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rment and Transformation in New India"

noration of

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Raja Ram Mohan Roy

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Contents

From the desk of the editor-in-chief…

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1722–1833) was a social reformer and identified as India's greatest feminist. He was at the forefront to liberate women against social injustices such as child marriage, polygamy and sathi. Further, he advocated a number of social reforms like widow marriage, women education, property rights to women etc. To commemorate his 250th birth anniversary, Govt. of India is organizing educative programmes and one such national conference is organized at A.J. Institute of Management, Mangalore in collaboration with Ananya Institute for Development Research and Social Action, Lucknow, with the support of Ministry of Culture, Government of India. On this auspicious occasion, A.J. Institute of Management is bringing out a special issue on the conference theme "**Relevance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Women Empowerment and Transformation in New India**". I feel privileged to place before the learned people, Volume 12 and No. 2 the special issue of the bi-annual journal, containing the scholarly article on the relevance of **Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Women Empowerment,** authored by Dr. A K Singh**.**

Relevance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Women Empowerment and Transformation in New India

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Abstract

The Government of India has launched the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to commemorate and celebrate 75 years of independence as well as the glorious past of its people, culture, and accomplishments. This Mahotsav is devoted to the Indian people who, in addition to playing a significant role in the country's progress to date, also possess the strength and capacity to realize Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a self-sufficient India. The Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is commemorating and celebrating Raja Ram Mohan Roy's 250th birth anniversary. One of the greatest socio-religious reformers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who gave the concept of modern India. On May 22, 1772, Raj Ram Mohan Roy was born in a time when society was plagued by injustices covered in religious garb. The architect of modern India was known as Raja Ram Mohan Roy who started "Bengal Renaissance". He led the way in modernizing education in India and campaigned against superstition. He led a fight against Hindu traditions and was instrumental in releasing women from a number of societal evils including 'Sati', polygamy, child marriage, and widow remarriage. He also pushed for widow remarriage and passionately supported women's education. He was adamant about giving women their due in society. In the Hindu Dharma Sabha, he steadfastly fought for women's rights, arguing that the old Vedic Shastric rules never approved of the mistreatment of women at the time. He also had an impact on the British government, which changed the law when needed. His efforts led to the banning of 'Sati Pratha', the granting of inheritance rights to women, and the promotion of women's education as being equally essential to that of males. He was a pioneer in the fields of women's empowerment and education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a strong and logical thinker who provided innovative and integrative thought to light up the dim nineteenth-century Indian civilization. India is hence recognized as one of the renaissance's founders. He is still respected for being a pioneer in Indian society, culture, and education. His contribution to society's general development will always be cherished. He aimed to create a prosperous and

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healthy India. Her views on women's rights and education have given rise to an image of social, cultural, and religious transformation. In the eyes of enlightened future generations, he represents India. Therefore, Ram Mohan Roy's contributions to social reform, women's rights, and education in India and around the world are still very relevant today. One of the few individuals in his era, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, fully understood the significance of the contemporary age. He understood that the objective of human civilization is a brotherhood of interdependence between individuals and nations, not an isolation of independence. His goal was to fully awaken Indians to their unique cultural identities and to help them understand the realities that were particular to their civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic cooperation. Raja Ram Mohan Roy has vehemently fought against society's unfair superstitions and the injustice of women's rights. He made an effort to free women from irrational beliefs. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is revered as a national hero in India for securing and defending women's rights.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy encouraged nationalism and independent thought among the Indian people, and it now appears that those seeds have grown into a banyan tree. He first gave visitors an introduction to Indian society, culture, and values. As a result, negative perceptions of Indians were eliminated. He was referred to as the "first cultural pioneer of India" as a result. He was able to forge a connection between Eastern and Western, as well as culture and education. According to the National Education Policy 2020, reputable foreign universities would be able to open campuses in India and offer students a high-quality education. In other words, it is obvious that developing a connection between East and West education is a priority for the National Education Policy 2020. Following India's independence, a number of committees, commissions, and national education policies were established for the empowerment and education of women, placing a particular emphasis on women's education. He has made a special contribution to women's liberation, equal dignity, and the women's liberation movement in the area of social development while bearing in mind the growth of women. The protection of women's rights is emphasized particularly in the Indian Constitution. As a result, it is clear that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a pioneer in his era in releasing women from various social evils so they may benefit from the opportunity to pursue education and self-empowerment. Several reformist religious organizations were started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to promote social change. He established the Calcutta Unitarian Association in 1821, the Brahmo Sabha in 1828, and the Atmiya Sabha in 1815. Ram Mohan Roy contributed to the movement for free press in India through his writings.

In order to foster and highlight the achievements of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in improving the conditions of women in the Indian society, and social change as well as transformation in new India under the dynamic leadership of our Honorable Prime Minister, the proposed seminar will prove to be a way of paying a true tribute to him and we do hope that it will continue to inspire the young generation about the great deeds, high ideals of the visionary pioneer of the concept of modern India in New India.

Keywords : Relevance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Transformation

Section: A

Raja Ram Mohan Roy: A Pioneer of Modern India

Introduction:

When the British established their dominion in India after the battles of Plessey (1757) and Buxar (1762), India was in a general state of degradation and ruin. Conditions in the social, political, economic, cultural, and educational spheres were deteriorating and stagnating. Rabindranath Tagore observed that "the life was dried up and it exhibited all those dead and forgotten customs, superstitions and prejudices, all the ignorance and fear, all feuds, all anger and separateness, all unjustifiable remoteness from the broad world" (Bose, 1976). Bengal in particular was experiencing social and educational stagnation and degradation during the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Religion-related extremism was much to blame for the degradation of society. The Brahmins used to delight them in the performance of mechanical rites and ceremonies, taking advantage of the ignorance of the general populace. Out of which, the horrifying, terrifying Sati rite was most common in the Bengal at the time. The populace used to mindlessly adhere to the false teachings of the priestly elite because they were unaware of the true meaning of their scripture and literature. People lacked the ability to make reasoned judgments about anything. Their sense of morality had been compromised. People's lack of development, confusion, and mechanical obedience debased both their nature and the entirety of society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, one of the most extraordinary individuals of Bengal in the 19th century, was the driving force behind all of those improvements. Ram Mohan Roy was a religious, social, and educational reformer who questioned conventional Hindu

culture and showed how Indian civilization might advance while under British rule. In the Radhanagar village in Bengal Presidency's Hooghly district, he was born on May 22, 1772. He has been cited as the country's modern-day founder. The present Indian Renaissance is credited to him. The elimination of the vicious and horrifying "Sati Pratha" was the most remarkable of his accomplishments. His initiatives were also essential in abolishing the 'purdah' system and child marriage. In order to unite the Calcutta-based *'Brahmos'*, a group of people who opposed idol worship and caste limits, Ram Mohan Roy founded the *Brahmo Samaj* (Society of Brahma). In the year 1831, Akbar II, the Mughal emperor, bestowed upon him the title 'Raja' (The king). As the Mughal King's agent, Roy went to England to see that Bentick's ban on practising Sati was upheld. He succumbed to meningitis in 1833 while residing in Bristol, England. Roy established *Atmiya-Sabha* (Friendly Society) in 1815 to spread his monotheistic Hindu teachings. As the creator and editor of two of India's first weekly newspapers, Roy organised a protest in 1823 in opposition to British control of the Calcutta (Kolkata) press, stating that freedom of speech and religion were inalienable rights. Roy's life began to change after that demonstration, shifting from religious rhetoric to social and political activism. As the nominal monarch of Delhi's unofficial emissary, Roy travelled to England in 1829. The British did not accept the '*Raja'* title that the Delhi monarch had bestowed upon him. In England, Roy was favourably received, especially by the country's Unitarians and King William IV. While under the care of Unitarian friends in Bristol, where he was buried, Roy passed away from a fever. The expanse of Roy's social vision and the stunning modernity of his ideas contribute to his significance in modern Indian history. While he worked tirelessly for social change, he also rekindled interest in the ethical precepts of the Vedanta school as a defence against the Western invasion of Indian culture. In addition to helping to popularise Bengali through his books and treatises, he was the first Indian to adapt the core political and social principles of the French and American revolutions to the Indian context. He advocated for the creation of an English-language educational system that would cover science subjects like arithmetic, physics, chemistry, and even botany. He co-founded Hindu College with David Hare in 1817, and the school went on to become one of the best in the country and the source of some of India's brightest brains. The educational system in India was changed by this. He established the Vedanta College in 1826 and the Anglo-Vedic School in 1822 in order to combine old theological ideas with cutting-edge

intellectual teachings.

Ram Mohan Roy was vehemently against the excessive idolatry and ritualism that priests encouraged. His argument that Hindu books like the Upanishads supported the idea of monotheism was based on his analysis of religious texts from different faiths. He subsequently embarked on his endeavour to implement the ancient Vedic writings' fundamental teachings in their most unadulterated form in contemporary culture. He founded the Atmiya Sabha in 1928, and the new religion's inaugural gathering happened on August 20 of that same year. The *Brahma Sabha*, a predecessor of the *Brahmo Samaj*, took the name *Atmiya Sabha*. Monotheism, separation from the scriptures, and rejection of the caste system were the three major beliefs of this new movement. After being totally purified of Hindu ceremonialism, *Brahmo* religious rites were constructed in accordance with Christian or Islamic prayer practises. The *Brahma Samaj* became a powerful force for social reform in Bengal throughout time, especially in the area of women's education. He was a major figure in the 'Bengal Renaissance'. The 'Father of Indian Renaissance' is how people refer to him. He reintroduced the Vedic philosophies, especially Vedanta from the historic Upanishads of Hinduism. He made an effective effort to modernise Indian culture. Ram Mohan regarded education as a weapon for achieving social reforms and used his resources to start an English College as soon as he landed in Calcutta in 1815. He disagreed with the government's choice to just open Sanskrit schools and wanted the students to learn scientific and English language skills. He argued that Indians would lag behind if students are not given the chance to acquire contemporary subjects like geography, mathematics, and Latin. The government embraced and implemented Ram Mohan's suggestion, but not before he passed away. Ram Mohan was the first to emphasise the value of developing one's mother tongue. His best prose work is *'Gaudiya Byakaran'* which was written in Bengali. Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra came after Ram Mohan Roy.

Life Sketch:

In the village of Radhanagar in the district of Hooghly, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a forerunner of the Bengal Renaissance, was born in 1774, seventeen years after the Battle of Plessey. Warren Hastings was India's Governor General at the time. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's father was Ramakanta Roy, a devotee of Vishnu and the fifth son of Brajabinode. His mother's side of the family was devoted to *Sakta* tradition. His mother,

Tarini Devi, had a good comprehension, a powerful personality, and influence. Raja Ram Mohan Roy thus had early exposure to several cultures. He was impacted by both *Sakta* and *Vaishnava* cultural elements. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was exposed to composite or synthetic culture from an early age. In terms of religion, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's family was highly traditional. He was sent to Patna at the age of nine to study Persian and Arabian, and then to Kashi to learn the Sanskrit language of the Hindu scriptures. At the age of 16, he left once more for Tibet. At the age of 20, he went home after spending more or less four years there. Raja Ram Mohan Roy began his native education at home, where he also studied Bengali and Sanskrit. He was then instructed in Persian by local Maulavi or Muslim priests.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was well-versed in old classic literature after visiting Patna and Varanasi, and he also learned about the monotheistic nature of the Hindu Shastras. He regarded the dominant Hinduism's popular religious ideas as being narrow-minded and superstitious. He realised that absurdities and abnormalities, particularly idolatry and ceremonies, had a significant impact on the current popular rites, ideas, goals, and beliefs of Hinduism. People back then used to practise mechanical rites that, in the eyes of the society, were degrading and degenerating. He was unafraid to criticise their events in public. Due to a disagreement with his devout parents about this, Raja Ram Mohan Roy left his house and spent two and a half years in Tibet.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy began his career as a private Munshi for Thomas Woodforde, the Collector of Dacca Jalalpur (modern-day Faridpur, Bangladesh). He then left that position as a result of his father's illness. Raja Ram Mohan Roy joined Woodforde as his personal secretary, or munshi, when he once more assumed the position of Registrar of the Appellate Court of Murshidabad. He wrote Tuhufat-ul-Muhhiwiddin, a Persian tract with an Arabic preface, at that time. The tract was written by him between 1803 and 1804. In May 1805, Raja Ram Mohan Roy joined John Digby as his personal Munshi, succeeding Thomas Woodforde. He held the position of Sheristadar, or top clerk, of the Faujdari Adalat from the position of Munshi. He worked for John Digby in that position as well. In his service career, he worked alongside John Digby for about ten years. They were associated until 1814. When John Digby left Rangpur in the early months of 1815, Raja Ram Mohan Roy also left Rangpur and moved to Calcutta, where he remained for the following sixteen years. He began by buying a garden home in the Circular Road of Calcutta, whose address is

No. 113, Upper Circular Road, and which is currently occupied by the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the North District of Calcutta. Raja Ram Mohan Roy also owned the 'Simla house', which was located in Amherst Street.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy discovered via his extensive research that the three major world religions—Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity—all share a common fundamentalism. In addition to learning Hebrew and Greek for his study of Christianity, he had studied the Vedanta. When he was in Patna and Varanasi, he studied ancient Hindu literature and came to the conclusion that, after eliminating dogmas, superstitions, and rituals, a synthesis of the core principles of the three religions would be achievable. Later, he developed that insight into the notions of universality and universal religion. He released "The Precepts of Jesus," a manual for finding happiness and tranquilly, in 1820. He sought to preserve the ethical teachings of Christ in that book, so he left out any later-developed supernatural and dogmatic concepts and rituals. In 1826, he founded the *Brahmo Samaj* in support of upholding the same belief in the oneness of God. His *Brahmo Samaj* was created to both worship the Eternal, Unsearchable, and Immutable Being who is the Creator and Preserver of the Universe and to combat many forms of societal tyranny.

Social and Educational Philosophy:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy established a steadfast philosophy based on *'Lokasreya'* or the common good. He made the idea of the general welfare of the populace a reality. He undertook a variety of activities and brought about reforms in the fields of society and education thanks to his diverse nature. He maintained his individuality as a whole and unbroken in all he did. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who more than any other living soul at the beginning of the nineteenth century affected the course of human history, is one of the heroes of humanity because of his extraordinary moral and spiritual genius (Das, 1958: 1). Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a selfless humanitarian who dedicated his life to helping people. He had strong affections and respect for women. He was completely aware of the reasons for their distress and was aware of their awful social conditions. Raja Ram Mohan Roy always promoted contemporary education that was free from an outdated and deteriorating civilisation. He was appropriately referred to as a modernizer, a modern man, and the founder of a new era.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy thought that in order to bring about social

improvement, both religious modernity and an educational perspective were required. He then said that people should educate themselves. In that regard, education should have the dual goals of uplifting people's morals and spirituality so that they can comprehend the genuine nature of God fully. He also argued that doing good deeds and fulfilling one's obligations to society and the wider world can lead to salvation in the end. He was a fervent adherent of Advaitism. He has always placed a high value on commitment and the betterment of people in his worldview. Raja Ram Mohan Roy thought that in order to reach the highest knowledge of God, one needed to have a clear mind, a sincere devotion, and a true grasp of life's purpose (Dasgupta, 1980: 150).

The notion of universal religion, which means to worship the one true God, was the core of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's religious views. He thought that such a sentiment would free his countrymen's minds from the constricting grip of superstitions and irrationality. Men would be freed from sectarian prejudice by those great and lofty ideals of the one true God, who would also lead them to the fundamental value of serving others. Because Raja Ram Mohan Roy consistently believed that if a man could serve another man, he or she could serve God in the truest manner possible. His social philosophy was based on his religious convictions because, in his view, religion always entailed happier and better social connections within the community (Barua, 1988: 87). He firmly believed in universal religion since it was free from all forms of sectarian animosity and the evil side of Hindu culture, making it possible to end casteism, polygamy, child marriage, Sati, and other forms of oppression. Raja Ram Mohan Roy held that ignorance, injustice, and social oppression towards a specific group of the population, the ladies, were to blame for all of society's ills. His social philosophy also stressed the importance of helping others. He always preferred social service because it was free of self-centeredness and constrained by interreligious peace. He saw every person as being honoured for their dignity, uniqueness, and value. He was well aware that people could only provide a pure contribution to humanity if they adhered to universal religion without any form of sectarian bias. Raja Ram Mohan Roy thought that a liberal, non-sectarian, and global religion was essential to the country's unity, freedom, and growth. His *Brahmo Samaj* was a reflection of his belief in a single, universal religion and a single, eternal God. He created his *Brahmo Samaj* with the lofty goal of bringing together many Indian classes and communities under one roof for shared worship of a single deity. The Trust Deed of the Samaj was also a document that called

for members of various Sampradayas or churches to worship together, creating a religion of harmony, synthesis, and universality as a result.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy had a strong belief in the superior level of culture in his own nation. He supported nationalism. He possessed a patriotic heart, and as a result, he never misunderstood or disregarded the ideology or civilization of his country. He firmly thought that the innovative and progressive Western concepts and aspirations might illuminate the corrupted forms of the Hindus and thereby give them more depth and richness. He never made an attempt to disparage or destroy his own religion. The corruption of his own religion that was degrading the social fabric was the only thing that captured his attention. He desired to remove that debasement in order to internally rehabilitate his own religion. Raja Ram Mohan Roy had a strong belief in the uniqueness of each person, free from any stifling ideals or principles. He sought to advance a social movement that had been assessed. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a wise, gracious, and humble man who had the perspective of a statesman and was known for his "modesty, sensitivity of emotion, and respect toward ladies" (Krishnayya, 1969: 106). He synthesised ancient caste and modern humanity, superstition and science, dictatorship and democracy, immovable custom and conservative development. He was a great philosopher (Krishnayya, 1969: 109). In Raja Ram Mohan Roy's synthesis philosophy, two ideas had been combined. One was the Eastern understanding of religion at its ultimate level, and the other represented Western ethical values. He was always inspired by the objective perspective of scientific thought in his philosophical convictions. He had primarily synthesised three philosophical traditions—Hindu, Muslim, and Christian—into a cohesive totality. His principal ideas and beliefs were "from a synthesis of divergent values and ideals a composite nationality and a synthetic civilization" (Sen, 1967: 264). He replaced outdated value systems that were detrimental to the advancement of the society at the time by shedding light on concepts and ideals essential for contemporary India. He was dubbed the Father of Modern India with justification. He opened the road for inclusion and peace, and he empowered his compatriots to identify the greater issue facing the society at the time and find a solution.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was exposed to western thinking and civilization. Reason, truth, and rationality served as the cornerstone of his transformation. He acquired those flavours from the social, political, and scientific concepts produced in Europe during the period of 'intellectual ferment' (Sen,1967: 270). He was absolutely sure that, in addition to the

overall Christian tradition of contemporary western civilization, another branch, namely its scientific and economic foundation, was accountable for the development of science. He thought that man may apply scientific knowledge to the fields of the arts, industries, and machinery with the aid of that foundation. That would once more demonstrate man's superiority, right, and control over nature. Raja Ram Mohan Roy firmly believed in democratic societies, rich in the ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity, which are sufficient to alter peoples' perspectives on life. He was profoundly affected by the social democratic ideas of the west since he personally valued liberty, independence, and mental freedom. He completely altered the doctrines of what is now known as 'orthodox Christianity' by drawing inspiration from European laws and government structures, which he thought were adequate to improve native peoples' lot in life. Raja Ram Mohan Roy promoted the use of science and scientific principles to eliminate all unfair and oppressive practises. He demanded knowledge of the arts and sciences since he was fully aware that it would assist his compatriots get rid of all kinds of superstitions and biases.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed in the creation of new spirits, but he also understood that this was impossible without the influence of the West. He suggested that innovative and enlightened ideas may be produced from the "compulsory mingling of races, beliefs, and civilisation" (Collet, 1988: 350). He aimed to instil in his students "freedom of inquiry, desire for Science, humanistic sympathy, pure ethics, and reverent but not uncritical regard for the past" in their minds (Collet, 1988: 350). Raja Ram Mohan Roy transformed mediaeval India into modern India by his illuminating and inspiring research over the course of his lifetime. He was accurately referred to as a man who ushered in contemporary India. He didn't think that East and West were blending like never before. He created a historical synthesis of the European and Asian streams of human evolution in his educational endeavours. He was dubbed the 'Universal Theist' with good reason (Collet, 1988: 349). Raja Rammohan Roy was a man who effectively oversaw the Bengal Renaissance's initial stage. As the founder of the Bengal Renaissance, he advocated for English education that was focused on science. He understood that in order to educate people about the law and their rights, a comprehensive educational system was required. Raja Ram Mohan Roy thought that a comprehensive, authentic educational system would liberate people from old Orientalism and mediaeval scholasticism. As a result, Raja Ram Mohan Roy proclaimed that women's education was just as important as men's education at the time when all the

forces were working against Western education and in favour of Oriental education. Therefore, he believed that encouraging boys' education alone would not be beneficial as a true reformer. He supported universal access to education. A progressive society required progressive education for both boys and girls. He held to the belief that while educating boys genuinely educates only one person, educating girls actually educates an entire family.

Abolition of *Sati* Custom:

The person who bravely confronted injustices like the *Sati* and caste systems was Ram Mohan Roy. Ram Mohan Roy stated unequivocally that the Sati system was more than murders in accordance with every Shastra and universal science. Both within and outside of his home, he raised awareness about the Sati system. The orthodox community protested as a result, and a social boycott was established against him. His very life was in danger. It is to his credit that he advocated for the legal abolition of Sati, which was a stain on the honour of Hindu society at the time, to the government of his time. The newspapers 'Samachar Darpan','Sambad Kaumudi','Bengal Harkara','Indian Gazette','Calcutta Journal', and others railed against *Sati* at the time. To prove women's ownership rights over their paternal property, 4/5 Women have rights in their paternal assets, according to Ram Mohan, who cited the *Yajnavalkya Smriti*. Ram Mohan worked tirelessly to get ban on Sati by passing the 'Bengal *Sati* Regulation – XVII' in 1829.

