council's recognition of HIV/AIDS as a threat to international peace and security has yet to bring about appropriate measures in peacebuilding situations for prevention, care and treatment. As populations at risk - including soldiers, former combatants, refugees and displaced persons - return and reintegrate into their communities, many are no longer able to access 'humanitarian' support they received during conflict for HIV and AIDS. As governments need time to establish national HIV/AIDS infrastructure, lapses in prevention, care and treatment can create acute medical crises, new strains and risks of infection, resistance to anti-retroviral treatment, and increased stigma and discrimination.

4.7.2 Strategic Considerations of Issues on the Peacebuilding Commission's Agenda

4.7.2.1 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Exploitation

Sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation is often unrecognised, invisible, and critical impediment to effective peacebuilding. It is a foundational constraint on women's capacity to exercise their citizenship rights, their leadership roles and contributions to reconciliation. It affects not only their mobility and health, but also the way they are perceived as legitimate participants in post-conflict decision-making. The perpetuation of SGBV with impunity signals that peace has not been achieved for at least half the population. The scale and scope of sexual violence in post-conflict situations has implications for, and is affected by, virtually every aspect of peacebuilding, from small arms control and weapons reduction to HIV/AIDS risk, transportation planning, economic recovery and reintegration. The psycho-social damage – to survivors and perpetrators – is one of the most pervasive threats to social cohesion at family, community and national levels.

Responses to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, however, have been very narrowly defined, under-resourced and inconsistently addressed throughout the peacebuilding frameworks and priority plans. In part, this is because very little exists in the way of evidence-based approaches to SGBV prevention, protection, physical and psychosocial recovery. Given the recent initiatives in a number of countries to develop national action plans to prevent SGBV, the PBC and the PBSO might assess the effectiveness of this approach and, in collaboration with UNFPA, UN Action, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNICEF and others, identify ways in which peacebuilding frameworks can more systematically address this concern.

4.7.2.2 Security Sector Reform

By giving priority to security sector reform, the Peacebuilding Commission recognises that physical security and freedom from violence are essential preconditions for peaceful recovery. But strategies to increase women's protection and ensure a more accountable, responsive and representative security sector have yet to be identified in the peacebuilding frameworks and priority plans. A comprehensive re-envisioning of a gender-responsive security sector is urgently needed. Across the security sector, urgent attention must be given to establishing accountability systems, gender sensitive recruitment, selection and retention policies; specific procedures for registering crimes against women and protecting victims; gender responsive police structures, deployment, risk assessment, research, and crime and injury data and information collection systems. Additional focus should be given to other sectors of enforcement (e.g. peacekeeping, army, customs, prisons, immigration); oversight (including Ministries of Finance, Interior and Justice) and in identifying risks to women posed by non-statutory security elements

4.7.2.3 Judicial Reform

Increasing women's access to justice requires legal reforms that bring formal and traditional justice systems into conformity with human rights norms and standards. Ending gender discrimination requires technical support for enacting constitutional, legislative, electoral, judicial reforms, and the reform of military codes.

Increasing women's legal literacy and aid, monitoring and reporting women's human rights violations, ensuring reparations and restitution for women, and training and capacity building for gender justice must also be central to reform efforts. Constructing special courtrooms and prisons for women, and providing necessary office equipment and translation services are necessary starting points. Drawing from experiences in India, Fiji, the United States, Australia, Scotland and elsewhere, consideration should be given to establishing special courts to try sexual and gender based crimes and relieve the backlog of cases. Lessons should also be learned from recent experiences in Liberia, Sierra Leone, India, Peru, and Brazil on the establishment of specialised police stations for women, and the establishment of hospital police.

4.7.2.4 The Micro-economics of Gender Responsive Peacebuilding

The macro-economic principles and strategies underpinning Peacebuilding Frameworks – drawing largely from the PRSPs, and reinforced in MTEPs and UNDAFs - may inadvertently undermine national strategies for gender equality. It is well known that women suffer disproportionately from the stringent macro-economic policies often put in place during a country's transition to peace. Composing eighty percent of the rural

agricultural workforce, women often experience a severe adverse impact from the commercialisation and privatisation of agricultural land.