Virtue, purity, and devotion to her husband are the highest values for a woman in Indian society. This ritual gave rise to the practise of wives immolating themselves as a symbol of their devotion on their husbands' funeral pyres. The practise of a woman burning herself following her husband's death, either on the funeral pyre, by herself, or both is today known as sati. The word *'Sati'* originally meant a woman who lived up to her ideals. Sati is a title given to virtuous and religious women. The word *Sati*, which means truth in the old Indian language, was translated as *Sati*. Instead of referring to a 'virtuous woman', Sati has come to represent both the victim and the act of immolating a widow. The Hindu Goddess Sati is always associated with the word *Sati*. In Hindu mythology, Sati was Lord Shiva's spouse. She took this action in retaliation for her father's rejection to invite Shiva to the Gods' gathering. She felt so humiliated that she sparked a yogic fire, which turned her into ashes. Similar to the original sati, selflessness is transformed into a "Divine model of wifely devotion". The

Sati Act validated the notion that a widow will be honoured if she sacrifices her life for her husband. In terms of society, a woman's true nature was largely determined by her participation in sati. Roy saw his brother's wife burn alive on her husband's funeral pyre in 1811. After retiring three years later, he focused on raising concerns about the custom of women dying as Sati. The first Indian to express opposition to this practise was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Raja Ram Mohan Roy vehemently disagreed with this Sati method. He argued that this was utterly in opposition to a woman's right to exist in society as a human being (Basham, 1975).

Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not place much importance on rituals and ceremonies when he was reforming society. In line with the Vedanta, Raja Ram Mohan Roy promoted the idea that learning about God does not need doing rituals or following laws. Rituals and rite-like actions should be carried out in line with their underlying meaning, not for mechanical purposes. Hindus believed that worshipping the Supreme Being led to spiritual enlightenment. He made peace between eastern spirituality and western ideas and moral principles. He supported liberalism in politics, sociology, and the economy. He conducted extensive research on the many sacred scriptures of India and came to the conclusion that popular Hinduism had been distorted from the original forms of Hinduism. He alluded to the revered, venerable, spiritual, and undeniable authority of Hindu theology in order to purify and elevate Hindu minds and to inform Hindus of the misinterpretation of their Shastras. He studied the original Sanskrit manuscripts for that reason. Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed that because people are social animals, they must live in communities. He thought that society should be built on people's perception of how the laws should really be applied. There was no need for hundreds of pointless difficulties and privations related to eating, drinking, cleanliness, impurity, auspiciousness, and inauspiciousness, among other things, for that. He therefore believed that those pointless mechanical procedures should be abandoned and that instead, man should investigate the genuine nature and necessities of their religious ideas in order to free them from rituals, ceremonies, and superstitions that serve no use.

Between 1815 and 1818, a large number of widows perished as a result of the Company's order regarding the practise of Sati, which instructed them to 'regulate it' rather than outlaw it. According to statistics, this occurred in the six divisions of Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad, Patna, Benaras, and Bareilly. It would be simple to infer the cause of *Sati's* sharp ascent. That was the true challenge in establishing a boundary between

voluntary and involuntary Sati. In fact, voluntary self-immolation was almost unheard of in that society. Mr. Ewer, a policeman from Lower Bengal, brought attention to that fact and stated, "There are numerous reasons for thinking that such an event as a voluntary suttee extremely rarely occurs", in reference to it years later (Singh, 1958: 197). Between 1815 and 1818, no fewer than 2365 widows had been set afire. Of those, 1528 were residents of Calcutta and the areas around it. An estimate of the annual sacrifice of human life was obtained from the Police's report to the Bengal Government for a single year, which revealed that in the year 1823, there were a total of 575 widows who were burned on the funeral pyres of their husbands who had passed away within the Bengal Presidency. Thus, 340 widows out of the total were reported within the circuit of the Calcutta Court. The figures provided only covered Calcutta's local neighbourhood; the actual number of people lost outside of that area was significantly more than what was stated. The age distribution of the various people was also mentioned in the return. For instance, of the 575 victims of 1823, 109 were above the age of sixty, 226 were between the ages of forty and sixty, 208 were between the ages of twenty and forty, and 32 were under the age of twenty. Anyone could infer from the return that five to six hundred females were sacrificed yearly. Up to 309 widows were burned alive alongside their husbands in Calcutta during the year that the *Brahmo Sabha* was founded, which is 1828 (Chart 1).

Chart-1: Incidence of *Sati* in British India during 1815-18 in India
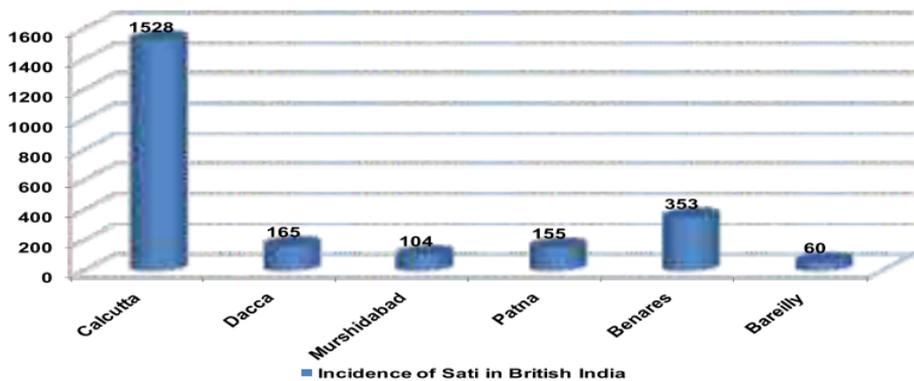
Source: General Summary of Suites from 1815 to 1818, Collet, 1988: 88.

In order to make the best judgement possible about the complete abolition of the ceremonies of Sati, Lord William Bentinck not only had access to those records, but he also got support and approval for the eradication of that barbarous rite from the educated indigenous. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of those who have always been respected as a

knowledgeable local and philanthropist. Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought against all other superstitions and corruptions that the Hindus engaged in in the name of their faith, according to Lord William Bentinck, who also highlighted this in his illustrious Minute. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, however, was in favour of suppressing the rite without the direct involvement of the police, according to Lord Bentinck. Raja Ram Mohan Roy backed the police's indirect role because he opposed the British government's use of arbitrary force. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a reformer, consistently opposed any sort of coercive repression. According to the justification given by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, such legal restrictions could hurt the natives' sensibilities and give them the idea that the British emperors were using force to impose their religion on them; as a result, the Indians would view the foreign emperors as invaders. The Sati Regulation Act, which made Sati an illegal offence, was passed on December 4th, 1829. In addition, the ordinance barred anybody from participating in or witnessing a Hindu widow's sacrifice.

Women Education:

The Raja's support for women's education was equally capable. Although missionaries had already proposed the idea, the Raja was instrumental in spreading it among Hindus. He said that Indian women had advanced education levels and that women's education followed long-held religious customs and principles. Ram Mohan deserves the majority of the credit for the remarkable work the Brahma Samaj made in eradicating the widespread prejudices in Hindu society against women's education (Naik & Nurullah, 1974:131-132). Roy worked hard to promote the advantages of contemporary education among his fellow citizens. In 1817, he helped David Hare establish the Hindu College while Roy's English school offered classes in mechanics and Voltaire's philosophy. He founded Vedanta College in 1825, where he offered studies in both Indian learning and Western social and physical sciences. Ram Mohan was among the first intellectuals in India to appreciate the usefulness of Western science and philosophy in the realm of education. He sparked a significant shift in public opinion in favour of English education, which may have helped the youth with education in India feel more united. His concepts of western education aided Lord William Bentinck's administration in bringing European education to India. Ram Mohan made significant contributions to several spheres of social and literary life. Ram Mohan offered a style and quality that aided in the growth of Bengali prose as a form for polemical

literature, stories, and novels (Banerjee, 2004). Ram Mohan Roy's concentration on the study of contemporary Indian languages was his greatest contribution to the modern educational system. He is regarded as the founder of modern literary Bengali prose and provided a significant contribution to the field by authoring books in Bengali on grammar, geography, astronomy, and geometry.

The cornerstone of modern India was created by Raja Ram Mohan Roy's educational endeavours, which, in his opinion, would not be viable unless and until India came into contact with contemporary European ideas. Raja Ram Mohan Roy came to the conclusion that this communication could only satisfy modern-day needs. Missionary operations in the nation have always been zealous in their support of spreading western education. As a multifaceted individual with a passion for education, Raja Ram Mohan Roy extended his invaluable assistance to Christian missionaries with the goal of promoting western science and literature among the native people .Raja Ram Mohan Roy once gave me the most valuable and effective support in pursuing some of the goals of the General Assembly's Mission, Alexander Duff said in thanking the great help and effort of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Duff's educational endeavours. (Krishnayya, 1969: 75). Alexander Duff's educational endeavours received active support from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who promoted the idea that English education had a big impact on society today. The monotheistic tenor of Vedanta strongly impacted Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who later founded the Vedanta College in 1825 to impart its teachings. He made arrangements for prominent Pandits to instruct pupils at his Vedanta College. The students used to receive lessons in Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit was never undervalued by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was aware that his countrymen would benefit if they were taught the monotheistic theory of authentic Hinduism using that language. To support Hindu Unitarianism, he had actually founded Vedanta College, a modest but incredibly well-kept and attractive college. However, he was equally aware of the value of European science and literature since he was a wonderful educator. Therefore, he included European Science and learning in that college. Lord Macaulay asserted that English should be used to understand western science and western culture. He added that this choice was appropriate given the circumstances of age and time. Lord Macaulay supported the introduction and advancement of scientific knowledge as a means of identifying and addressing the needs of the Indian populace. Lord Macaulay eventually gave Raja Ram Mohan Roy's conference and his call

for a western education formal recognition.

Economic and Political Reforms:

Because of the civic liberties it granted its citizens, Roy was pleased and liked the British system of constitutional government. He wished to make Indians eligible for the advantages of that form of government. Press freedom: He contributed to the campaign for a free press in India by his writings and other efforts. Ram Mohan discovered three newspapers after Lord Hastings abolished press regulation in 1819: The Brahmanical Magazine (1821), the *Bengali* weekly Samvad Kaumudi (1821), and the Persian weekly *Miratul-Akbar*. Roy urged the establishment of minimum rents and denounced the repressive practises of Bengali *Zamindars*. He also pushed for the repeal of taxes on exempt lands. He demanded the elimination of the East India Company's commercial privileges as well as a reduction in export taxes on items made in India. He pushed for the separation of the executive branch from the judiciary as well as the Indianization of higher services. He advocated that Europeans and Indians be treated equally.

Religious Reforms:

In his first book, *Tuhfat-ul Muwahhiddin* (a gift to deists), Raja Ram Mohan Roy revealed the corrupt practises and irrational religious beliefs of the Hindus, such as their belief in revelations, prophets, and miracles. He established the *Atmiya Sabha* in Calcutta in 1814 to fight idolatry, rigid caste systems, pointless rituals, and other social problems. He rejected Christ as the God-in-human form and condemned the ritualism of Christianity. He attempted to disentangle the miracle accounts in the New Testament's moral and philosophical teachings in Precepts of Jesus (1820), which he commended. *Brahmo Sabha* was established in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and eventually changed its name to *Brahmo Samaj*. The adoration of the eternal God was its main goal. It was opposed to sacrifices, ceremonies, and priesthood. It placed a strong emphasis on scripture reading, meditation, and prayer. It held that all religions were interconnected. It was the country's first intellectual reform movement. It caused enlightenment and rationalism to flourish in India, which indirectly supported the nationalist movement. It served as the model for all subsequent modern Indian social, religious, and political movements. The *Brahmo Samaj* of India, led by Keshub Chandra Sen, and the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*, led by Debendranath Tagore, split apart from it in 1866.

Debendranath Tagore, Keshub Chandra Sen, Pt. Sivnath Shastri, and Rabindranath Tagore are notable leaders.

The *Bhahmo Samaj* opposed idol worship, polygamy, the caste system, sati, child marriage, and other pointless rituals and promoted the oneness of God, fraternity, morality, and charity. Keshab Chandra Sen, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, Satyajit Ray, Rabindranath Tagore, and Debendranath Tagore were important Brahmo Samaj leaders. One of India's most significant reform groups, the Brahmo Samaj is recognised with helping lay the groundwork for contemporary India. Its efforts in social and educational reform helped people feel more confident, which helped the national movement expand. Later on, several *Brahmo Samajists* played important roles in the fight for independence.

Social Reforms:

Rama Mohan Raja Roy excelled at social change. In many ways, he modernised Indian society. As India's "first modern man", Ram Mohan understood early on that social change was necessary for the renewal of our nation's populace. Roy wanted government support for social reforms, particularly in the form of socially progressive legislation since he believed in the progressive role that the British played throughout their control of India. The goal of Roy was to establish a new society founded on tolerance, empathy, and reason, where the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity would be acknowledged by all, and where man would be liberated from the historical chains that had held him captive for so long. He yearned for a new, global, and contemporary civilization. Roy used a variety of strategies to enact social change. He incorporated every method that could be used, even some that were typically thought to be incompatible.

Women Liberty:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was an Indian advocate for women's rights. He established the movement for women's liberation in this nation. He rebelled against women's enslavement and cried out for the restoration of their rights. Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought for women's rights. He was adamant about giving women their due in society. He supported widow remarriage in addition to outlawing Sati. Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Right of Females is a book by Roy that was published in 1822. He contended that daughters have the same rights to parental property as sons have. He also had an impact on the British

government, which changed the law when needed. He spoke out against polygamy and child marriage. He promoted the education of women. His organisation, the *Brahmo Samaj*, gave particular emphasis to the education of women. He openly promoted women's liberty as a result, arousing them.

Synthetic Approach:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy liked Western culture and devoted a great deal of time to studying Western literature. Liberals in Great Britain adored him. He didn't slavishly copy the concepts of Western political theorists. He didn't even make an effort to prove that Western culture was superior to Indian culture. He established the principles and value of Indian spiritualism by simply and unambiguously drawing his inspiration from Indian religious texts. Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed that the treatment of women in India was unfair and unreasonable. He advocated for women's rights in other areas as well, including their right to a share of inherited wealth. He advocated for widow remarriage as well as female education. He advocated for inter-caste marriages and opposed polygamy in order to give women their proper place in society. He had a strong belief in Indian mysticism, in which he was a symbol. He studied Indian religion in the traditional sense. In his view, the traditional Indian religion stood for religious tolerance, global fraternity, humanism, and liberalism. He stated with great audacity that the caste system, idol worship, and untouchability were all later additions to religion made by egotistical individuals and were not a part of the ancient and pure Hindu faith. He brought about the ideal fusion of morality and religion. He believed that a man needed to have virtues like joy, morality, Catholicism, forgiveness, and so forth. These characteristics will cleanse his spirit. Furthermore, these characteristics will govern man. A man can develop these great traits, gain divine knowledge, and commit himself to the general good of society. By cultivating these traits, his religious catholicity will flourish even more.

Socio-Political and Liberal Thought:

Ram Mohan Roy was the epitome of a social thinker. His participation in the historical abolition of sati-among orthodox Brahmans was crucial. Roy created the *Brahmo Samaj* in an effort to express his faith in the Islamic concept of "one deity". According to his thinking, social reform should come before political reform because the former set the stage for political liberty (Das, 2018). Roy didn't seem to have given his political beliefs the proper amount of attention given his priority. Although he hated

colonialism, he seemed to support British rule, probably because of its historical role in battling the powerful feudal forces that were in place. In addition to being, at least culturally, superior to the previous feudal lords, British control would also help shape a different India by introducing the principles it stood for. He believed that the British had a significant impact on the Hindus' traditional mentality, which led him to admire their reign. He continued by saying that if British authority persisted, eventually democratic institutions similar to those found in Great Britain will be established. Like any liberal, Roy believed that the most effective way to establish democratic institutions in India was likely through the unthinking acceptance of British liberal ideas. Mohan Ram Roy had contributed to advancement in a certain historical setting. Ray seemed to have given preference to his experience of British colonialism above its recent feudal background in conceptualising his historical role. He undermined the manifest negative effects of foreign control on Indian society, politics, and the economy while simultaneously blatantly favouring one type of government over the other, all because of his blind faith in British enlightenment's ability to drastically alter the dominant Indian mentality. Ram Mohan, who preached the delicate significance of human oneness, rose to prominence as the father of Indian nationalism. His reform movement sought to free people from both social tyranny and mental illiteracy. Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian to travel across the sea to England in 1830, defying conventional wisdom that one must leave one's caste behind in order to do so. He died there in 1833 after fighting for the eradication of Sati, the introduction of Western education in India, and the introduction of measures to put an end to Indians' misguided beliefs (Das 2018). Ramachandra Guha (2012) refers to him as the first liberal Indian whose thoughts had an impact on the establishment of the Indian Republic after Independence in "The Makers of Modern India". As the creator and editor of two newspapers, the *Samvad Kaumudi* for the common people and *Mirat-Ul-Akbar* (mirror on intelligence) for the learned, Guha demonstrates that he may also be recognized as a pioneer in journalism. Since 1820, when he first discussed press freedom, his modernity has been in direct conflict with the middle ages. Ram Mohan Roy thus stands for cosmopolitanism and religious ecclesialism. Similar to Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, Ram Mohan Roy was fervently committed to the idea of liberty. He emphasized the importance of individual freedom. Ram Mohan was a proponent of individual freedom because freedom is a treasured property of the human being. But, the country also needs liberty. Despite his

fervour for liberty and equality, Roy respected private property and upheld the right to contract freely. In fact, he argued that the government should step in to stop bad behaviour in society and that it was its responsibility to defend tenants against landlord abuse. Roy acknowledged the unchangeable sanctity of natural rights, just like John Locke, Thomas Paine, and Grotius. He supported both the moral rights of the person as well as the natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. But, he developed his idea of natural rights in the context of the Indian culture at the time. Father of Modern India, Bengal Renaissance, and Indian Renaissance were all titles bestowed upon Raja Ram Mohan Roy. A well-known social reformer in India and the creator of the Brahmo Samaj, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is credited with starting the modern Indian Renaissance because of the notable changes he made to India in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Internationalism was championed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He desired the abolition of imperialism, the synthesis of human culture and ideas, and the peaceful coexistence of all nations. He consequently became the sign of the modern era. As a modernity pioneer and a liberal democracy dreamer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the most notable figures of the 19th century. It evolved into the prevailing idea of India's initial period of religious and social reform. Roy was the first to raise Indians' understanding of civil rights. He was appreciative of the British since they extended to Indians all the civil rights that the Queen's subjects in England were entitled to. Although Roy did not mention the civil rights expressly, he appears to have included the following rights. Right to property, Right to freedom of religion, Right to life and freedom, Right to opinions and freedom of expression, etc. Roy deemed the right to freedom of expression to be of utmost significance. In his view, it encompassed the freedom to communicate one's ideas and opinions via a variety of mediums as well as the freedom of the mind and intellect. According to Roy, both the rulers and the ruled benefit from freedom of expression. People who lacked knowledge may rebel against power itself and all that their rulers did. Roy gave an insightful debate on the need for urgent reforms in administrative and judicial concerns in his book, "An Exposition of Revenue and Judicial System in India". He emphasised the fact that officials must speak to the general public in order for the administration to be effective and efficient. Additionally, there have to be a number of ways for the public and the administration to communicate. Since Roy believed that an effective, impartial, and independent court was the ultimate guarantor of liberty, his suggestions for reform in this area are more numerous. According to Roy,

including indigenous in the legal system must be a crucial aspect of judicial administration. Roy also pushed for the appointment of Indian assessors in civil lawsuits, jury trials, the separation of judicial and executive powers, and constant consultation with native interests prior to the passage of any laws that affected them, and the use of English instead of Persian as the official language to be used in courts of law. He also advocated reviving the traditional Panchayat system of decision-making. Roy therefore pushed for a number of changes and improvements to the Indian judicial system in line with political liberalism.

His goal was to totally transform the educational system. He was certain that only a modern, science-based education could give Indians a fresh perspective and new skills. Without this kind of education, India's social change would be quite limited, and the nation would always be behind. Roy, who was a brilliant Sanskrit scholar himself, was adamantly opposed to Sanskrit studies because he believed they had no application in contemporary India. He urged the rulers to support educating the next generation of Indians in practical modern science rather than continuing to teach them useless Sanskrit. Roy's views and actions were truly trailblazing in giving a new direction to the educational system in India. Roy wanted instruction in useful modern sciences like chemistry, mathematics, anatomy, and natural philosophy and not load young minds with grammatical complexities and speculative or imaginary knowledge. He was the first well-known supporter of female education. Roy was a fervent advocate for peaceful coexistence between nations. He was possibly the first thinker of the 18th century to have an unmistakable understanding of internationalism. He might have had this vision while looking for a religion that will apply to everyone. Roy, the universalist prophet, stated that in order to attain world unification and a spirit of widespread fraternity, all nations must be treated equally. The conflict between nationalism and internationalism can only be resolved at that point.

Relevance:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who announced Bengal's Renaissance in the 19ᵗʰ century, is regarded as a guy with many distinguishing characteristics. He had very strong intellectual capacity. An average individual could not comprehend his thoughts or his areas of activity. We are still in awe of his extensive and tenacious efforts to transform society and education. He made an effort to combat social injustices like polygamy, casteism and *Sati*. He worked for the reinstatement of press freedom and the

adoption of a contemporary, liberal, scientific education. Even in those days, all of those were still true. Even though we are familiar with the Western rational movement, we can't seem to shake our conservatism. In order to determine the significance of his rationality, modernity, and humanism, it becomes necessary to analyse and center his efforts within the perspective of the present.

One of the harmful practices of mainstream Hinduism, *Sati*, which involves burning widows on the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands, was opposed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Lord William Bentinck assisted in making that horrible, inhuman rite illegal. But before then, Raja Ram Mohan Roy made numerous arguments for and against Sati in his tracts and pamphlets. Because he considered that simply passing laws was insufficient, he gave them freely to his countrymen and did everything he could to raise awareness among them. He did this by giving authentic *Shastric* interpretations of Hinduism and demonstrating that the rite of Sati was not prescribed by Hindu *Shastras*. It is easy to say that, in light of the rising corruption in our current culture, we still lack the consciousness that Raja Ram Mohan Roy yearned for. Nothing can match to bride burning in terms of brutality. Even though dowry has been outlawed by law, it still exists. Every day, this repugnant behaviour claims the lives of women while disobeying laws, norms, and regulations. Therefore, in order to combat the ills of society, social awareness is now more important than law. Legislation cannot modify some mental views. Although we want to think that we live in a society that is more advanced than the one that existed two centuries ago, the truth is that this particular mental composition has not yet altered. The birth of a girl is viewed as a matter of restrained happiness among today's most educated families. In a household, a boy and a girl are treated differently, and their daily interactions and educational plans also diverge. The basic gender disparity that exists in our culture is highly pervasive. These days, this general imbalance starts even before birth as a result of dishonest medical professionals who employ technology to detect and kill female foetuses. In our modern world, the harsh Sati ritual has evolved. Female foeticide and female infanticide are examples of India's gender-based mistreatment of women. Dowry is one of the main causes of female infanticide in India. This is combined with the causes of poverty, ignorance, and superstition. Thus, it may be claimed that the causes of Sati that existed in Bengal in the 19th century still exist now; the mode has just changed. Female foeticide, another horrible evil that is proliferating in society like female infanticide, is based on sex determination, which makes

it inevitable that prenatal diagnostic methods are extensively used to eliminate female foetuses. Due to the availability of ultrasound technologies in India that could determine the sex of an unborn child, female feticide started in the early 1990s. Female foeticide has been perceived by social groups, activists, thinkers, the media, and people's representatives as nothing more than a murder case. The caste system deserves to be recognized among the many factors that have impeded national growth. That technique worked quite well as a deterrent in India. The caste system, according to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was what brought us all together. He thought that the caste system could not benefit man in any way. The current generation is aware of the need for education for all, the elimination of untouchability, and other issues. All of those are based on the ideas Raja Ram Mohan Roy promoted a decade ago. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's views on the caste system have been upheld since the founding of our constitution, in a number of articles. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was highly concerned that India not miss-out on the cutting-edge information that was flowing from the West. That is why he fought for English-speaking schools and universities and criticized the traditional Sanskrit system of education. In that age, he argued for a more open and progressive educational system that included mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other practical sciences in his famous letter to Lord Amherst. It follows that Raja Ram Mohan Roy would have been taken aback by the English language's rising popularity if he had arrived in the modern era. As a forerunner of contemporary education, Raja Ram Mohan Roy consistently employed the terms scientific temper, application of reason, and freedom of thought. That mindset is still very applicable now because science and technology are developing at such a tremendously fast rate in our everyday lives. The seclusion between the East and West that existed during the reign of Raja Ram Mohan Roy has vanished due to the current quick explosion of knowledge being shared via websites, fax machines, cell phones, and electronic mail.The numerous traits that made Raja Ram Mohan Roy famous in history are just as relevant today as they were back then. His opinions on freedom of speech, rationality, social reform, and scientific education are still relevant today. Raja Ram Mohan Roy still has a lot to offer society today and to education in terms of contributions, ideas, and actions. It is quite commendable that the museums, libraries, and roads were founded after his passing in order to preserve his memory. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's actions and contributions still have a significant position in people's lives as well as in society at large. For many years to come, Raja

Ram Mohan Roy will continue to be adored, honored, and deeply valued.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the greatest feminist during his era. We see that he was the pioneer in his era for freeing women from all kinds of social evil, so that women could get an opportunity to educate and empower themselves. It is because of his multifaceted contributions in social, religious, political, economic and educational spheres that **Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the 'Father of Modern India' and Father of Indian Renaissance'.**He stressed that our society cannot progress unless women were freed from various forms of oppression such as - illiteracy, *Sati,Purdah*, child marriage, etc. In view of the relevance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's thoughts on women empowerment, after independence, the Government of India increased its presence in social welfare and development. Let's have a look on the initiatives of women development in independent India:

Section: B

Women Development Initiatives in the Post-Independence India

A number of policy initiatives and plan interventions for the welfare, development, and empowerment/protection of women and children have been undertaken within the framework of a democratic polity, laws, and development policies, according to the trajectory of the women and child development sector and the main trends in how women's and children's issues have been conceptualized in the context of development in India. The agenda of the sector has also been influenced by the women's movement, child rights advocates, and a vast network of civil society groups with a strong local presence and in-depth knowledge of women's and children's issues. The first five-year Plan (1951-1956) recognized that the status, duties and roles of women in the family and community would have a significant impact on the social well-being of any community. Problems with health, maternity and child welfare, education, employment, and working conditions received particular attention. On the other hand, it was also acknowledged that, given the numbers involved, children's needs should be given far greater weight than is typically given to them. The need for child health care and educational facilities was expanding. In order to help nonprofit organizations plan welfare programmes for women and children, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established. State Social Welfare Boards were established

nationwide by the Board in partnership with State Governments. The necessity of child welfare initiatives was once more emphasised in the Third Plan. During the Fifth Five-Year Plan period, the emphasis on women's development shifted from 'welfare' to 'development' (1974-79). Through the approval of a National Policy for Children (1974) and the beginning of the Integrated Child Development Services, the Plan also proved to be a turning point in the field of child development (1975). The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980–1985), which featured a separate chapter on women and development and employed a multidisciplinary approach with the three-pronged focus on health, education, and employment, was a watershed moment in the history of women's development. Despite legal and constitutional protections, the Plan's evaluation of the position of women revealed that women had fallen behind males in all fields. For the development of women, a multi-sectoral strategy was used during the Sixth Plan. In order to provide it a distinct identity and serve as a nodal point for issues connected to women's and children's development, Women and Child Development was established as a separate department within the Ministry of Human Resource Development in the year 1985. During the Seventh Five-Year Plan, the concern for equity and empowerment expressed by the International Decade for Women was put into practice (1985-90). All segments of society were given welfare measures, with a focus on the disadvantaged segment, which is the female population. Promoting "beneficiary-oriented programmes" for women in many development areas and providing them with tangible advantages was a key step in this direction. Directions for the all-around development of women were provided through the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000). A thorough report named *'Shramshakti'* that examined the issues impacting a significant number of women in the informal sector was submitted by the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector. Additionally, women's Mahila Mandals were founded. In order to promote work prospects for women, Support to Training-cum Employment for Women (STEP) was established in 1987. The Khadi and Village Industries sector implemented steps to increase female employees' employment and income. More importantly, it was acknowledged that nonprofit organizations play a critical role in the advancement of women. The Eighth Five-Year Plan, which was implemented in 1992, highlighted a significant shift in strategy from development to women's empowerment (1992-97). The Plan's approach was established to make sure that women do not miss out on the advantages

of development in many areas. Women should also be given the tools necessary to participate in development as equal partners and contributors, not just as recipients of various programmes. One of the main goals of this plan was to increase the quality and quantitative reach of services to women. The National Commission for Women was established in 1990 to protect the rights and legal privileges of women through a Parliamentary Act. Women were given seats reserved in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities via the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution (1993), creating a solid framework for their involvement in local decision-making. The fundamental goals for women were incorporated in the Tenth Plan (2002-2007), which went into force in April 2002. It planned for gender mainstreaming and also had a Women Component Plan (WCP) that made sure that at least 30% of funding were set aside for women under the various programmes of the ministries and departments that dealt with women. The Plan put various programmatic interventions in place, with a primary focus on empowering women economically. One of them was the *Swayamsidha* programme, a revamped version of the *Indira Mahila Yojana* that grouped women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for the purposes of generating money. Additionally, it made it easier to obtain services like water supply, health, non-formal education, and literacy. The Women's Component Plan was the first attempt by the Indian government to make the budget more sensitive to gender issues (by state governments also). The institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting, however, has been the subject of more rigorous efforts, as seen by the Gender Budget Statement, which has been published annually since 2005 or 2006 alongside the Union Budget. This highlights the annual expenditure budget's budgetary allocations for programmes that only benefit women (Part A) and programmes that benefit women at least 30% of the time (Part B). The Eleventh Five-year Plan has included a separate chapter on women's autonomy and children' rights for the first time in post-independence planning history. In the Eleventh Plan's Approach Paper (2007–2012), it is stated that gender is "an important divide that needs prompt attention". To rid society of this ill by fostering an atmosphere that empowers women on all fronts—economically, politically, and socially—special, targeted efforts must be made. The Plan's women's strategy is limited to three areas: economic empowerment, violence against women, and women's health. The Twelfth Five Year Plan, headlined "Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive Growth", acknowledges the supremacy of women and children in India, who make up more than 70% of the country's population. The

inclusion strategy of the Plan calls for engendering and child-centricizing development planning. It reiterates the need for structural transformation in policies and programmes generally as well as in the direct policy and programme interventions pertaining to women and children. It is particularly relevant to the numerous fields that have an effect on women and children, especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or whose unique situations make them the most vulnerable. The policy for women and children in the Twelfth Plan tackles the many elements of their vulnerability and deprivation. Its top objective is to put a stop to violence against girls and women as well as discrimination and gender-based injustices. The Twelfth Plan for Women and Children therefore recognises improvement in the unfavourable and rapidly dropping child sex ratio as an overarching monitorable aim. The concept aims to give women a caring, safe, and protective environment to ease their entry into public settings.

National Development Agenda (2017-2032):

With the economy becoming more open and liberalized, it was deemed necessary to reconsider the methods and frameworks used to conceptualize the development process. In order to better connect the development strategy with the altered reality of India, a break from the five-year plan process was made, and a vision, strategy, and action agenda framework was devised as part of the National Development Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become the focal point for setting the goals for development. It is widely acknowledged that empowering women is necessary to achieve a number of SDG targets, including the elimination of poverty, inequality, good health, decent work, and economic growth. The welfare of women and children is crucial for the country's demographic dividend to be realized. The SDGs' targets are perfectly aligned with the MWCD's programmes and objectives. They are associated with the nation's social safety net for the advancement and wellbeing of women and children.

Addressing Violence and Discrimination:

The following are some of the programmes that the MWCD implements as part of its purpose to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls:

The *'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'* programme was initiated to promote gender equality for girls through stakeholder sensitization, community participation, and social mobilization. The scheme's primary

goal is to address the falling child sex ratio with the goals of preventing gender-biased sex-selective elimination and guaranteeing the survival, protection, education, and participation of girls. The Ministry launched the *Ujjawala* Scheme with the goals of:(i) preventing the trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness-raising campaigns, and fostering public discourse through workshops, seminars, and similar events, as well as any other creative activity; (ii) assisting in the victims' recovery and placement in safe custody; (iii) offering rehabilitation services, such as housing, food, clothing, medical care, including counseling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training; and (iv) assisting in the cross-border victims' return to their country of origin. The Swadhar Greh initiative aims to provide a supportive institutional framework for women who are victims of tough situations so they can continue their lives with dignity by meeting their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. As part of the plan, victims are also given financial and emotional rehabilitation so they can rebuild their lives with dignity. The Women's Helpline serves as a first point of contact and referral for women in distress as it offers a toll-free, round-the-clock telecom service to women who have experienced violence and are looking for support and information. This scheme aims to facilitate emergency and non-emergency responses by connecting women in need with the right agencies. The purpose of *Mahila* Police Volunteers is to serve as role models for the community and to report instances of violence against women, including as dowry harassment, domestic abuse, child marriage, and violence against women in public places. The One-Stop Centers established offer a variety of integrated services such as police facilitation, medical help, psycho-social counseling, legal aid, legal counseling, and temporary refuge among others, all under one roof for women afflicted by violence.

Valuing Domestic Work:

One of the few programmes aimed at empowering women and protecting their health is the *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana*, which requires that LPG connections be provided to BPL homes and guarantees that cooking gas is available to everyone in the nation. An adult woman from a low-income family who does not have an LPG connection in her home is eligible to receive benefits under the programme. There is a void in social protection programmes that attempt to improve the wellbeing of

domestic workers and caregivers and encourage shared responsibility within the home and family aside from this programme. DAY-NRLM gives rural women access to a variety of financial, employment, and convergence services. The scheme's main initiatives include:(i) teaching financial literacy to SHG members using a cascading method of training; (ii) appointing a bank mitra or bank Sakhi in each rural bank branch to assist SHGs in all banking transactions; (iii) assisting the rural poor in setting up microenterprises, both individually and collectively, under the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP); and (iv) providing safe, reasonably priced, and communal transportation A MoRD sub-scheme called *Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana* (MKSP) leverages the strength of disadvantaged women farmers' local institutions to advance sustainable agricultural practices with the goal of empowering women in agriculture. It plans to start a leasing cycle to make it possible for women to learn and use the right farming technologies.

Women's Safety and Protection:

In the Indian society, gender inequality and discrimination against women are pervasive and long-standing issues. Crimes against women like rape, dowry murders, and honor killings persist despite great economic growth. Discrimination against women and girls starts at conception and doesn't end until death. The majority of villages across the nation practice female infanticide, female foeticide, and strongly favour sons, which is symptomatic of the poor position and secondary worth of girls in society. Amniocentesis, a recent modern technology used for sex-selective abortions, has made discrimination against girls worse. For the purpose of preventing crimes against women, a number of laws and acts have been created, and the MHA's division for women's safety has taken steps to strictly enforce them. Interventions have also been put in place for the recovery, reintegration, and redress of crime survivors. Under the *'Beti Bachao Beti Padhaho'*scheme, efforts are made to sensitize stakeholders, including men and boys, in order to establish an atmosphere that will enable the birth of a girl child and secure her survival and growth in a safe environment. Despite positive trends in the sex ratio at birth and the proportion of women who report being physically or sexually abused by their current intimate partner, the total prevalence of crimes against women shows an increase. The increase in crime is another indication that safe spaces must be created for women in public areas, workplaces, and their own homes. Only 8 metropolises are included in the MHA's safe cities

programme as it is currently being executed. However, there is an increasing need to take action to safeguard women's safety in other urban centres and cities. Up scaling the current action becomes necessary as a result.

Women's Empowerment:

In order to enhance women's control over financial and intellectual resources, challenge patriarchal ideology, and remove gender-based discrimination against women in all institutions and societal systems, women must be empowered (Batliwala, 2013: 46). It inspires women to pursue their full potential and fight for their right to equal opportunities in political, cultural, economic, and social spheres of life. Women are limited by social norms, legal constraints, and other obstacles that hinder them from fully engaging in the economy and, as a result, from doing this, even though they are equally capable of achieving economic success as men. According to research on women's economic participation in all nations, women are more likely to work in dangerous, unstable jobs for low pay and are less likely to have access to capital, markets, education, training, and the right to own or transfer property. The majority of family, child, and household care giving responsibilities fall on women, who also frequently lack access to family planning services and the health and financial benefits that come with being able to plan one's family. Since women's economic empowerment directly influences the improvement of economic indicators for the neighborhood and the country, a lack of fairness in access to economic participation leads in significant missed possibilities for the entire world. The advancement of all women's empowerment may result from the implementation of gender responsive budgeting in the sphere of urban development. GRB gives women from a variety of backgrounds and social classes the opportunity to have an active role in planning and development. Women are represented and empowered more politically as a result of the government's enhanced responsiveness and accountability to them. In order to "enable widespread consultation at all levels of society about development goals, the mechanisms by which those goals are to be attained, and the resources needed to achieve them", this is done by reorganizing the development process to include GRB (Young, 1997: 373). Additionally, GRB contributes to the final outcome of women's empowerment by providing a means of achieving other crucial gender goals, such as greater financial security and mobility.

Engendering Development:

A supportive environment that enables the full and efficient utilisation of women's economic contributions is necessary to enhance gender equality and inclusive growth. The development must also address the crucial governance, capacity-building, and accountability challenges for gender equity and inclusive growth. There has been a paradigm change from a welfare policy to an empowerment one. Due to this, the idea of "engendering development," which supports gender parity, gender mainstreaming, and women-centric governance, is also becoming more popular. In a committee assembled by the Planning Commission, Government of India, Prof. Pam Rajput put forth the notion of engendering development; afterwards, the Planning Commission, Government of India, presented the report on engendering public policy. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan's midterm appraisal, the expression gained more notoriety (2007–12). Given that women make up a substantial portion of India's workforce, empowering them is crucial for fostering national growth and ensuring distributive justice. The mainstreaming of women in development may be aided through engendering growth paradigms and development strategies. Growth models and development planning demand the right system that can address gender concerns at all levels, dedication to policies, and financial support for them. Because men and women were socialised differently and because gender must be taken into account as a macroeconomic feature in the growth model, it is essential to ensure engendering development. Women must be seen as producers of both economically and non-economically productive groups in order to progress the growth model. Gender-inclusive urban planning is necessary in India because "women and men experience cities in different ways" (Beall, 1996: 10). In large part because India frequently employs a gender-blind strategy that is primarily concentrated on infrastructure and real estate, women's interests and concerns have been disregarded in urban policy and development (Mahadevia,2011). To achieve a sustainable and equitable urban development, women's needs must be taken into account while building programmes, infrastructure, and services. Women who reside in cities typically face the most challenges since they are "on average poorer than men...they frequently experience greater difficulty acquiring resources and services customised to their needs, and decision-making opportunities" (UN- DESA, UNDP and OHCHR, 2015: 3). These differences, which are currently escalating, are illustrated through studies

on housing, infrastructure access, transit, and other subjects. The rise in women-headed households and women-maintained families across all cities, according to Beall, "made it even more necessary to embrace a gender perspective in responding to urban poverty" (Beall, 1996: 10). Since they do not have equal access to transportation, women have limited mobility. Mobility, according to Hanson (2010), shapes gender since it offers chances and influences social justice by increasing capacity (Beyazit, 2011). According to Harvey (1973), the usage of transportation infrastructures was necessary for gaining access to other services and, more importantly, the job market. Since movement is freedom in and of itself, transportation enables it. Additionally, it promotes capabilities in the way that Sen (1985) defined them by allowing for choice. Sen claims that improving capacities is essential for achieving social fairness.

Inclusive Development:

The idea that the city belongs to all of its residents is the cornerstone of the inclusive city concept. Human rights are broken down into seven core freedoms in the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2000) that the freedom from discrimination for equality, the freedom from want for a decent standard of living, the freedom to realise one's potential as a human, the freedom from fear without threats to one's personal safety, the freedom from injustice, the freedom of participation, the freedom of expression and association, and the freedom from decent work without exploitation. Strong urban governance is required to ensure the preservation of these fundamental rights in society. When the knowledge, productivity, social capital, and physical capital of the underprivileged are incorporated into urban development, inequality and social unrest are decreased. Additionally, it increases local participation and ownership in development initiatives. Some groups are excluded from urban life and services due to physical, social, or economic constraints and local governments frequently fail to take these groups into account in their decision-making as a result of inertia and bureaucratic and unresponsive forms of government. The urban elites live in a world that is isolated from the rest of society and is moulded by things like self-exclusion, race, gender, and religion. Displacement spurred on by expansion exacerbates population marginalization and isolation, even in metropolitan areas. Urban centres draw people from rural regions because of the alluring economic opportunities they offer, yet slum dwellers are displaced and deported as a result of infrastructural development projects and urban

center redevelopment. Due to their limited purchasing power and affordability, migrants from rural and semi-urban areas frequently struggle to locate suitable housing and are consequently compelled to live in unclean conditions, which force them to live in a hazardous and unhealthy environment. This exposes, marginalizes, and excludes a substantial segment of the metropolitan population. The following justifications for inclusive growth: Infrastructure investment is widely acknowledged to be a necessary component of growth. In order for infrastructure to contribute to inclusive growth, policy must focus on specific types of infrastructure. In addition, infrastructure investment targeted at inclusive development must be complemented by policies that improve the utilisation of the infrastructure by disadvantaged growth (Rauniyar, 2010). Four components—opportunity, capability, access, and security—combine to form the inclusion idea. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, established a strategy for creating 'Inclusive cities' in accordance with the 'Approach Paper for the 11th Five Year Plan, which named 'Inclusive Growth' as the key concept for the nation. The NSUP project is providing support to this organization. The project aims to provide technical assistance on the following topics: inclusive urban and regional planning systems; inclusive urban infrastructure; integration of the informal sector into the formal urban economies; affordable land and housing for the underprivileged; inclusive city development processes for developing infrastructure and services; inclusive social development and convergence of programmes; and inclusive financial inclusion. Given that men and women have distinct perspectives on urban life in India, gender equality must be taken into account when developing cities. Women's interests and concerns have been disregarded in urban policy and development, in large part because India usually uses a gender-blind strategy that is primarily focused on infrastructure and real estate. Women's demands must be taken into consideration while developing programmes, infrastructure, and services in order to create a sustainable and equitable urban development. A unfortunate byproduct of urbanization, urban poverty has a detrimental impact on women and girls. Women make up the bulk of the urban poor; as a result, they have less access to essential services, resources, and livelihoods and are more vulnerable to crime, illness, natural catastrophes, and environmental dangers. The integration of these priorities into the urban development agenda, the setting of policy priorities, the development of programmes, the selection of budget allocation priorities, and the

establishment of institutional mechanisms to ensure appropriate expenditures are all made possible by gender planning and the related tools, such as gender responsive budgeting. By doing these things, the chance of women's empowerment is greatly improved.

Gender and the Norms of Good Governance:

The seven interconnected concepts of sustainability, decentralization, justice, efficiency, openness and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security form the foundation of the Campaign for Good Governance. Even if each of these applies equally to both men and women, there are still some considerations that need to be made because of gender. The norms are used as an analytical framework in this section to examine how women are increasingly engaged in decision-making. In other words, in addition to our evaluation of the actual situation, the rules give us guidance for choosing a policy. Prior to the 1970s, most development theories and studies were 'gender-blind', assuming that men's experiences were average (Moser and Peake, 1994). Gender development theories have provided the conceptual framework for integrating gender into urban design by acknowledging that women and men have different needs. In the 1970s, the first concepts integrating a gender perspective in development first surfaced. Since then, gender and development has undergone a number of conceptual modifications that have evolved in line with improvements in the ideas around gender and urban development. The fundamental change in these transitions was the emphasis on women's empowerment from a welfare-based viewpoint on gender and development. In cities, women form up half of the population. Despite their enormous numbers, they have relatively limited influence on policy and decision-making in urban governance because of their poor and improper representation in urban local bodies (ULBs). Although everyone is impacted by ULB activities and operations, historically women have played very little or no part in leadership positions within local governments. They are powerless to change local policies, which results in constrained access to services. To ensure equitable representation in local governments, action must be made. ULBs are the best places to include women in local policy and decision-making because they are closest to the community. They will have the opportunity to participate in choices that affect the standard of living and how municipal services are delivered. The participation of women is restricted by a variety of factors, such as

prejudice, family responsibilities, financial limitations while running for municipal office, cultural considerations, etc. It is necessary to alter current political institutions and practices to include more women if women are to have political sway. Making ensuring that women actively contribute to socioeconomic development is the aim of the women's reservation in local bodies. Due to the customary disinclination of women to run for office due to the frequent violence and obscurity of electoral politics, reservations became crucial (Prasad, 2014). The 74th Constitution Amendment Act's ratification in 1992 opened the door for the rise of strong bottom-up female leadership that might someday result in posts of authority at the state and federal levels. Municipal acts governing their establishment and operation set forth the responsibilities of municipalities and municipal corporations. Experience has revealed that the four primary duties of ULB chairpersons or councilors, regardless of gender, are policy, development, politics, and administration.