Heavy-handed cuts to social sectors and the introduction of user fees further restrict women's access to health services and education. As women and men occupy unequal positions in the labour market and the household, women are more negatively affected by policies that privatise basic service provision, including energy, communications, transportation, health care and education. While privatisation has been seen to expand markets and increase foreign investment, there is little analysis that shows privatising basic services actually benefit the poor. Claims of a more efficient private sector have yet to be established while outsourcing public sector employment is known to disproportionately affect women's employment. The PBC is therefore encouraged to assess existing macro-economic frameworks for gender bias in their conception and impact; carry out demand-side assessments of women's needs in water, sanitation and energy; and advocate for appropriate reforms and redress.

4.7.2.5 Socio-economic Recovery

Within Peacebuilding Frameworks and poverty reduction strategies, 'pro-poor' investments in human capacity are targeted primarily at the most marginalised through low-skill vocational training, public works employment, micro-credit and primary education. But no country has ever developed without investing in the human skills needed to use modern technology and shape intellectual and research agendas.

Strategic consideration must be given to supporting secondary and tertiary education, agricultural research and basic sciences, and the development of information and communications technologies. The PBC can help expand the international community's focus beyond micro credit, to consider socio-economic strategies which build on women's historical successes in market based social entrepreneurship, trading, the fisheries and agriculture including through the provision of substantial loans, support for technical skills upgrades, and removal of gender biases in market access. Short-term programmes like those in Sierra Leone which support expatriate transfers of knowledge should also be explored.

4.7.2.6 Democracy and Good Governance

In many conflict and post-conflict countries, national mechanisms and machineries for the advancement of women have been established but must be strengthened to ensure women's active participation in public policy formulation and implementation. Current PBC approaches in Burundi and Sierra Leone lack visible support for national women's rights machinery and would benefit from 'best practice' guidance on the most effective formulations for women's engagement in post-conflict governance.

Constraints to women's meaningful engagement in political institutions and public decision-making require specific commitments to address factors that inhibit women's ability to campaign for public office or their freedom of choice at the polls. Both countries have reported encouraging experiences with affirmative action, such as informal and formal quotas and it is recommended that the PBC consolidate best practices on this issue so that UN support for elections provides consistent advice on this issue.

4.7.2.7 Empowerment and Employment

Neither Burundi nor Sierra Leone will be able to achieve their goals of youth empowerment

and employment without developing strategies that respond to different needs of youth across the development cycle and to the very different impacts that the conflict had on boys and girls. Both age and socio-economic location throughout protracted civil wars are critical determinants of impact, as are the direct experiences of young people as participants and survivors. Responding to the needs of young women require targeted strategies that address the very different impacts and experiences of conflict by young people of different ages. Adolescence, especially, is a particularly fragile developmental stage; strategies for reaching this group will need to be tailored to different sexual and reproductive health needs and rights, intellectual stages of development and dependency burdens. This very under-developed field of knowledge and practice needs to consider new ways of responding to issues such as coerced and forced early marriage, teenage pregnancy, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation, HIV/AIDS.

4.8 SUMMARY

As has been dealt with in this Unit, Peace Building involves establishing normalised relations between ordinary citizens on both sides of a conflict. Although it can be done at any time, Peace Building efforts usually follow peacekeeping (the enforced prevention of further violence) and peacemaking (the forging of an actual settlement agreement). Unlike peacekeeping which can be implemented relatively quickly, and peace-making, which can occur over a period of a few months, Peace Building usually takes a number of years. John Paul Lederach has observed that it takes people at least as long to get out of a conflict as it does to get into one. Peace Building usually involves efforts to increase “normal,” co-operative contacts between opponents. Stephen Ryan explains that peacekeeping “builds barriers between warriors,” while Peace Building “builds bridges between the ordinary people.” The goal of all of these efforts is reconciliation- getting the people to accept each other as part of their own group or be reconciled to mutual co-existence and tolerance. In this Unit, you have learnt about the peace building efforts that are needed to reconstruct a society torn by conflict. It has a major impact on women and the Unit has dealt with these issues in detail.

4.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Examine the role of women in building Peace.
2. Point out the main differences between Peacebuilding from gender an general perspective
3. What are the strategic considerations of Issues on the Peacebuilding Commission’s Agenda?

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