Caroline Moser emphasizes the threefold role of women in gender planning in developing countries, referencing Molyneaux's (1985) classification of women's needs as "Strategic Gender Needs" or "Practical Gender Needs" (Moser, 1989, 1993). The triple role of women is one important factor that supports theories of gender and development. Therefore, in order to understand the demands of women in urban development, it is essential to first understand the "Triple Role of Women", which can also be viewed as a gendered division of labour (Moser 1993). Women differ from males in that they typically divide their time between three different but equally significant responsibilities. Reproductive work, which includes taking care of and rearing children as well as taking care of household responsibilities, is the first of these three jobs. Women carry out useful jobs as well. Whether they are at home or away from home, many women work and support their families with a second income. Last but not least, a large number of women engage in community management, which entails supplying items for shared consumption. The locations of this art are typically both urban and rural. Urban settings, which make any one of these duties harder to perform, limit the amount of time they can devote to their other two tasks. However, mainstream planning and law rarely take this into account.

Gender and Budgets:

The most crucial instruments for carrying out policy are a government's budgets, which are a reflection of its political objectives. Empirical research reveals that spending habits and the methods by which the government raises money have different effects on women and girls than they do on men and boys, frequently to the detriment of the former. This is true even though the numbers and statistics in the budget documents appear to be gender neutral. Due to the socially prescribed roles that men and women fill in society, the gendered division of labour, and the differences in responsibilities, capacities, and constraints that men and women experience, among other things, women typically hold less economic, social, and political sway than men in their communities. Gender responsive budget aims to incorporate the gender perspective across the entire budget cycle. Gender responsive budgeting's overarching goal is to assess the various effects that a state's national, local, and revenue policies will have on women and girls. Effect analyses and recommendations for re-prioritizing income and expenses while taking into consideration the various needs and goals of men and women are included in gender responsive budgeting. Other aspects of inequality, such age, religion, ethnicity, or place of residence, may also be highlighted, depending on the specifics of the nation.

The systematic evaluation of budgetary programmes and policies for their effects on women is known as gender budgeting. Studies demonstrate that initiatives aimed at enhancing women's access to the workforce have a positive impact on economic growth. In recent years, gender budgeting has become more well-known in the policy world. In recent years, gender budgeting has become more well-known in the policy world. The current article aims to critically assess the plans, policies, programmes, and schemes as well as to look at union budgets from a gender perspective in light of the growing importance of gender budgeting. Australia implemented the first gender budget in 1984. A groundbreaking analysis of the effect of public budgets on gender relations was conducted with the assumption that budgets are crucial tools for fostering gender equality. Since then, gender budgeting as a tool for women's empowerment and engendering development has been implemented by more than 90 nations. Many states, local governments, businesses, and private organisations have started gender budgeting initiatives in India as well.

They have also implemented particular laws, programmes, and plans for gender mainstreaming.

Gender disparity, according to the World Economic Forum, is ineffective and expensive for women, men, girls, and boys (Ratnasi, 2008). Lower levels of production, competitiveness, and well-being are the results of these costs. According to Diane Elson, "there will be rewards for society as a whole if women themselves have more control over resources" (Elson, 2002). The fundamental disparities between men and women are acknowledged in a gender-responsive national budget, which addresses these disparities by allocating public funds (Helena, 2003). It also sees women as "right holders, whose governments are required to empower and protect them", rather than "a weak group that is beneficiaries of government aid" (Noeleen, 2006). Learn how women are doing in many categories, such as life expectancy, adult literacy rate, and labour force participation, in order to comprehend the importance of gender budgeting and why gender budgeting is required.

Gender Budget Analysis:

There are more than 70 ministries/departments that draw grants from the government. Of the 70 ministries, 57 of them have gender budget cells. But, only 34 ministries/departments have reported allocations in the gender budget schemes during 2020–21. Though there is increasing trend in number of demands and ministries reporting gender budgeting in India, however, a large number of Departments. Ministries are still far behind (Chart-2).

Chart-2:No. of Ministries and Demands for Gender Budgeting in
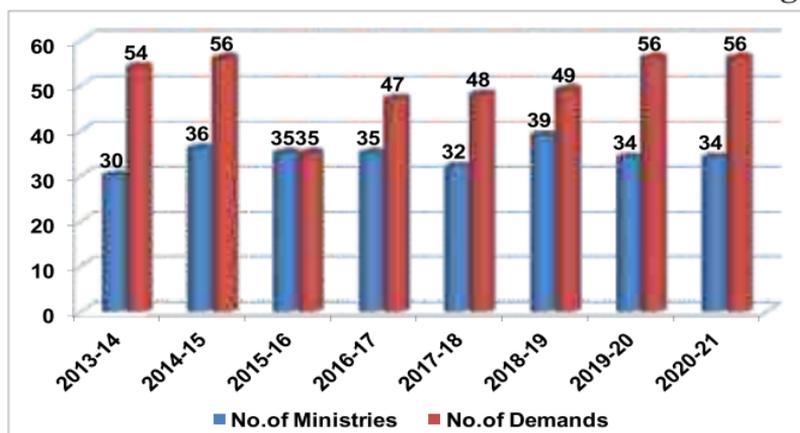
Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Eighteen ministries/departments have reported allocations in A Category of Schemes of the Gender Budgeting Scheme (GBS) 2020–21. Six of the 18 have reported allocations only in Part A. Twenty eight ministries/ departments have reported allocations in B Category of Schemes of the GBS 2020-21. Of them, 16 have reported only in B Category of Schemes. 12 ministries/ departments have reported allocations in both Parts A and B Category of Schemes. On the other hand, more than half of the total number of ministries/ departments did not comply with the directions of the Finance Ministry regarding the reporting of information. These include Commerce, Posts, Telecom, Consumer Affairs, Corporate Affairs, Finance, Defence, Parliamentary Affairs, and *Panchayati Raj* Ministries. However, some of the above Ministries/Departments Had reported in GBS in the past. For instance, the Ministry of *Panchayati Raj* reported allocations in Part B of the GBS from 2008–09 for schemes, such as *Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva ShaktiAbhiyan and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojna*, which were subsequently subsumed into the *Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan* in 2012–13 and continued till 2016–17. It also reported large allocations for the Backward Regions Grants Fund in 2013–14 and 2014–15. However, it has not reported any allocations for women in either Part A or B since budget 2017–18. The Panchayati Raj ministry implements a centrally sponsored scheme called *Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan* since 2018, the allocations of which have not been reported either in A or B Category of Schemes of the GBS (Mehta, 2020).

Union Budget 2020–21 aimed to address the aspirations and hopes of the youth, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and women, who have been in the pursuit of a better life. In her budget speech on February 1, 2020,the   Finance Minister *Nirmala Sitharaman* highlighted that the budget has been worked out on the basis of a "three-pillar framework," to attend to aspirational India, accelerate economic development, and work towards building a humane and compassionate society. The total allocation for the gender budget in 2020-21 has been Rs 1,43,461.72 crore, of which Rs 28,568.32 crore has been reported in A Category of Schemes and Rs 1,14,893.40 crore in Part B Category of Schemes. The share of gender budget as a percentage of total budgetary expenditure has been 4.98 percent in 2018–19), 4.91 percent in 2019–20 (budget estimates), 5.29 percent in 2019–20 (revised estimates), and only 4.72 percent in 2020–21 (budget estimates). Over the last 15 years, the size of gender budget has remained below 5 percent, with a few exceptions (Mehta, 2020). Only 18 ministries/departments have reported allocations in A Category of Schemes

and 28 in B Category of Schemesin budget estimates 2020–21. However, just four of them, namely, the Department of Rural Development, MWCD, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Police, account for as much as 96% of the estimates reported in the A Category of Schemes of the GBS. In Part B of the GBS too, just four ministries/departments account for 75 percent of the allocations that have been made for women. These are the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Rural Development, Department of School Education and Literacy, and MWCD. The Rural Development department is the largest contributor to the budgetary estimates reported in the gender budget 2020–21. One-third of the value of the total gender budget, comprising both A and B Category of Schemes, is reported by the department. The department accounts for 75 percent of the total budgetary allocations reported in A Category of Schemes, and 21.86 percent of the total budgetary allocations reported in Part B of the GBS 2020–21. The department reports only two budget heads in the A Category of Schemesand two in the B Category of Schemes. As much as 90 percent of the amount reported by the Rural Development department for 100 percent women-specific allocations is allocated to the *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana*. Two budget heads, National Rural Livelihood Mission—*Aajeevika* (NRLM) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), have been reported in Part B of the GBS. NRLM includes schemes, such as the *Deen Dayal Upadhyaya—Grameen Kaushalya Yojana* (DDU-GKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI), that provide skill development training to boys and girls. Hence, NRLM is correctly reported in Part B of the GBS. The budget estimate reported for NRLM was reported Rs.610.90 crore or around 50 percent of the total demand for the grant of Rs 9,210.04 crore. However, more than 50 percent should be reported in the GBS since the bulk of the benefits of NRLM are for women and girls. The second highest budgetary allocation in A Category of Schemesof the GBS is Rs. 3,919 crore for the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Around 64 percent of this or Rs 2,500 crore has been for pregnant women under the *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana* (PMMVY). Over the last decade,four ministries viz. Rural Development, Education, Health and MoWCD have received between 85-90% of the Gender Budget expenditure. Flagship government schemes that received maximum allocation in 2019-20 were the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (15 percent); *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* (14 percent); *Anganwadi* Services (9 percent); *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (8 percent);

and the National Rural Health Mission (5 percent). This pattern of allocations suggests a concerning concentration of funds in a few sectors, as opposed to a widespread gender balanced budget. There has been growth of 34.75 percent in grossgender budget in India during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21. The growth was recorded high in B category of schemes (48.29 percent) as compared to A category of schemes (0.64 percent). The gross gender budget was recorded Rs. 85495 crores in 2013-14 which increased to Rs. 115207 crores in 2020-21. However, gender budget under women specific schemes increased to Rs. 24440 crores in 2020-21 from Rs. 24285 crores in 20213-14.

Though it is mandatory to release the GBS, there are no accountability mechanisms mandating impact assessment of allocations for female beneficiaries (Chakraborty, 2013). About 16 states in India currently undertake GRB, however, the quality of statements produced, and allocation undertaken vary significantly by State, owing to inadequate training for government officials (Joshi, 2013).Chakrabortyet al. (2020) have analyzed the gender budget in terms of fiscal marksmanship whichis the accuracy of budgetary forecasting. It can be crucial information about how fiscal agents form expectations. The significant variations between actual revenue and expenditure from the forecasted budgetary magnitudes could be an indicative of non-attainment of the objectives of fiscal policy. The difference between the budget estimates and actual expenditure gives the extent of fiscal marksmanship. In India, budget comes in three stages, first is the Budget Estimates (BE) released during the Budget Speech. The second is the Revised Estimates (RE) after a year, and the third is the actual spending. The actual spending data comes with a significant time lag. Higher BE does not ensure higher spending. There is significant deviation between BE and RE and actual in India. The amounts budgeted for police for the safety of women under the *Nirbhaya* fund show a decline relative to the budget estimates of 2019–20. The decision to reduce this allocation may have been determined by the unspent amounts of Rs 40 crore in the revised estimates of 2019–20. The allocations by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship for women-specific schemes have decreased to the tune of Rs 107 crore between budget estimates of 2019–20 and 2020–21. Similarly, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment was unable to spend Rs 93 crore allocated in the budget estimates of 2019–20 for hostels meant for girls from SC households. Similarly, MWCD was unable to spend Rs 120 crore out of Rs. 165 crore allocated towards the benefit of working women's hostels in the budget

estimates of 2019–20. In addition to the unspent balances in *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* and working women's hostels' scheme, MWCD has unspent balances to the tune of Rs 150 crore in the Scheme for Adolescent Girls, Rs. 100 crore in the allocations for *Mahila Shakti Kendra*, Rs. 70 crore in one-stop crisis centres, and Rs. 15 crore in *Swadhar Greh* scheme (Mehta, 2020) .

Ministry of Home, Government of India has introduced Nirbhava Fund for safety of women. Rs. 1000 crores were earmarked in the budget during 2014-15, however, funds were not utilized and Rs. 849 crores were spent during 2018-19 . The budget slightly increased to Rs. 891 crores in 2019-20. Ministry of Home also introduced scheme for women hostel for CRPF with the budgetary allocation of Rs. 90 crores in 2016-17. The Ministry also launched a scheme for Assam Rifles with the budget of Rs. 38 crores in 2019-20. Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, introduced rural housing schemes with the budget of Rs. 11000 crores   in 2014-15. The budget under the scheme reduced to Rs. 10025 crores in 2015-16 however, Rs. 16000 crores were allocated under *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* during 2016-17. The funds under the schemes increased to Rs. 19308 crores in 2018-19 and Rs. 19000 crores in 2019-20 . Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, initiated DISHA Programme for Women in Science with the budget of Rs. 44 crores in 2014-15 which increased to Rs. 70 crores in 2016-17. Department of School Education and Literacy under Ministry of Human Resources , Government of India, launched scheme for incentives to girl child for secondary education   with financial support of Rs. 45 crores in 2016-17 which increased to Rs. 165 crores in 2018-19 . Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India allocated budget of Rs. 120 crores girl students of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 2015-16.Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, initiated a scheme of clean energy , LPG connections for poor households with the financial package of Rs. 2500 crores in 2016-17. The budget increased significantly to Rs.3724 crores in 2019-20 however, it decreased to Rs. 1118 crores in 2020-21. It is to be noted that a huge amount has been earmarked under infrastructure development programmes, housing and institutional development which is should not be treated as gender budget. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, also allocated huge amount under NIPPCED, National Commission   for Women, National Women Empowerment Mission, National Child Protection Commission, National Nutrition Mission and ICDS programme which include major benefits to

children including girl children. The composition of gross gender budget during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21 has shown fluctuating trend. The lion's share of gross gender budget has been in favor of women centric schemes while share of gender budget under A category of schemes has declined over the period. Even during 2017-18, it recorded share of just 3.32 percent. It is because of the fact that Government has launched schemes and programmers in Mission Mode approach which are mostly in nature of gender neutral while a few programmes during the year were shifted from A category to B category of schemes (Chart-3).

Chart-3: Composition of Gross Gender Budgets in India

(In Crores)
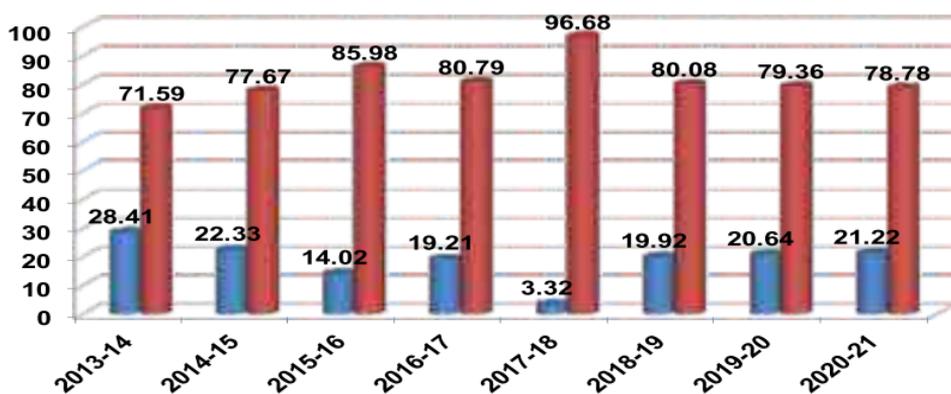
Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Gross gender budget constitutes less than 5 percent of union budget in 2020-21. The share of gross gender budget against total budget was accounted significantly high in 2013-14 (5.86 Percent) followed by 2014-15(5.46 percent and 2019-20 (5.29 percent). However, it showed as low as 4.46 percent in 2015-16 and 4.72 percent in 2020-21 (Chart-4).

**Chart-4:Gender Budgetas Percentage of Total Budget in India**
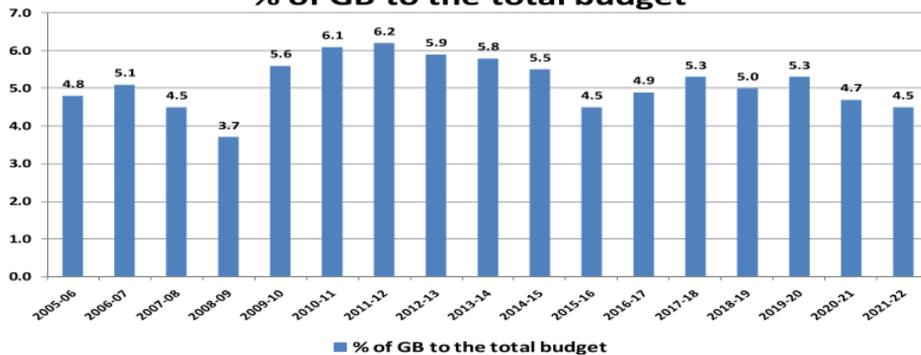
Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Gross gender budget accounted for less than one percent of GDP of India. It recorded 0.63 percent in 2019-20 while it was reported 0.59 percent in 2015-16. It further increased to 0.66 percent in 2018-19. India has been producing a Gender Budget Statement (GBS), as part of the Union Budget since 2005-06. Yet even today, the gender budget is less than 1% of the GDP. The total resource envelope dedicated to the gender budget in 2019-20 amounted to Rs. 1,317 billion, just 0.63 percent of GDP. The gender budget was about 0.7 percent of the GDP, over the 2008-09 to 2019-20 periods (Chart-5). During the period 2008-09 to 2020-21, the overall Gender Budget stayed below 1 per cent of the gross domestic product of Indian economy and less than 5 per cent of total expenditure.

Chart 5: Gender Budge as Percentage of GDP in India

GB as a percentage to GDP
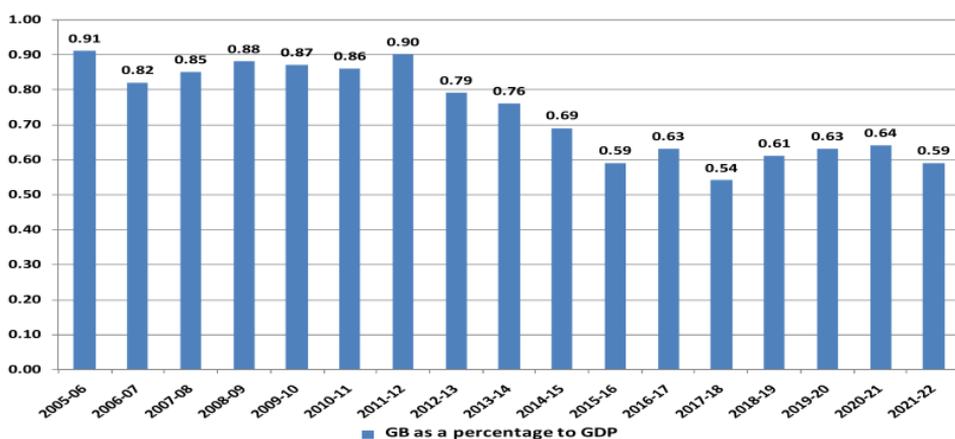
Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Women Specific Schemes:

The *'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana'* was introduced in Panipat, Haryana, in 2015. It strives to raise awareness and enhance the effectiveness of services provided to girls in need of assistance. The campaign's initial goal was to address the diminishing child sex ratio, but it has expanded to include gender-based sex discrimination, girl child education, and protection. A nationwide campaign and concentrated multi-sectoral effort in 100 chosen districts with low child sex ratios, encompassing all states and UTs, are being used to carry it out. The Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Human Resource Development collaborated to create the *'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana'*.

Mahila-E-Haat was introduced in 2016 by the government's

Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is a bilingual online marketing platform that makes use of technology to assist aspiring women business owners, self-help organisations, and NGOs in showcasing their goods and services. One of the various services offered by *Mahila-E-Haat* is promoting direct communication between the sellers and buyers, as well as providing a web-based approach, advocacy, training, workshops on packing and soft interventions, and sensitization. In order to provide rural women with chances for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health, and nutrition, the government established the *Mahila Shakti Kendra* in 2017. In the 115 most underdeveloped areas, the *Mahila Shakti Kendras* are anticipated to work through community engagement with student volunteers. Each *Mahila Shakti Kendra* would act as a point of contact for rural women to contact the government in order to claim their rights through capacity building and training. It functions at the federal, state, local, and block levels. The government established the Working Women Hostels to guarantee that working families could find safe, practical housing in urban, semi-urban, and rural locations, together with day care centres for their kids, wherever possible. Assistance is given under the plan for new hostel building as well as hostel enlargement. Any woman is eligible for the working women's hostels as long as her gross monthly salary does not exceed Rs. 50,000 in major cities and Rs. 35,000 in all other locations. In the case of single bedrooms, 10 percent of the total emoluments or gross income of the ladies may be charged as rent; in the case of double bedrooms, 7.5 percent; and in the case of dormitories, 15 percent of the entire emoluments or gross salary may be charged as rent. Fees collected from children attending day carefacilities shall not exceed 5% of their mother's income, or the real cost, whichever is smaller. Over 66,000 women have benefited from this programme, which has so far approved 890 hostels. The STEP programme was created to give women the skills they need to find successful employment. Additionally, it gives women the necessary skills and training to launch their own businesses. It is accessible to all women over the age of 16, and it is operated by a grant given to a facility or organisation, including NGOs. The plan has, however, been incorporated into a skill development objective.

The assistance under the STEP Scheme will be available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to agriculture, horticulture, food processing, handlooms, tailoring, stitching, embroidery, *zari*, handicrafts, computers & IT-enabled services, along with soft skills and workplace skills like spoken

English, gems and jewellery, travel and tourism, and hospitality. The *Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana*, which falls within the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* program's purview, is a government-sponsored savings programme for young girls. When a girl is born and up until the age of ten, her parent or legal guardian may open an account at any India Post office or branch of an authorised commercial bank. When a girl is 10 years old, she can run the account, and when she is 18 years old, she can withdraw 50% of the money for higher study. After opening, the account matures after 21 years. Deposits are accepted up until the account reaches its 14th anniversary; after that point, it will only receive interest at the current rate. In 2013, the Government of India's Ministry of Finance established a special fund called the *Nirbhaya* Fund for the implementation of programmes targeted at improving women's safety and security throughout the nation. This corpus fund, which is under the control of the Ministry of Finance, is non-lapsable. The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has been operating a women's helpline programme since 2015. The Program is designed to provide information about women-related government programmes across the country as well as a 24-hour immediate and emergency response to women who have been victims of violence through referral to or linking with the appropriate authority, such as the police, one-stop centre, or hospital. The One Stop Center Scheme, also referred to as *'Sakhi'*, was put into place in 2015 using the *'Nirbhaya'* budget. The One Stop Centres are set up in several cities throughout India to offer victims of violence a place to stay, a police station, legal, medical, and counselling services all under one roof, along with a 24-hour Helpline. The *Nari Shakti Puruskars* are national awards that honour individuals and organisations for their outstanding contributions to the cause of women, particularly marginalised and at-risk women. By reaching one crore participants, the *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana*, the government's flagship programme for expectant and nursing mothers, has accomplished a critical milestone. It is a direct benefit transfer programme wherein monetary benefits are automatically transferred into pregnant women's bank accounts to cover increased nutritional demands and partially make up for lost wages. The program's implementation began in 2017. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are eligible for a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 under the 'Scheme' if they meet the requisite requirements, which include early pregnancy registration, antenatal care, recording of the child's birth, and finishing the first round of immunizations for the family's first-born child. Under the *Janani Suraksha Yojana*, the qualifying beneficiaries also

receive a financial incentive. In order to help women in challenging situations, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the *Swadhar* programme in 2002. The programme offers marginalised women and girls who are in need refuge, food, clothes, and care. Women prisoners released from prison without family assistance, women survivors of natural catastrophes, women victims of terrorist/extremist violence, and widows abandoned by their families and relatives are among the beneficiaries.

Due to the high number of widows and poor women living in Vrandavan, Varanasi, Mathura, and other sacred locations, the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India has introduced a programme for homes for widows and the homeless. The Union Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Union Ministry of Home Affairs jointly launched the *Mahila* Police Volunteer programme. *Mahila* Police Volunteers (MPVs) have the broad responsibility of informing the government and police about incidents of violence against women, including as child marriage, dowry harassment, and violence against women in public places. The *Mahila* Police Volunteers programme has been operationalized in Haryana as the first state. A comprehensive plan to combat trafficking is called *Ujjawala*. The Scheme was established in 2007 with the purpose of preventing the trafficking of women and children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, assisting in the rescue of victims and their placement in safe custody, offering rehabilitation services by meeting their basic needs, assisting in their reintegration into families and society, and assisting in the repatriation of cross-border victims. The Non-Governmental Organizations are primarily responsible for putting the Scheme into action (NGOs). The Government approved the implementation of a restructured Scheme for Adolescent Girls to focus on out-of-school adolescent girls in the age group of 11–14 years after realising the multifaceted needs of pre–adolescent girls (11–14 years) and with the aim of motivating these girls to join the school system. The *Kishori Shakti Yojana* has been discontinued as a result of the scheme's expansion to all of the nation's districts. Scheme for Adolescent Girls to be implemented through *Anganwadi* Centers using the Platform of *Anganwadi* Services of Umbrella ICDS Scheme (MoWCD, 2020).In the years from 2013–14 to 2020–21, the Ministry of Women and Child Development's gross gender budget increased by 86.12%. However, the gross gender budget for initiatives falling under the A category has increased by 3.5 times during the same time period. Budgets for schemes in the B category have grown by

67.77 percent over the period. The Ministry's gross gender budget increased from Rs. 11126 crores in the 2012–14 year to Rs. 20709 crores in the 2020–21 periods. However, from Rs. 1119 crores in 2013–14 to Rs. 3919 crores in 2020–21, the funding for programmes under the A category grew.

In terms of numbers, there are just three women-specific schemes in the Gender Budgeting Schemes, each with an allocation of more than Rs. 1,000 crore, which is a small sum compared to the other schemes. Rural housing contributes for around 68.26 per cent of women-specific budget allocation, with maternity benefit schemes accounting for approximately 8.75 per cent of total womenspecific fund allocation.Specifically, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal body responsible for implementing the gender budgeting process. The Integrated Child Development Programme, the Support for Training and Employment Program (STEP), the *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh*, *Swadhar*, the *Rajiv Gandhi Matrithva Sahayog Yojana* (SABLA), and the National Commission for the Empowerment of Women are just a few of the women-specific initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Children Development. When looking at the scheme's trends on the basis of money allocation, it becomes clear that the allocation to ICDS programs is expanding at an alarming rate. When the ICDS programs were first funded in 2005-06, the total amount allocated was Rs. 3315.25 crore. This amount was then increased to Rs.27584 crore in 2020-21.There has been a noticeable increase in the appropriations under Part-B of gender budgeting statements, with the exception of the fiscal year 2008-09. It is estimated that Part-B allocations account for 72.09 per cent of the total allocations. Part B expenditure is more diverse, although it is primarily restricted to the ministries of education, health, rural development, and women and child development, among other ministries(Panda, 2022).

The composition of gross gender budget of the Ministry shows that there has been fluctuating trend. The lion's share of gross gender budget was reported under B category of scheme. About 87 percent expenditure was recorded under B category of schemes in 2018-19; however, its share is likely to decrease in 2020-21. Budget allocations under A category of schemes recorded 10.06 percent share in 2013-14 which increased to 29.23 percent during 2016-17 (Chart-6).

Chart-6: Composition of Gender Budget of MoWCD

(Rs. In Crores)
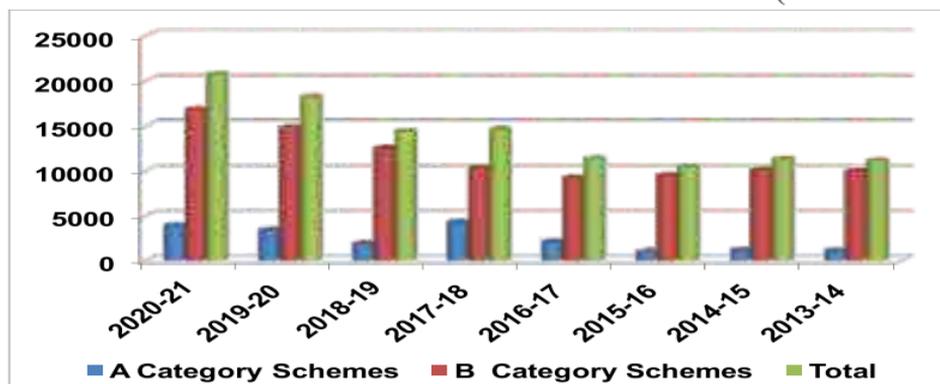
Source: Union Budgets, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Budgetary allocations under major schemes shows interesting trend. There has been massive increase of budget under Working Wmomen Hostel, *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme, ICDS, and National Nutritional Mission while budget allocations under Scheme for Adolescent Girls, *Nirbhaya* Fund and STEP has fallen down over the period. Government has massively invested in National Nutrition Mission, *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme, One Stop Crisis Centre and *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Scheme. It is to be noted that Government has merged STEP in Skill Development Mission, while *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme is upgraded scheme of *Indira Gandhi Matratu Sahyog Yojana* and *Kisori Shakti Yojana* (SABLA) has been integrated with Scheme for Adolescent Girls. It is to be noted that many women schemes have been implemented by Central Social Welfare Board, National Commission for Women , NIPPCED and *Rastriya Mahila Kosh*. However, government has decided to close down Rastriya Mahila Kosh while Central Social Board has been weakened by withdrawing financial support and work of monitoring of centrally sponsored schemes.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India being the nodal Ministry has implemented both the schemes categorized under A and B category of schemes. A large amount has been earmarked under B category of schemes which mainly include *Aganwadi* services, nutrition, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Program (ISSNIP) aim to improve nutritional outcomes of children and women in India, however, the major beneficiaries of such programmes are children who include both boys and girls. The Ministry has also failed to utilize the allocated amount due to administrative reasons.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated equality between men and women and declared that women are not inferior to men morally and intellectually. He believed that our society cannot progress if gender inequality is prevailed. Let us take a look at data on present status of women:

Section: C

Present Status of Women

Equal opportunity access is hampered by gender inequality. Since gender inequality has traditionally had a strong hold in cultures all throughout the world, its scope and pervasiveness have had a negative influence on generations. As a result, gender inclusion has become a key theme in discussions about global policy. The gender gap in India has been the subject of numerous analyses and controversies. India is ranked 135th out of 146 nations in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022. Numerous indices of the status of women in India show that better economic growth can be attained while gender equality is not being achieved to the same extent. These are the results of an uneven development process, which persists if it is not addressed as a priority in policy. For development to be more inclusive, identifying areas to focus on for closing the current gender inequalities is crucial. It's critical to recognise gender discrimination as a systemic issue since it results from deeply rooted structural problems. In light of the fact that women continue to experience prejudice in every sphere of life, short-term legislative remedies have shown to be ineffectual. The persistent impediments must be addressed in a way that considers the pervasive influence of gender norms in society. Understanding the interdependence of criteria relating to women must be reflected in policies. Aiming for change in one area will inevitably have an impact on other others. Although the interconnections across areas like education, health, financial empowerment, crime prevention, and political engagement make it a complex place, these interconnections can also be used to one's advantage. An all-encompassing approach to policies is essential in this situation. The gender gap will continue to exist in many forms unless policies are created with a clear knowledge of the deep-seated structural problems causing the perpetuation of discrimination against women. When we take into account how quickly the economy and society are changing, this becomes even more important. The first stage is recognising and identifying the different barriers that women must overcome in order to realise their full potential as equal citizens. Numerous

actions have been taken in recent years to alleviate the gender gap that still exists in India. The study provides a status update on women in India to support ongoing activities.

Education:

Even in some social groupings, there has been an increase in the literacy rate. In both urban and rural areas, the female literacy rate has increased from 59.3% for Scheduled Tribes to 62.8 percent for Scheduled Caste in 2017-18 to 63 percent and 66.1 percent, respectively, in 2020-21. The Indian government has placed a strong emphasis on digital literacy as a way to keep up with a world that is becoming more and more digital. The government launched programmes like the 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) and the 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) from 2014 to 2016 to teach thousands of candidate's digital literacy. The *Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan* (PMGDISHA) aims to equip people in rural areas with digital skills such as using computers, sending and receiving emails, browsing the internet, accessing government services, and making digital payments, among other things, in order to address the literacy challenges in India's rural areas. About 52% of the beneficiaries of the scheme who have registered as participants are women.Secondary education serves as a transitional level between primary and higher education. This phase has a significant impact on how a student enters higher education. At this level of school, there is still a sizable gender discrepancy in enrollment. From 2019 to 2021, enrolment did somewhat rise, with over 2 lakh more girls enrolling in secondary school last year. Attention must be given immediately to the connection between the female dropout rate and the absence of functional restrooms. Studies have highlighted the challenges girls encounter at school when there isnot a restroom. When ladies limit their intake of food and water because their school doesn't have a lavatory, learning becomes practically impossible (Hough, 2018). Since 2014, all Indian schools' availability of functioning restrooms for girls has progressively risen. The situation appears to be improving, going from 85 percent of schools having functional restrooms in 2014 to 93 percent in 2020–21, as expressed as a proportion of all schools. The degree of female presence in higher education venues is indicated by the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Higher Education. On this front, India has seen notable advancements. It climbed from 0.92 in 2015–16 to 1.01 in 2019–20, indicating that women of that age group have

better access to higher education than men do. Additionally, an increase in GPI across social categories is noted in the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE 2020). There is no denying that during the past few years, female enrollment in higher education has increased. In the future years, there will be an increase in the number of women participating in India's higher education system due to more concerted efforts to boost retention rates and enhance learning outcomes by providing better education at the primary and upper secondary levels of school (Chart-7).

Chart-7: Gross Enrolment Rations in Higher Education for age 18-23 years Percent)
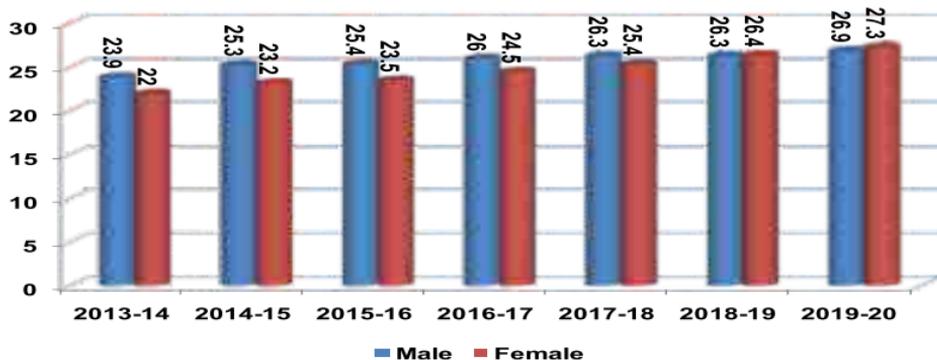

Source: ASHER, 2020.

Gender Violence:

Although it is a widespread issue, it is impossible to assess the level of violence against women. Due to the fact that a large number of incidents of violence against women go unreported, it may be significantly greater than what the reports suggest. Individual research projects and surveys typically yield greater estimates of violence than official statistics. However, it is also believed that they overestimate the level to which violence against women actually occurs. Women may be less likely than men to report domestic abuse in a number of areas. There is very little genuine domestic violence against women in India. With the evolution of society and the passage of time, gender-based violence is increasing quickly. On the one hand, economic liberalization, privatization, and globalization have greatly increased the chances for women to find productive jobs and achieve socioeconomic empowerment in general. On the other hand, there has also been an increase in crime, violence, and female exploitation. Gender-based violence has grave, long-lasting effects on one's physical and mental health. Additionally, it is against human rights. Globally, violence against women is rampant. It exists everywhere and

transcends all barriers, including those related to age, ethnicity, class, caste, education, and income. The severe symptoms, meanwhile, are found in South Asia, particularly in India. Girls and women in India are more likely to experience abuse of any type due to gender inequality in the areas of nutrition, healthcare, education, mobility, and other life possibilities. Policymakers are coming to understand that violence against women and girls is a significant obstacle to the nation's development objectives. This worry has driven legislative changes, institutional systems for women's development to be strengthened, and policies to be implemented that aim to alleviate women's vulnerability in diverse contexts. The percentage of crimes against women increased somewhat between 2018 and 2019. In 2019, there were 4.05 lakh cases of crimes registered against women, compared to the 32.25 lakh crimes reported overall under the Indian Penal Code. 12.6 percent of all offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) were crimes against women in 2019. In 2020, crimes against women made up 8.7 percent of all crimes. Offenses against women as a percentage of all IPC crimes have been on the rise in India (Chart-8).

## Chart-8: Proportion of Crimes against Women in India
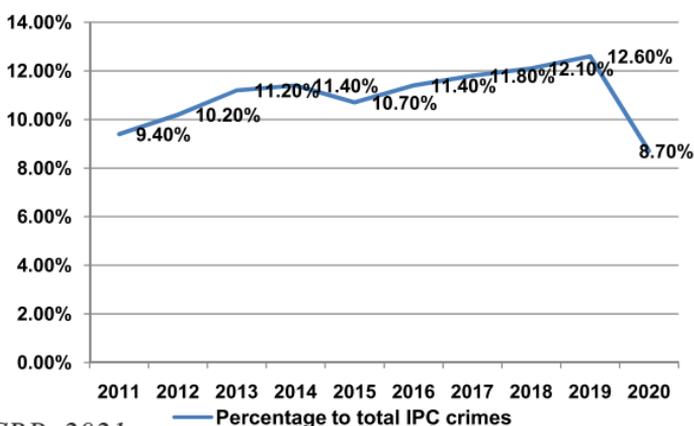
Source: NCRB, 2021.

Rate of cognizable crimes against women is shown in Chart-9. Assam, Tripura, Rajasthan, Telangana, Haryana, Odisha and West Bengal have recorded high rate of cognizable crimes against women. Nagaland, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Gujarat and Bihar recorded comparatively low rate of cognizable crimes against women. There has been increase of 23.27 per cent in the crimes committed against women in India during 2015-2019. An analysis of the below NCRB data clearly indicates that crimes against women have continuously been on the rise (Chart-9). The reported crimes against women have increased in the

country by 7.3percent in 2019 over the previous year. The data for 2019 showed that there were 4, 05,861 cases of crime reported against women. The total number of rape cases reported in the year 2019 stands at 32,033. The State-wise figures also show that crimes against women have been reported throughout India.Over all conviction in cases of crime against women has been low, especially in case of insult to the Modesty of Women and it may be assigned the reason behind rising cases of sexual harassment of women.

Chart-9: Crime Rate against Women in India
Rate to Total Crime against Women (2019)+
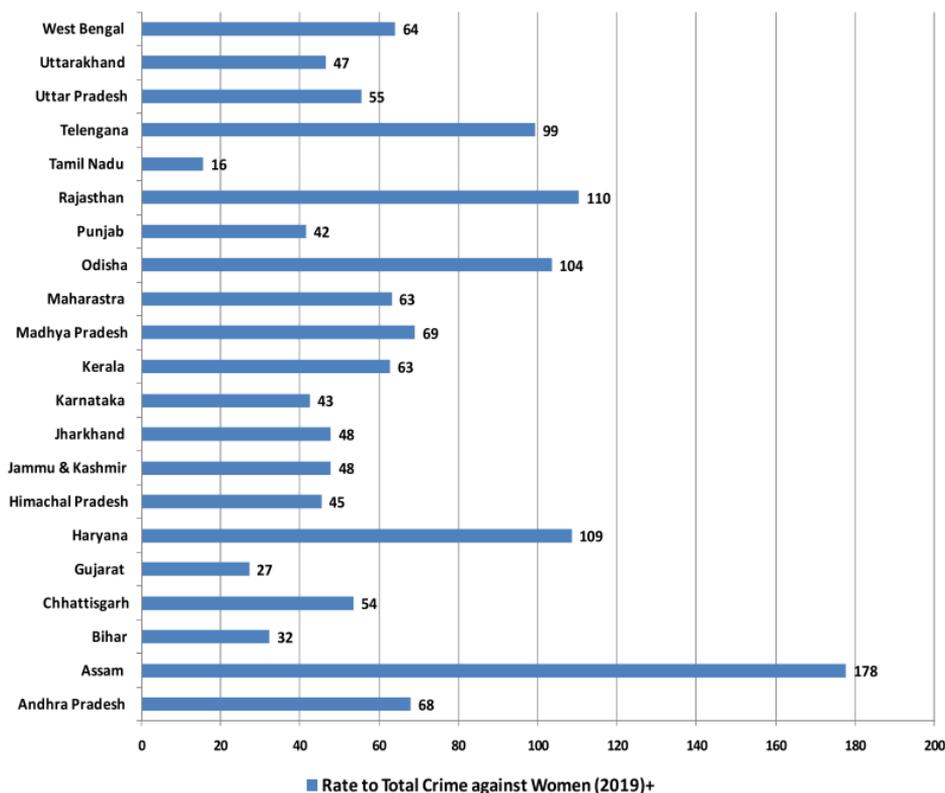

Source: NCRB, 2021.

Education:

The literacy rate is one of the fundamental metrics used to assess the level of education in India. The first necessary step in achieving various degrees of formal education is literacy. An individual is given the ability to access and use the many rights and privileges that are granted to citizens. India has made great efforts to raise its literacy rate. The growth in literacy rates over the past 20 years is clear evidence of the efforts. In India, however, there is still a long way to go until universal literacy is achieved.

Even in some social groupings, there has been an increase in the literacy rate. Urban and rural regions together have shown an increase in the female literacy rate, which went from 59.3% for Scheduled Tribes to 62.8 percent for Scheduled Caste in 2017–18 to 63 percent and 66.1 percent in 2020–21, respectively. It is well known that compared to metropolitan areas, literacy rates are lower in rural sections of the nation. The Indian government has placed a strong emphasis on digital literacy as a way to keep up with a world that is becoming more and more digital. The government launched programmes like the 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) and the 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) from 2014 to 2016 to teach thousands of candidates digital literacy. The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) aims to equip people in rural areas with digital skills such as using computers, sending and receiving emails, browsing the internet, accessing government services, and making digital payments, among other things, in order to address the literacy challenges in India's rural areas. About 52% of the beneficiaries of the scheme who have registered as participants are women. Numerous studies have examined the variables influencing the drop-out rate for women, but more research is needed to examine the drop-out rate for boys, which is higher than that of girls at the secondary school stage and across all of India. Attention must be given immediately to the connection between the female dropout rate and the absence of functional restrooms. Studies have highlighted the challenges girls encounter at school when there isn't a restroom. When ladies limit their intake of food and water because their school doesn't have a lavatory, learning becomes practically impossible (Hough, 2018). The degree of female presence in higher education venues is indicated by the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Higher Education. On this front, India has seen notable advancements. It climbed from 0.92 in 2015–16 to 1.01 in 2019–20, indicating that women of that age group have better access to higher education than men do. Additionally, an increase in GPI across social categories is noted in the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE, 2020). Even though more women enrolling in higher education is unquestionably a good thing, AISHE 2020 notes that the institutions of national importance have the lowest percentage of female students, followed by state private universities and deemed government universities. It is essential to guarantee that the educational level is of a high caliber. The higher education market has grown significantly. Since a few years ago, there have been a lot more higher education institutions established, making India's higher education system one of the biggest in the world (Nagaraj et.

al., 2019). The level of education offered must rise in tandem with the industry's rapid expansion. The number of students enrolled in higher education varies greatly between states. In 2019–20, Uttar Pradesh has the largest percentage of female undergraduate and graduate students. According to the number of women enrolling in postgraduate programmes in 2019–20, Telangana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Gujarat, and Haryana have all fared better than average. Chart-10 displays the enrollment of girls in arousing and non-engineering trades.

Chart-10: Enrolment of Girls across Engineering and Non-Engineering Trades (2014-18)
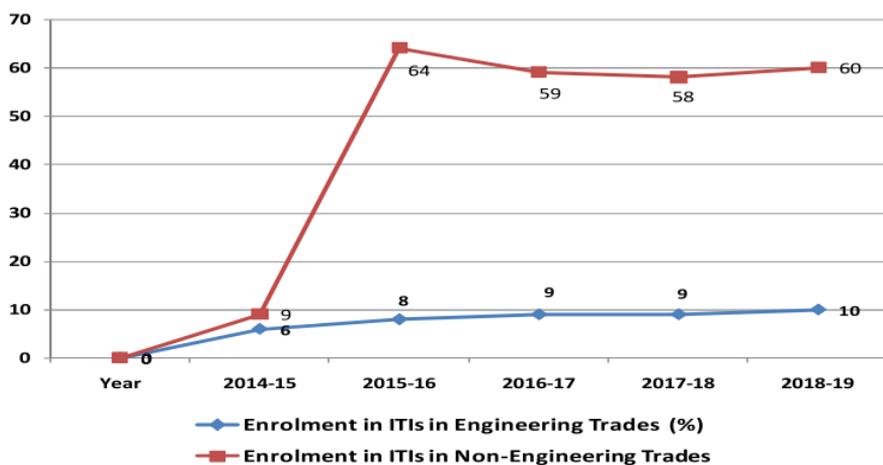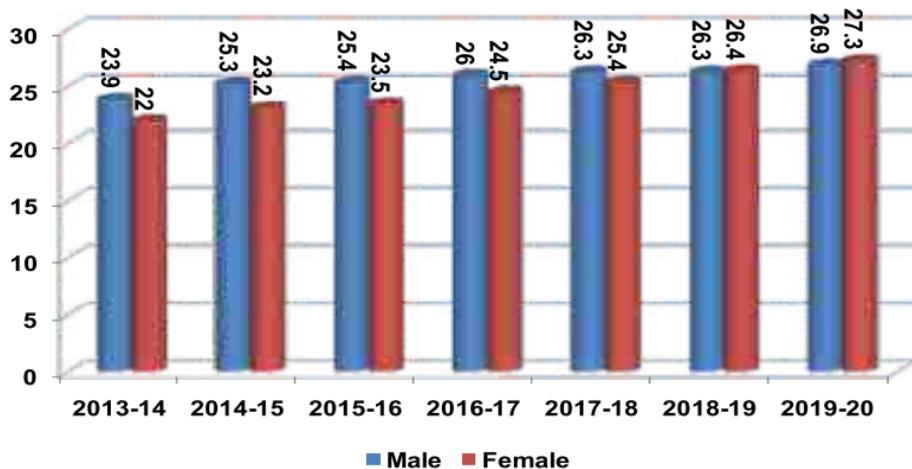

Source: ASHER, 2021.

The conventional idea is that when women pursue higher education more frequently, they will have more access to possibilities for better-paying employment. Studies, however, indicate that the gender pay difference is small for low-skilled jobs and increases for high-skilled jobs (Varkkey & Korde, 2013). At higher levels of the occupational hierarchy, the gender wage gap is likewise found to have grown. According to the rising trend in female enrollment in higher education across all states, women's specialization and skill levels will keep growing. To reduce the gender wage gap, several steps must be performed. Since a few years ago, there have been a lot more higher education institutions established, making India's higher education system one of the biggest in the world (Nagaraj et al., 2019). The level of education offered must rise in tandem with the industry's rapid expansion. The number of students enrolled in higher education varies greatly between states. In 2019-20, Uttar Pradesh has the largest percentage of female undergraduate and graduate students. According to the number of women enrolling in postgraduate programmes in 2019–20,

Telangana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Gujarat, and Haryana have all fared better than average. The conventional idea is that when women pursue higher education more frequently, they will have more access to possibilities for better-paying employment. Studies, however, indicate that the gender pay difference is small for low-skilled jobs and increases for high-skilled jobs (Varkkey & Korde, 2013). At higher levels of the occupational hierarchy, the gender wage gap is likewise found to have grown. According to the rising trend in female enrollment in higher education across all states, women's specialization and skill levels will keep growing. To target closing the gender wage gap, certain actions must be performed (Chart-11).

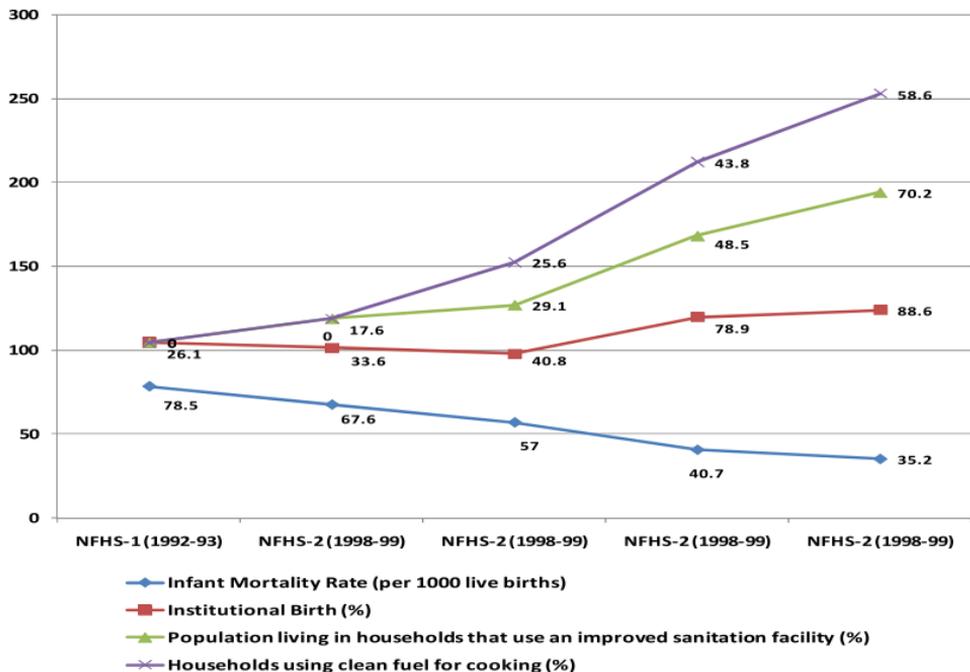**Chart-11: Gross Enrolment Rations in Higher Education for Age 18-23 Years (Percent)**

Source: ASHER, 2021.

Health:

The prevalence of gender discrimination in society has traditionally been determined by the sex ratio at birth. A decrease in the sex ratio is regarded as evidence of progress in the area of gender equality. In India, the sex ratio has increased from 991 women for every 1,000 men in 2015-16 to 1,020 women for every 1,000 men in 2019-21. It should be highlighted that progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment includes more than just good trends in the sex ratio. There are countless more elements that contribute to closing the gender gap. With regard to social and health metrics, there has been substantial advancement for women's health (Chart-12).

Chart-12: Progress on Social and Health Indicators

- Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)
- Institutional Birth (%)
- Population living in households that use an improved sanitation facility (%)
- Households using clean fuel for cooking (%)

Source: NFHS, IIPS, Mumbai.

There are many risk factors which affect health status of men and women India. Among these include the factors of mal nutrition, pollution, dietary risks, high blood pressure, high fasting plasma glucose, tobacco use, high cholesterol etc. (Chart-13).

## Chart-13: Preventive Risk Factors to Disease Burden
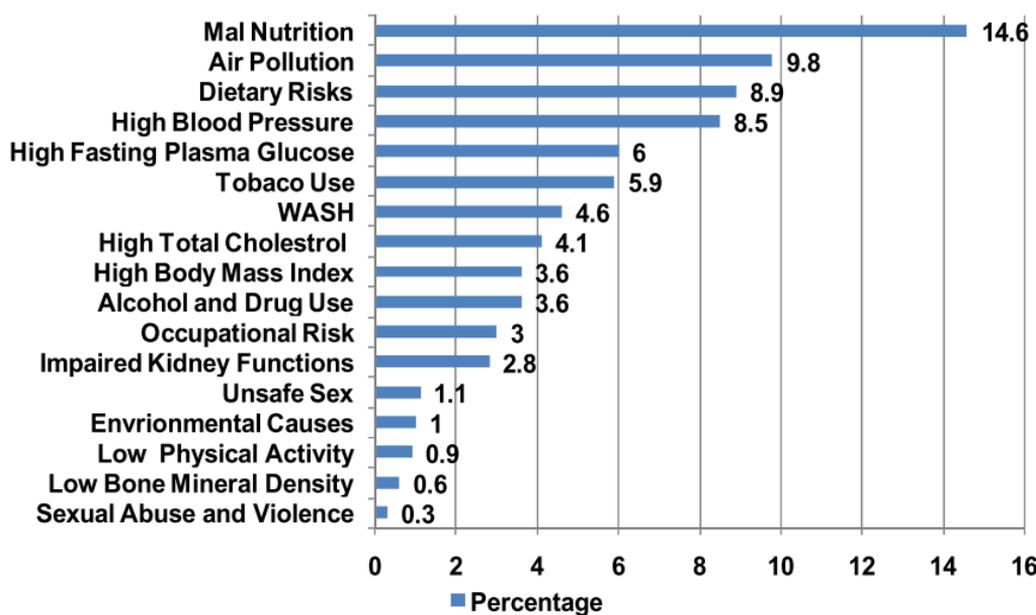
Source: MoM&H, Govt. of India.

In the past two years, as India and the rest of the globe battled the pandemic, the government of India has placed a priority on protecting the most vulnerable members of society and developing a coordinated response to the pandemic's health effects. Following the first peak of COVID-19 in September 2020 and the second peak in May 2021, India is currently dealing with the third wave, which is being led by the Omicron variety. One of the biggest vaccination programmes in the world, the Indian National COVID Vaccination Program, has encouraged domestic COVID vaccine production while simultaneously guaranteeing free vaccination for its population, the second-largest in the world. For the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, the Union Budget for 2021-22 allotted Rs. 35,000 crore for the purchase of vaccines. A total of 156.76 crore doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given since January 16 of 2021, out of which 90.75 crore for the first dose and 65.58 crore for the second dose. With these, 93 percent of those aged 18 and older have had their first dose of vaccination, and over 70 percent have received their second dose. This kind of rapid vaccination has made it possible for livelihoods to quickly recover. India had two COVID-19 waves, the first in 2020 and the second in 2021, similar to the majority of other nations. The total number of COVID-19 cases during the first wave gradually increased beginning in May 2020 and reached a high in the middle of September 2020. After that, the country experienced a sharp increase of COVID-19 cases beginning in March 2021, reaching a peak of over 4 lakh cases per day1 in May 2021 and over 4400 deaths per day by the end of May 2021. At the time of writing, a new wave of cases and a new variation of Omicron had appeared in December 2021 and were spreading. A multi-pronged strategy was used by the government to save lives, including (i) limitations and partial lockdowns; (ii) increasing the capacity of the health infrastructure; (iii) encouraging COVID-19 proper behavior, testing, tracking, and treatment; and (iv) a vaccine effort. Containment and buffer zones, perimeter control, contact tracking, isolation and testing of suspicious cases and high-risk contacts, and establishment of quarantine facilities were all steps done to break the chain of transmission. Based on current information and evidence, the preventive plan was modified in response to the evolving scenario that was seen. The nation's testing capacity grew dramatically. All government facilities also offered free COVID-19 tests. Rapid Antigen Test kits were introduced for quicker screening. In a mission mode, production capacity for N-95 masks, ventilators, personal protective equipment kits, and sanitizers was ramped up. Massive infrastructure was built to support the supply of medical

oxygen, isolation beds, and beds for dedicated intensive care units. The government enlisted the help of the railroads, the Air Force, the Navy, and industry to fulfil the exponential increase in medical oxygen demand during the second COVID wave. The COVID vaccines have proven to be the finest defence against the disease in the fight against the corona virus, saving lives and maintaining level. One of the biggest vaccination campaigns in the world has been India's National COVID Vaccination Program. From May 1 to June 20, 2021, the "Liberalized Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy" was in effect. States/Union Territories (UTs) and private hospitals were permitted to purchase COVID-19 vaccine directly from manufacturers under the policy. The State Governments and private hospitals purchased the remaining 50% of the monthly doses of vaccine produced domestically, with the Government of India purchasing 50% of that total. The "Revised Guidelines for Implementation of National COVID Vaccination Program", which went into effect on June 21, 2021, was modified in response to real-time feedback. Under this programme, the Government of India purchases 75% of monthly vaccine production and provides it gratis to the States and UTs. The remaining 25% may be purchased by private hospitals. As of January 19, 2022, 56.66 lakh preventive dosages had been given to frontline employees, people over 60, and healthcare professionals.

Employment:

Chart-14, presented hereafter, reveals that the LPR of women in India has continuously declined from 31.79 percent in 2005 to reach 20.52 percent in 2019, after recording advancement from 30.28 percent in 1990 to 31.79 percent in 2005. Indeed, women participation has declined drastically declined by 6.11 percentage points from 2005 to 2010. The compound annual growth rate depicts also a decrease of 4.32 percent in labour force participation of women from 1990 to 2019 respectively. Many reasons might explain such changes, such as the rise of women schooling rate of women and the household income.

Chart-14: Labour Force Participation of Women
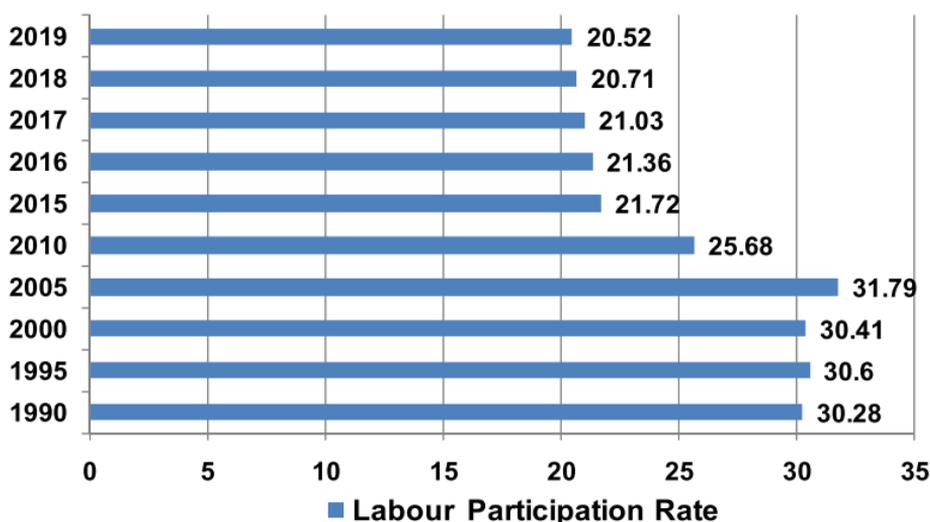
Source: Empirical Economics Letters, 20 (Special Issue 5), July, 2021.

India has experienced a quick economic expansion, economic structural changes, an increase in the rate of educational attainment, and a rapid urbanization over the past 25 years. At the same time, the percentage of women who are in the labour force has decreased by 23% over the same period (Lahoti & Swaminathan, 2013). In fact, women's involvement in the labour market has dramatically decreased, falling from 30.25 in 1990 to 20.52 in 2019. However, it fell significantly after 2005, with a decline of 6.11 percentage points between 2005 and 2010. Given that a sizable portion of Indian women are still working in domestic and unpaid professions, there hasn't been a considerable occupational diversification in women's occupations. The enormous changes that the various economic sectors have undergone may help to explain such observations. A significant source of employment for women in India is agriculture, despite the sector's declining GDP contribution (Bhatt et. al, 2021). On the other hand, the situation in metropolitan areas has marginally improved since more women are now working in the transportation, retail, and other service industries. In addition, the labour force's focus on the agricultural sector, where wage workers are predominantly concentrated in informal jobs, contributes to the disadvantageous situation of women and the economic imbalance in the labour market. Chart-15 displays the employment trends for women in India.

## Chart-15: Pattern of Female Workers in India
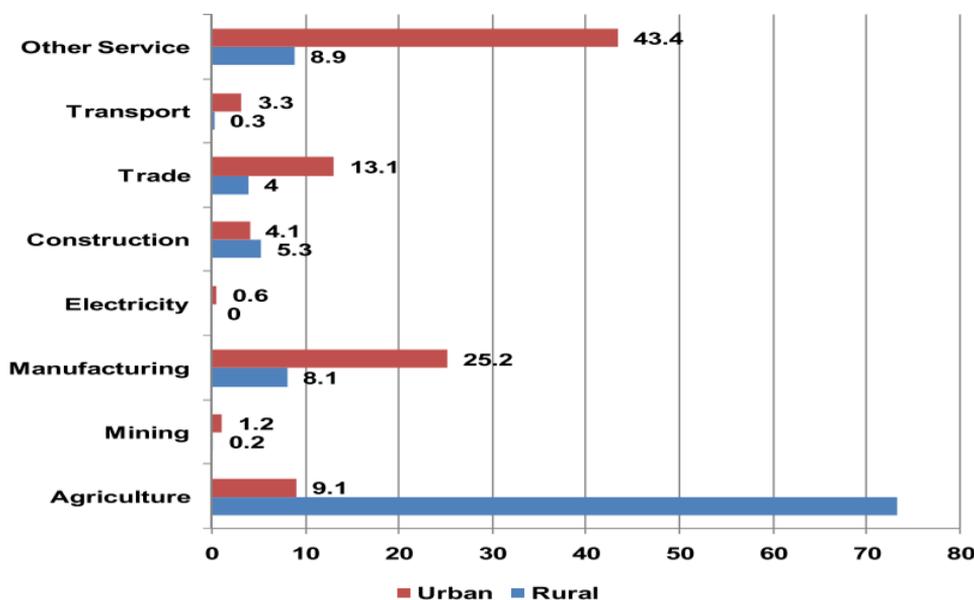
Empirical Economics Letters, 20 (Special Issue 5),July 2021.

Indian women have been leaving the workforce or being forced out at an alarming rate over the past few decades. This occurs in the backdrop of escalating urbanization, rising female literacy rates, and a general decline in fertility rates. According to data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (2019–20), women make up only 22.8% of the labour force, while men make up a far larger 56.8%. The poll was performed before to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led the country's female workforce to continue to decline since 2020. Following the first year of the pandemic, women's participation in the labour decreased to 16.9 percent, according to PLFS data for the quarter of January-March 2021, while that of men remained practically unchanged. The pandemic has demonstrated that India will need to reunite its workforce with its missing women. Skilling has been recommended as a remedy. Indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations pertaining to gender equality and decent work are associated with skilling. The National Skill Development Mission, which was established by the Union government in 2015, highlights in its policy paper that women make up half of the demographic dividend and that enhancing their skill levels may be the key to boosting their involvement in the labour force of the nation.

There is a severe lack of skilled people in India. Initiatives for skill development that are supported by policy have received sustained support since 2009, when the National Policy on Skill Development was created.

Greater awareness of the need for skill development has led to the launch of many programmes by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). These programmes are designed to get a highly qualified workforce ready to meet the demands of a growing working-age population. By 2022, 402.87 million adults were to have acquired new skills, according to the National Policy for Skill Development. The task is difficult considering that only 4.69 percent of India's workforce has received any formal skills training. Other nations, like the UK, Germany, the US, Japan, and South Korea, have much greater percentages of their populations undergoing skills training, at 68%, 75%, 52%, and 96% respectively (Chart-16)

Chart-16: Workforce under Formal Skill Training
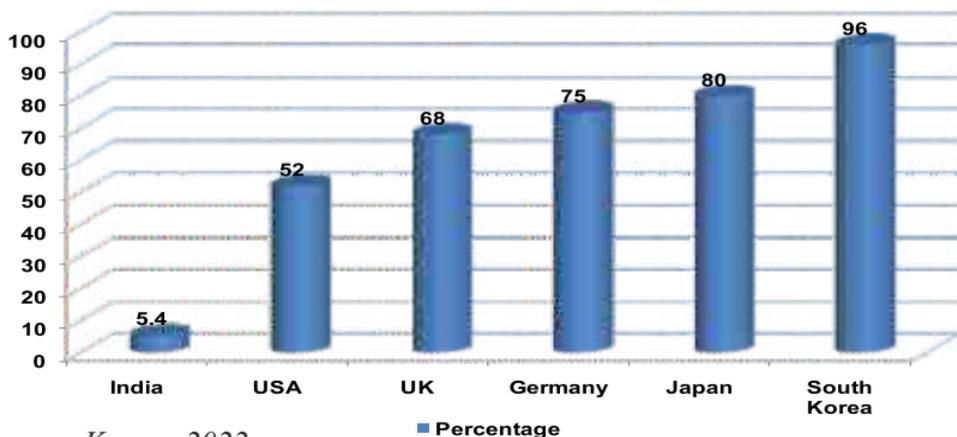
Several initiatives have been taken for women in skill-building programmes in order to close the skill gap. For instance, women are only allowed to sit in 30 percent of seats at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). There are 15,042 of these ITIs nationwide. The Craftsmen Instruction Scheme (CTS) and the Craft Instructors' Training Scheme are two more exclusive National Skill Training Institutes for Women that provide training (CITS). Eleven of these institutes have already been established, and eight more are on the way. The *Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana* (PMKVY), the MDSE flagship programme that provides short-term skills training, places a high priority on gender mainstreaming. Women make up about half of the PMKVY candidates. As of November 2021, the PMKVY was in its third phase and had trained 4,830,646 women. To examine the employment outcomes of female candidates who successfully completed short-term skills training programmes under PMKVY, the government commissioned a tracer study in 2021. The Ministry of Rural Development

implements the *Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana* (DDU-GKY), a placement-linked skills development initiative for rural youth that offers a 33 percent reservation for women. To date, DDU-GKY has taught 1,128,301 candidates, and over half of the program's beneficiaries have found employment after receiving their certification. The World Bank and MSDE are working together to implement the Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) scheme, which aims to improve the participation of women in short-term vocational training. Only 21 courses are offered in the National Skill Training Institutes for women, compared to 153 at the general ITIs, where men predominate. Even among the 21, there is a preponderance of courses in professions like secretarial work, cosmetology, fashion design, or interior design that are either outmoded or blatantly stereotyped for women. Although it increased from 6% in 2014 to 21% in 2018, female enrollment in general ITIs is still low.

Women in Decision Making:

The political empowerment of women serves as a catalyst for social and political change, which in turn accelerates societal growth and social transformation. In other words, the political empowerment of women is a tool for the political empowerment of women (Ghimire, 2006). Regarding the status of the law, all of the countries' constitutions recognize that all individuals are entitled to the same fundamental freedoms and that discrimination based on one's gender or religious beliefs is not permissible. However, organizations those are in charge of enacting laws and policies still engage in discrimination. It has been maintained that in order to be fairly represented, different social classes and minority groups need to have their own representatives (Michael, et al., 1994). In South Asia, women are disproportionately underrepresented in positions of high authority, especially in nations without gender representation mandates in their legislatures. Almond and Powel define 'political participation' as "the participation of members of society in the decision-making process of the system" (Almond & Powelll, 1975). Mc Closky defines "political involvement" (Dowse, 1972). The phrase "those private citizen activities that more or less explicitly aim at influencing the choice of governmental people and the acts they take" is used in Verba & Nie's definition (Verba & Nie, 1972). One of the most difficult issues that must be resolved in order to define political involvement is the component of the people's will or intention. In the end, getting involved in politics implies doing something that entails trying to change how authoritatively values are distributed in a

society. While the number of female candidates in parliamentary elections has grown over time, their proportion to male candidates is still low. Less than 9% of the 8,049 candidates running in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 were women. State and party differences in the proportion of female candidates and MPs are significant. West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have the most female MPs in the current Lok Sabha. In terms of percentage, women make up 14% of all Lok Sabha MPs in the state of Uttar Pradesh, and 26% in Bengal. Regarding political parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fielded 53 women candidates in 2019, while the Congress fielded 54 women candidates in that same year, representing 12.9% of all candidates (12.6 percent). Overall, a sizable number of women were fielded that year in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Bihar. The biggest percentage of female candidates was fielded in the states of Goa and Manipur, each with 17% of the total number of candidates. The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha and the TMC in West Bengal both nominated more women candidates for the Lok Sabha elections that same year: BJD nominated 33% of women candidates in Odisha and TMC nominated 41% in Bengal (Chart-17).

**Chart-17:Percentage of Women Elected to Lok Sabha**
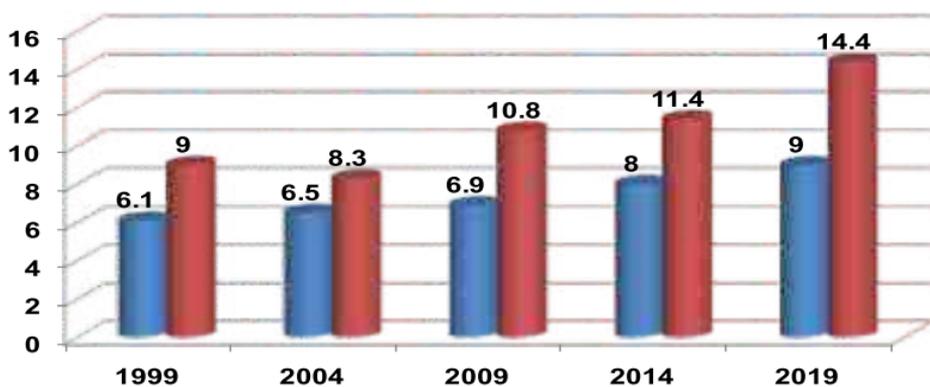
Source: ORF, Paper No. 382, November, 2022.

Women's representation in the Rajya Sabha has been slightly lower than in the Lok Sabha, not yet crossing 13 percent of the total membership of the house according to 2020 data. In state legislative assemblies or Vidhan Sabhas, meanwhile, average representation is even lower, mostly below 10 percent (Chart-18).

Chart-18: Women Representation in Rajya Sabha

■ **Women Representation in Rajya Sabha (%)**
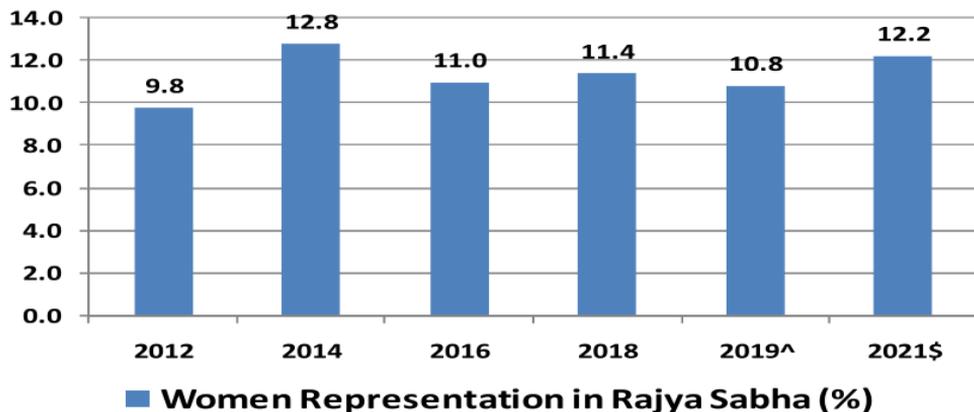
Source: ORF, Paper No. 382, November 2022.

There has been low representation of women in state Assemblies, however, their winning ratio as compared to their counter male part has been reported higher in many states. Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have recorded high representation of women in State Assemblies (Chart-19).

Chart-19: Women Representation in State Legislations

■ % of seats won by Women   ■ % of women Contestants
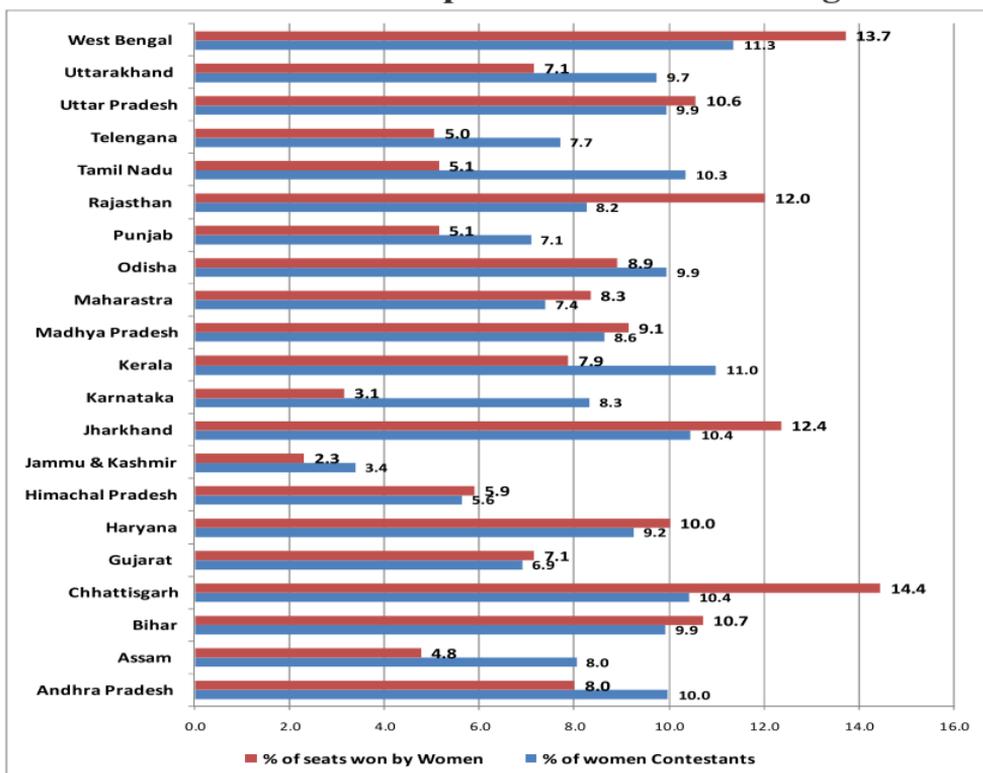
Source: PIB, March 2022.

In the past decades, surveys by the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) have shown an increase in the number of women participating in political activities like attending election rallies, running door-to-door campaigns, distributing election pamphlets, and raising money for elections. However, altogether, such participation is still modest. This shows that although women are more politically mobilised as voters as a result of increased education, political awareness, and exposure to public life, several institutional and structural obstacles still prevent them from fully engaging in the many other facets of electoral politics. Municipalities or municipal corporations in cities and towns, as well as PRIs in rural regions, make up India's third tier of local administration. In order to "provide chances for local level planning, effective execution and monitoring of various social and economic development programmes in the country", the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments were enacted in 1992. These amendments' requirement that one-third of all seats in local body elections be reserved for women was one of their most significant and transformative features. According to studies, the strategy significantly increased women's political participation at the municipal level. Since then, 20 of India's 28 states have increased the percentage of reservations to 50 percent.

During the pre-independence era, other than Raja Ram Mohan Roy many social reformers initiated and sustained movements against certain types of social malpractices. The introduction of western ideas by the end of the eighteenth century precipitated the widespread emergence of religious and social reform movements in India during the nineteenth century. Many social reformers like - Ravindranath Tagore, Dayananda Saraswathy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Kesava Chandra Sen, Ram Krishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda had focused their social action against the rigid social evils and practices like - child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage and other caste-based practices. Let us now have a look at the social reforms movement in India:

Section: D
Social Reforms Movement in India After Raja Ram Mohan Roy

In the first part of the 19th century, casteism, superstition, female education, widow remarriage, child marriage, and other social evils plagued Indian society and impeded our advancement. Starting in the first half of the 19th century, social reform became increasingly necessary.

Modern concepts like liberty, social and economic equality, fraternity, democracy, and justice were brought to India by the British and had a significant influence on Indian society. Many religious and social reformers, including Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and many others, advocated for the eradication of the evils in the society at the time and were eager to bring about reforms so that it could meet the challenges of the West. They were no longer prepared to accept the customs, values, and social norms just because they had been followed for so long. Intellectuals in India carefully examined the nation's history and determined that many ideas and customs were no longer useful and needed to be abandoned. They also learned that many facets of India's cultural legacy were essential to the country's cultural awakening. As a result, numerous movements for socio-religious change emerged, affecting practically all facets of Indian culture. Many reformers upheld Indian philosophy and culture, including Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda. Indians developed a sense of pride and faith in their own culture as a result of this. Education for women was encouraged. Girls' schools were established. Even medical schools for women have been founded. This resulted in the gradual advancement of girls' education. The engagement of socio-religious movement in the cultural and ideological fight aided a value in the development of national consciousness. They therefore created the conditions for nationalism to flourish. The study of the history, philosophy, science, religions, and literature of ancient India began in the late 19th century by a number of European and Indian academics. The Indian people felt a sense of pride in their civilization as a result of their expanding understanding of India's former splendor. Additionally, it aided the reformers in their fight against all kinds of cruel customs, beliefs, and other behaviors. These movements for social and religious change emerged within all Indian cultures. They fought to eliminate illiteracy, castes, untouchability, sati, child marriage, and other societal injustices. Early in the 19th century, Maharashtra began to experience the first stirrings of an intellectual uprising. Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar and Bhasker Pandurang Tarkhadkar were a few of the early intellectuals who started and led the movement. The intellectual movement in Maharashtra was started by Jambhekar, better known as *Lokahitwadi* and Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale, well known as *Vishnubawa Brahmachari*. In the early 1830s, he set the foundations for it in a number of his articles. It was given organizational structure by Dadoba, who established the *Paramhansa Sabha* in 1840, the

first reform group in Maharashtra during the nineteenth century. *Brahmachari* opposed caste distinctions and thought that all people are one. Despite being a Brahmin himself, he used a Muslim cook and consumed meals prepared by anyone. Thus, he publicly contested the rigidity of the caste system and fought for a just social structure.

While the movement had its roots in religious and philosophical thought in Bengal, solely socioeconomic causes came to dominate the reform agenda in Maharashtra. Early intellectuals had a very pragmatic attitude. The elimination of all caste distinctions was the Paramhansa Sabha's main goal. However, the Sabha was a secret club; as a result, its meetings were held in the strictest of secrecy to avoid incurring the wrath of the orthodox. Thus, only a small number of its members were able to participate in the fight against the caste system and other social ills. In the second half of the century, the reform movement grew stronger. The intellectual environment saw the emergence of numerous towering figures. Vishnu Parashuram Shastri Pandit, Jyotiba Phule, Ramkrishna, Gopal Bhandarkar, Narayan Mahadev Permanand, Mahadev Gobind Ranade, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, K.T. Telang, Ganesh Vasudev Joshi, Narayan Ganesh, Chandavarkar, and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar were the most well-known of them. Pandit promoted widow-marriage in the outset of his public career. He was a key player in the movement for the emancipation of women. In 1865, he founded the Vidhava Vivaha Uttejaka Mandal (Society for Promoting Widow Marriage), serving as its Secretary. In 1875, he set an example by getting married to a widow. Born from the Mali caste, Phule rose to prominence as an advocate for the downtrodden parts of society. In 1854, he was the first Indian to establish a school for outcasts. Additionally, he promoted the cause of Indian women's emancipation. He and his wife founded a girls' school in Poona in 1851. Bhandarkar got the title of *'Maharshi'* for himself via his profound scholarship. He permitted and orchestrated his widowed daughter's marriage in 1891. He was one of the few of those who fervently backed Hindu-Muslim union. Along with being a significant social reformer, Paramanand was one of the British government's constructive critics who wrote under the pen name 'Political recluse'. Ranade was a man with diverse interests. Elphinstone College graduate, he served as a judge on the Bombay High Court from 1891 until 1901. He believed that the primary flaw in the Indian social structure was the caste system. He came to understand that the social reform movement could not influence the public without incorporating religious change. In 1867, under his direction, the Paramhansa *Sabha* was reorganized as the

Prarthana Samaj. Up until the end of his life, he led the cause in Maharashtra with brilliance and pragmatism. The Prarthana Samaj promoted monotheism and condemned caste prejudice and priesthood dominance. Through the efforts of the Telugu reformer Veeresalingam, its activities also migrated to South India. In 1874, Chiplunkar launched his renowned *Nibandhmala*, a monthly Marathi magazine that promoted social reform. S.S. Bengalee, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Naoroji Furdonji were other reformers in Bombay. They established a religious organization known as the *Rehnumai Mazadayasan Sabha* in 1851. It represented the modernization of Parsi social mores and religious practices. It started a fight for equal inheritance and marriage rules for the Parsi community as well as for the introduction and expansion of education among women.

The *TatvabodhiniSabha* was established in 1839 by Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, to spread Rammohan Roy's beliefs. The *TatvabodhiniSabha* and its publication, the *TatvabodhiniPatrika*, supported and assisted in the dissemination of a logical approach as well as a methodical study of India's past in Bengali. When he joined the *Samaj* in 1842, Tagore, who was a product of the best in traditional Indian learning and western intellect, gave the *BrahmoSamaj* new vitality and the theist movement a clear form and structure. He engaged in two activities: The *BrahmoSamaj* was a reformer movement within Hinduism, and it steadfastly resisted the Christian Missionaries outside of Hinduism for their criticism of Hinduism and attempt at conversion. Under his direction, the Samaj created branches in numerous places, and the *Brahmo* massage expanded throughout Bengal's rural areas. After Debendranath Tagore joined the *Samaj* in 1858, Keshub Chandra Sen was appointed the Acharya, ushering in a new era of vitality and energy for the BrahmoSamaj. The movement gained popularity thanks in large part to Keshub, and branches of the samaj were established in cities such as the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Madras, and others. Unfortunately, Debendranath disagreed with some of Sen's ideas because he thought they were too radical. Examples include his strong opposition to the caste system and open support for inter-caste marriages, as well as his desire to cosmo-politanize the samaj's meetings by including speakers from all major religions. Thus, in 1865, Debendranath Tagore removed Kesub Chandra sen from his post as Acharya by virtue of his status. In 1866, Keshubsen and his adherents founded what was referred to be the *'BrahmoSamaj of India'*, breaking away from *Brahmo Samaj*. The *'AdiBrahmoSamaj'* was the name given to Debendranath's more traditional group. The drastic social reforms

advocated by Keshab Chandra Sen caused a second division in the *BrahmoSamaj*. The division in Keshub's *Brahmo Samaj* of India occurred after his 13-year-old daughter married the young prince of Cooch Behar in accordance with all traditional Hindu ceremonies. This division led to the establishment of the more democratic *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* in 1878. It is impossible to overstate the significance of the *BrahmoSamaj* as the "first intellectual movement which transmitted the principles of rationalism and enlightenment in modern India". Indians and Europeans alike praised it for its liberal stance on social and religious issues. Its efforts in social and educational reform helped people feel more confident, which helped the national movement expand. Many *Brahmo*Samajists went on to play important roles in the fight for independence. The 'Young Bengal Movement' was a radical, intellectual movement that formed among Bengal's youth in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Even, Ram Mohon Roy's style was more contemporary than this one. This forward-thinking movement was spearheaded and inspired by a young Anglo-Indian named Henry Vivian Derozio, who from 1826 to 1831 served as a professor at the Hindu College. Derozio encouraged his students to think critically and rationally, to challenge all forms of authority, to value liberty, equality, and freedom, and to reject outmoded practices and traditions by drawing inspiration from the great French Revolution. The Derozians were also in favour of education and women's rights. Derozio was also maybe the earliest nationalist poet of modern India. The thoughts of the renowned reformer and scholar Vidyasagar were a successful synthesis of western and Indian thought. He had high moral standards, was a profound humanist, and was kind to the underprivileged. He took over as head of Sanskrit College in 1850. He founded the Sanskrit College to do this in order to end the self-imposed exclusion of Sanskritic learning because he was resolved to end the priesthood monopoly of scriptural knowledge. Additionally, he developed a fresh approach to teaching Sanskrit as an academic. A movement led by Eshwar Chandra Vidyasagar in favour of widow remarriage led to laws allowing it. He also led a battle against polygamy and underage marriage. He exerted a lot of effort on behalf of women's education. He assisted in the establishment of 35 girls' schools, many of which he operated at his own expense while serving as a government inspector of schools. He was a pioneer of higher education for women in India as the secretary of Bethune School, founded in 1849. Under Vidyasagar's guidance and encouragement, the first legitimate Hindu widow remarriage took place in Calcutta in 1856.

Swami Dayananda established the *AryaSamaj*, a Hindu reform organization, on April 7, 1875. He was an advocate of the Vedas and a S*anyasi*. Dayananda promoted the *Brahmacharya* ideals (chastity). For fifteen years (1845-60), Swami Dayananda journeyed as a hermit in search of the truth. He officially founded the first *AryaSamaj* Unit in Bombay in 1875, and later established the Samaj's Lahore headquarters. The mantra "Go back to Vedas" was given by Swami Dayanand because he thought that the priestly elite and the *Puranas* had corrupted Hinduism. His philosophical and religious thoughts are contained in the book SatyarthPrakash that he wrote. He held that everyone has a right to speak directly with God. To bring back Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity, it launched the *Shuddhi* Movement. Today, AryaSamaj-built temples can be found all over India. The group has also contributed significantly to the spread of education in India through its Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) school network. Mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa turned to the age-old practices of renunciation, meditation, and devotion in order to find religious salvation. He was a wonderful guy who stressed that there are numerous paths to God and salvation and that serving others is serving God. He also recognized the essential similarity of all religions. The Ramakrishna Movement was founded on the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Ramakrishna's teaching was propagated by Narendranath Datta (1862–1902), afterwards known as Swami Vivekananda, who also attempted to adapt it to the demands of modern Indian society. He became known as the neo-Hindu movement's preacher. Vivekananda's message to the world about human values is based on a few of Ramakrishna's spiritual encounters, the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita, as well as the examples of the Buddha and Jesus. He adhered to *Vedanta*, which he regarded as a wholly logical theory with a superior methodology. His goal was to close the gap between daily life and spirituality as well as between *paramartha* (service) and *vyavahara* (conduct). Vivekananda excelled in the humanities. He declared, "for our own motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, is the only hope". He held the fundamental belief in the unity of God. He stressed the need of social activity and claimed that knowledge is useless without action. He bemoaned Hindus' tendency toward isolationism and their 'touch-me-not' attitude toward religious affairs. He scowled at religion's covert support for the exploitation of the underprivileged by the wealthy. In 1897, Vivekananda launched the Ramakrishna Mission, whose headquarters are in Belur, close to Kolkata. He engaged in social service and humanitarian

aid through Ramakrishna Mission. The mission promotes both social and religious transformation. Vivekananda promoted the idea of serving everyone, or the ideology of service. Shiva is worshipped for his assistance in serving *jiva*, or living things. The Divine can be found inside man via service. Vivekananda supported employing modern science and technology for the benefit of people. The Mission has operated a variety of schools, hospitals, and clinics ever since it was founded. It provides assistance to those who are suffering during natural disasters including famines, floods, and diseases. The Mission has grown into a multinational corporation. It is a very devout organization, although it does not actively spread its religion. It rejects the idea that it belongs to a Hindu sect. In actuality, this is one of the main factors in the Mission's success. The Mission, in contrast to the *AryaSamaj*, acknowledges the usefulness and utility of image worship in fostering devotion to the everlasting, all-powerful God, even though it places more emphasis on the fundamental spirit than on symbols or rituals. It holds that both Christians and Hindus will become better people as a result of studying Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda had a lasting impression on the audience at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 thanks to his insightful analyses. He stressed the importance of striking a good balance between spirituality and materialism in his keynote speech. He advocated combining the materialism of the west and the spiritualism of the east in a new equilibrium in order to provide happiness to all people, envisioning a new culture for the entire planet.

The Hon. Mahadev Govind Ranade was a well-known Indian novelist, social reformer, and scholar who lived from 1842 to 1901. He was a founding member of the Indian National Congress and held a number of positions, including judge of the Bombay High Court, member of the central finance committee, and member of the Bombay Legislative Council. Ranade was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and the *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha*. He has been characterized as Gopal Krishna Gokhale's tutor and an early opponent of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's politics. Ranade founded the Social Conference movement, which he continued to support until his death. He vigorously supported widow remarriage and female education, and focused his social reform efforts against child marriage, the practice of shaving widows' heads, the high cost of weddings and other social events, and caste-based travel restrictions. In 1861, he contributed to the founding of the Widow Marriage Association. Ranade made an effort to improve the social climate that constituted India's

cultural legacy while preserving the structure of weakening traditions. The Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society), formed by Jyotiba Phule in 1873, was led by members of the underprivileged *Malis*, *Telis*, *Kunbis*, *Saris* and *Dhangar* classes. *Sarvajanik Satyadharma* and *Ghulam Gin*, two of Phule's works, inspired the general populace. As contrast to the Brahmins' use of Rama, Phule used the sign of Rajah Bali. The Phule movement gave the oppressed communities a sense of class identity against the Brahmins, who were perceived as the exploiters, and sought the complete elimination of the caste system and socioeconomic inequality. Famous Maharashtrian social reformer Pandita Ramaba advocated for women's rights and spoke out against the practice of child marriage. In 1881, she founded the *AryaMahilaSamaj* in Pune to better the lot of women, especially child widows, and she advocated for girls' education. She founded the *Mukti Mission* in Pune in 1889 as a haven for young widows who had been abandoned and mistreated by their family. She also founded *ShardaSadan*, which offered widows, orphans, and people with visual impairments accommodation, education, vocational training, and medical care. She also authored a number of books that depicted the difficult lives of women, including child widows and child brides. Early in the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi entered the scene and had a significant impact on the nation's social reform efforts with regard to women. It is important to fully comprehend his role in the reforms affecting women. He wasn't just another reformer who supported women's rights and other causes. The people who came before him had discussed issues like women's education, widow remarriage, opposition to child marriage, dowry, and the Sati system, but they had also spoken of women as objects within the family structure who they were aiming to change as part of a larger social reform agenda that covered a wide range of topics like caste equality, religious reform, caste equality, the freedom struggle, modernization of Indian society, and caste oppression, among many others. Women played just a minor role in the reformist rhetoric they were advocating. Mahatma Gandhi supported women having more influence in all spheres of life. In terms of education, he favoured not just educating them but also empowering them to become independent by receiving an education on par with that of males. He stood apart from other social reformers of his era in this regard. His change was aimed at empowering women so they might become self-sufficient, autonomous individuals rather than objects of education. He also advocated for women's freedom to select their own husbands and opposed caste-based unions. He said this not because it was a part of the greater caste resistance

plan, but rather because he thought it would give independent-minded women a strong position in society. He opposed dowry not because it burdened the family of the woman, but because it devalued the position of women in relation to men. For the same reasons, he supported widow remarriage. Even though he was speaking about the same challenges as the other social reformers, his worldview was vastly different from theirs. Because Mahatma Gandhi did not portray himself as a feminist with Western influences who borrowed ideas from Western feminist discourses, it is simple to overlook this extremely important distinction while reading about social reform movements. On the contrary, he spoke of saving India's soul and was a very spiritual and devout man. Because of this, many academics have misunderstood Mahatma Gandhi's beliefs and have linked him with the others, which is a serious misinterpretation of his principles.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy conceived reformist associations as instruments of social and political transformation. Influenced by western modern thought Ram Mohan Roy stressed rationalism and the modern scientific approach. He devoted his life to the cause of social reforms throughout his life. He valued social welfare above everything. **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** was the first intellectual reformer in modern India. He led to the emergence of rationalism and enlightenment in India which indirectly contributed to the nationalist movement.Let us now explore the status of social change and rural-urban transformation in India as lesson learnt from him:

Section: E
Social Change and Rural-Urban Transformation:Towards Self-Reliant India

In India, sociological studies of villages have a long history. The paradigm for village life has changed as a result of contemporary dynamics of social development and transformation. Rural society is impacted by globalization, economic liberalization, and privatization. Village life is more influenced by communication, transportation, farm mechanization, constitutional and legal protection of weaker parts, and policy for reservation for SC/ST/OBC/Women. It has affected social connections, culture, way of life, and the social structure. Due to the declining economic importance of agriculture, rural economic life has undergone significant transformation. Average land size has decreased as a result of population expansion and family structure. *Jajmani* tradition and the caste system are out of date. However, there is a class divide. The old jajmani system jobs

have diminished as the service sector has grown. The welfare and social security programmes, rural development initiatives, and the green, white, and blue revolutions have given the majority of people access to employment and income options. There is currently extra money that can be used. The desire to acquire electric and technological equipment is growing among rural populations. Exposure to electronic media has risen. The values system and rural cultural life have been impacted by the increased exposure to Western culture through electronic media. Village life has undergone significant upheaval. The educational levels of underprivileged groups and marginalized populations have increased. Most families are becoming nuclear, and the traditional shared family structure is vanishing. Family values and ties have suffered as a result. Male emigration and more chances for job and income are contributing to the decline of joint families. Class stratification has replaced the fading caste system. A new middle class has developed as agricultural land holdings have decreased. Peasantry prominence has declined as the economy's agricultural contribution has increased. Living conditions have been enhanced by the availability of water, electricity, and other social services. Access to government health care services has increased.

Life is full of change, which is unavoidable. In nature, changes are constant. Also evolving is society. The evolution of interpersonal connections and interactions is referred to as 'social change'. Social transformation necessitates a change in the network of social relationships because, in the words of McIver & Page, "society is a web of social interactions". Social interactions, social processes, and social organization can all be used to explain them. Sociologists not only analyze the structure of society but also its causes and effects. According to Morris Ginsberg, social transformation refers to a change in the social order. Social change refers to any alteration in the social structure of a society, including cultural change. A change in observation over time is referred to as a change. Change refers to "differences from a prior situation or mode of existence". Fictor contends that society is continually changing, which is brought about by a multitude of factors. Societal change is a result of any alteration in culture, demographics, technology, or other elements. The rate of change fluctuates periodically. Due to the accelerated rates of industrialization and urbanization, change is occurring more quickly than it did in the past. It could manifest in ways that are social, economic, political, or religious. Every change that occurs in one area of society has an effect on the others.

Yogendra Singh developed an integrated strategy or paradigm mix

for researching cultural resilience in the context of India while maintaining a high level of critical awareness. According to Singh, the root of social change can be found both within and outside of the social order or tradition. To put it another way, orthogenetic or endogenous sources of change are just as important as heterogenic or external sources of change. According to Singh, the conceptual framework used in the majority of studies on social change in India either emphasizes "social structure" to the exclusion of "tradition," or the latter without sufficient consideration of the former (Singh, 1973). Singh had done study on India's conventional modernization strategy. Historical constructs are necessary to define the cognitive-structural qualities of the Indian culture because modernization is not a universal process (Singh,1973). Singh claims that in the four years since independence, India's social development process has taken on two unique shapes. First, without a structural shift in society, there has been a considerable change in the social structure. Tensions and, in certain circumstances, social crises have been brought on by it. The subjective domain, or people's awareness, has undergone a tidal change in terms of societal transformation. Singh saw that the traditional occupational structure of the nation's castes and tribes was set to undergo a significant change. As these groups migrated to new occupational sectors, the connection between caste or community and the inherited occupation was broken. Additionally, due to enhanced connectivity with cities and towns and changes in lifestyle brought on by a higher usage of consumer durables like bicycles, motorbikes, jeeps, and electronics, there is a notable rise in non-agricultural employment in the countryside. Singh is correct in saying that the tenacity and adaptability that Indian culture demonstrated during westernisation are still being kept, despite recent qualitative changes.

The Sulabh Sanitation Foundation was established by Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak in 1970. It has a significant impact on social and sanitary developments. Sulabh International has devoted 50 years of its public service to making sure that everyone has access to fair sanitation and hygiene. India's main *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, which seeks to end open defecation, has been fueled by it. Sulabh has also implemented a community-based behavior modification strategy, increasing demand for and knowledge of sanitation and hygiene. Two-pit pour flush latrines have been successfully converted from dry latrines. Its "pay-as-you-go toilet" model provides a wide range of affordable and practical sanitation services in addition to job possibilities for sanitation workers in cities all throughout India. Sulabh has placed a high priority on integrated planning to solve

water, sanitation, and hygiene issues concurrently. Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak has worked to improve the situation of manual scavengers ever since it began. In 2012, Sulabh intervened to provide care for widows in Vrindavan and Varanasi who had been left behind by their relatives, were in need of money, and had been mistreated. Additionally, it has taken on the duties of educating, rehabilitating widows, scavengers, and other underserved and less fortunate segments of society. The nation's socioeconomic development has therefore been greatly influenced by the social reform movement.

Changing Rural Life:

India is a rural nation with a workforce that is 70% rural and a population that is 2/3 rural. 46 percent of the nation's income comes from rural economies. By 2050, more than half of India's population will still live in rural areas. As a result, rural economic and population growth is essential for the overall growth and development of a nation. Traditionally, agriculture has been the mainstay of rural economies and employment. A key factor in the growth of the rural economy and the overall economy is the transfer in output and employment from agriculture to more productive non-farm sectors. According to several academics, the Indian economy is going through a similar change (Aggarwal and Kumar, 2012; Maurya and Vaishampayan, 2012; Papola, 2012). All sorts of households in rural areas saw a departure of women from the labour force. In terms of women leaving the labour force, farmers and non-farmers came after it. Only households with agricultural labourers had men who stopped working. Some academics have put up arguments for why women are leaving the labour field (Mazumdar and Neetha,2011; Rangarajan et al., 2011; Kannan and Raveendran, 2012; Abraham, 2013; Rangarajan et al., 2013; Chand and Srivastava, 2014). Other factors that contribute to workforce reduction include the rising reservation wage, the lack of suitable work at that wage level, manufacturing jobs that are located far from where people live, barriers to female participation, the inability of workers to obtain well-paying non-farm jobs, and rising tension between workers and employers in agriculture as a result of shifting social relations between them (Chand and Srivastava, 2014). In addition to the withdrawal of the labour force, there were notable occupational transitions in the workforce. Infrastructure and facilities in rural places are subpar. Similar to this, many homes need to be renovated. Clearly, there is possibility for significant growth in the rural construction industry.

A person's present job determines their social status in society. Families often raise their children in established jobs, although occupational mobility is slowly changing. Compared to wage earners, farmers, technicians, and mechanics, doctors, teachers, government employees, and activists have higher social status. Social status is independent of economic standing. Social standing is determined by other things. A dhaba owner might make more money than a teacher in a junior high school. The owner of the dhaba will not have a better social standing than the teacher. According to some, the rise of the so-called middle class, the division of the working class, and other unforeseen social developments after Marx may all be traced back to the theories of Marxian class and class conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959). Many sociologists base class distinctions on employment and wealth (Packard, 1964). Social class is based on several factors. According to Cooley, perspective largely determines how an employer and employee interact (Cooley, 1902:98). Richard Centers claims that social class is a psychological occurrence (Centers, 1949: 27). According to Jordan, the term is distributive when it stops being as a real, autonomous thing (Jordan, 1971:23).

Due to their distinct conduct from their classmates and urban residents, lower caste persons who relocate from rural to urban areas encounter particular difficulties. Lower caste individuals who work and own small enterprises typically reside in slums due to the high cost of living. Their interactions with other city people are therefore not very harmonious. Making the decision to move has an impact on the family, the neighborhood, and eventually the economy (Azam & Gubert, 2006). Perhaps the most evident and uncontroversial link between migration and development is the remittances that migrants send home (Ratha, 2007). Migrant remittances boost financial intermediation and domestic savings in addition to growing domestic savings (Aggrawal et al. 2006, Toxopeus & Lensink, 2007)

The impact of migration on gender roleshas been studied by Ghosh in 2009. Men are more likely than women to do reproductive tasks, such as looking after children and the elderly (King & Vullnetari, 2006). Women have more authority over their own finances, community decision-making, and expanding home responsibilities when men leave (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005: 39). Higher marriage restrictions and a focus on females' education could potentially spread from the destination nation to the sending society (Fargues, 2007). Family planning decisions are impacted by migration, which results in different fertility rates for migrants and non-

migrants (Singley & Landale, 1998, Fargues, 2007). Studies reveal that due to social adaptation or self-selection based on fertility preferences, migrants' fertility is more comparable to that of locals at their destination (Kulu, 2005; Chattopadhyay et al., 2006).

The local economy is undergoing change. Villagers' primary source of income is no longer agriculture, and the amount of land they possess is decreasing as a result of population expansion and family dissolution. Both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors continue to have significant employment. The salaried class in rural areas is expanding, but petty business and self-employment have gained prominence. Numerous reports of village movement have been made. At least one member of the majority of families has migrated. General Caste had a high migration level, while Scheduled Caste had a low one. As a result, those from the General Caste can afford to go to large cities like Surat, while those from the Scheduled Caste find employment in adjacent communities. MGNREGA is notable for helping Scheduled Caste individuals get employment. As irrigation, farm mechanization, and modern agriculture evolve, so does the village's cropping pattern. Important crops are being replaced by coarse cereals. Informal loan dependence is declining as banking services and microfinance organizations become more widely available. Credit was given very frequently in the weaker areas. Most of the credit was given by the government.

The development process and social transformation are the main topics of village studies as rural power structures change. New realities brought about by economic liberalization, privatization, and globalization had an impact on the rural economy and village society. Village social life is impacted by changes in communication, transportation, and consumerism. Village life was influenced by industrialization, western culture, and the rural-urban border. More men from rural areas are moving to metropolitan areas as a result of the recent changes. Male migration increased over time as a result of declining land holdings and agricultural production. Joint families broke up as a result of migration, and a gradual change to a new value system caused family members to disagree on matters of personal interest and traditional values.

The New *Panchayati Raj* System, implemented by the government in 1992, prepared the stage for decentralized rural governance. Equal opportunity in decision-making in local political institutions and the execution of rural development programmes was censured by reservations

for SC/ST/OBC/women. As a result, research was done in rural India and gave birth to a new subject called political sociology. Based on two fundamental traits, institutionalizing modern principles and adoptability, modernization has a long-term effect on village society. As democratic governments advance secular principles that foster social harmony, national integration, and coexistence, rural people's perspectives have altered. Traditional ideals, social structures, cultural traditions, rituals, and behaviors were discouraged by modern forces of change.

Migrants significantly affect the village. The decision to immigrate is taken by the entire family, including the women. Male migration is aggressively encouraged and facilitated by family women. Migration is influenced by debt, better employment prospects, income opportunities, and other economic factors. However, migration also exposed them to new cultural traditions. The effects of migration on the family are mutable and alter depending on how long the immigrant stays. Women eventually take on more responsibilities for managing the home, raising children, providing for their education, and managing money. With new relationships and networks with organisations, women now have more options for social and economic development.

The land reforms altered agrarian life in rural areas. Male family members were compelled to migrate to metropolitan areas as a result of declining land holdings, declining agricultural output, and family breakdown. Although land-based vocations were made possible by the allocation of surplus land to the weaker parts, the dispersed land was too tiny to sustain a family for very long. Traditional agriculture and land use patterns were disrupted by land fragmentation. A huge population could not be fed with enough agricultural products from small, marginal land holdings. Agriculture's importance in the village economy is steadily diminished by growing the non-farm industry and the service sector. The usage of labor-saving technology has increased significantly. The village lifestyle has grown more mobile (Sharma, 2014). In India nowadays, village studies are the subject of many academic research. Pioneer of village studies is Gilbert. Huller and Spencer argued that village studies, which persisted in anthropology until the 1970s, were obsolete. In his 2005 book, Dipankar Gupta emphasises the village's waning social importance. Singh (2005) asserts that other sources of production are displacing land as a means of subsistence and as the dominant factor in village politics. Harrish (2012) asserts that political-economic development has steadily transformed the dominant role of high costs in the village.

There is always change. Nature is a dynamic force. Changes in interpersonal connections and interactions are referred to as social change. They contend that as society is a network of social connections, altering one social system necessarily affects the others. These have to do with social interactions, procedures, and organization. Sociologists explain not just the structure of society but also its causes and effects. Morris Ginsberg refers to a change in social structure as social change. Any alteration in the cultural makeup of society is considered a social shift. Change denotes a progression in the observed. Fictor asserts that 'change' refers to deviations from a prior condition or mode. For a number of reasons, society is always the one driving change. Society is impacted by changes in culture, demography, technology, etc. Variable rates of change are present. Due to the growing industrialization and urbanisation, change happens quickly. There are various social, economic, political, and religious forms. The remainder of society is impacted by change in one area (Singh and Singh, 2022).

Yogendra Singh used a hybrid or integrative paradigm to investigate cultural resilience in India. Singh suggests searching both inside and outside the social system or tradition for the reasons behind social change. In other words, it is important to include both heterogenic and orthogenetic sources of change. Singh lamented the fact that the majority of Indian studies of social transformation either ignore or improperly treat "tradition" in favour of "social structure" (Singh 1973). Singh conducted research on India's traditional modernization. Because not all societies have adopted modernity, historical constructs are necessary to establish the cognitive-structural characteristics of the Indian tradition (Singh 1973). After five years of independence, Singh claims that India's social development has manifested in two separate ways. First, there has been a significant change in social organisation without a corresponding fundamental change in society. Tensions and societal problems have resulted from it. Additionally, there has been a change in how people view social change. Singh became aware of the rapid change in the traditional occupational structure of castes and tribes. As these communities dispersed, the connection between caste or community and hereditary occupation was lost. In addition, the rising usage of consumer durables like bicycles, motorcycles, jeeps, and electronics has changed lifestyles in the countryside and led to an increase in non-agricultural work. Singh stated right that the adaptability and tenacity of Indian culture have not changed despite recent qualitative changes. In India, sociological studies of villages

have a long history. The paradigm for village life has changed as a result of contemporary dynamics of social development and transformation. Rural society is impacted by globalization, economic liberalization, and privatization. Village life is more influenced by communication, transportation, farm mechanization, constitutional and legal protection of weaker parts, and policy for reservation for SC/ST/OBC/Women. It has affected social connections, culture, way of life, and the social structure. Due to the declining economic importance of agriculture, rural economic life has undergone significant transformation. Average land size has decreased as a result of population expansion and family structure. *Jajmani* tradition and the caste system are out of date. However, there is a class divide. The old *Jajmani* system jobs have diminished as the service sector has grown. The welfare and social security programmes, rural development initiatives, and the green, white, and blue revolutions have given the majority of people access to employment and income options. There is currently extra money that can be used. The desire to acquire electric and technological equipment is growing among rural populations. The values and rural culture have been impacted by the increased exposure to Western culture through electronic media (Singh, 2022).

Social Transformation:

There will remain a lasting memory of the enormous changes that occurred over the final quarter of the 20th century. The development of technology has an impact on businesses in many sectors, including manufacturing and services, public and private, domestic and international. In order to bring about economic liberalization and the internationalization of goods and services, the majority of economies underwent policy changes during the process of globalization, some of which were quite dramatic. Early in the 1990s, India also saw fierce international competition and started down the path of structural change. The process began with the introduction of the "New Economic Policy" in 1991. Change in an organization requires, among other things, altering its environment, management and employee behaviour, strategy, and structure. The organizational structure is one of the most frequent changes that are made. When discussing organisational transformation, it is important to take into account the nature and stage of management in general and the leadership of the organization in particular.

The idea of inclusive growth and development has gained traction as a result of the changing economic environment and policy framework. The phrase is frequently used to refer to both balanced spatial development and the involvement of the weaker, more vulnerable, and marginalized people. The 11th Five-Year Plan's (2007–12) Approach Paper placed a strong emphasis on inclusive economic growth and development. The administration also introduced a number of policies, initiatives, and strategies for inclusive growth, focusing on inclusive governance throughout the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17). In order to achieve inclusive growth and development throughout the COVID-19 years, the government introduced a series of programmes and economic packages under the slogan "Self-Reliant India". The protection and wellbeing of weaker, marginalized, and more vulnerable communities were further secured through legislation amendments and governance reforms.

Decentralized Governance:

India's political and administrative structures have been upgraded as the twenty-first century draws closer in order to fulfill democratic ambitions. Due to a change in development paradigms, participatory development with social justice and equality has become the main focus of development planning. It promoted decentralized management, where individuals participated in decision-making and local issues were given first priority. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992, which gave local governments more authority, guaranteed local self-government. The Local Self-Government Units had statutory status as a result, and state governments were mandated to establish three tiers of local governments. The evolution of local governments into decision-making bodies and active participants in the socioeconomic development of their communities is significant. The establishment of local governments, notably Panchayats, may be traced through historical writings, monuments, and excavation sites. While local governments played a significant role in expansion throughout antiquity, the Bruisers are to blame for modern-day local body strengthening. Lack of financial and operational autonomy prevented local governments from functioning effectively, and the non-statutory nature of local organizations prevented state governments from having the necessary ability to create local self-government units. The State Conformity Amendment Act of 1994 marked the beginning of the devolution of financial and operational authority from state governments to local organizations. The foundation for strong bottom-up female leadership

capable of climbing the political ladder to positions of power at the state and federal levels was laid by the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act of 1992. Women were granted one-third of the council's power by the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992, which also extended the same principle of reservation to women in other categories such as SCs and STs in addition to the general category and gave local governments in the nation constitutional status. There are various forms of democratic decentralization. It unquestionably includes circumstances in which members of institutions at the intermediate and/or municipal levels are selected by secret ballot. Elections may be held both directly and indirectly. Those elected may include the executive head of an authority, members of its council, or both. First-past-the-post voting is the custom; however proportional representation is occasionally employed. Decentralization in political systems may suggest the distribution of authority among several levels. It may be given to one or more intermediate levels. The formation of full-fledged administrations at the regional level is referred to as federalism. More constrained authority may be given to intermediate levels in experiments that do not call for a complete reform of the federal government.

The fall of ruling parties and patronage structures was a factor in less developed nations. The governments were faced with increasing demands from organized interests, but their capacity to respond was limited by slow economic growth and mounting political corruption at all levels. Oil shocks in the middle and end of the 1970s made things worse and led to new problems. In the guise of personal rule, many national leaders centralized authority, compromising the formal institutions' responsiveness, effectiveness, and autonomy. By the 1970s, small businesses, especially state-owned enterprises, were increasingly able to compete with larger corporations in a variety of industries. The development of technology played a big role in this. This prompted proponents of increased decentralization from various backgrounds of decision-making. The political development/modernization school and dependence theory, two paradigms that had long dominated political assessments of developing countries, lost some of their sway in the 1980s. In their place, new methods of analysis gained popularity, creating the foundation for decentralization experimentation (Manor, 1997). In an effort to make development more sustainable, some donor organizations started to shift their attention from massive development initiatives to smaller, micro-projects that might involve grassroots communities throughout the

1980s. The decentralisation process was facilitated by this. The dissolution of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union both had an effect. It causes the globalization and restructuring of the government, economy, and society. Due to the influence of Gandhian principles, India has historically had a greater decentralization constituency than the majority of other nations. The elected councils that were established at the local and intermediate levels throughout the 1950s, however, had very little authority since Nehru's inner circle and the framers of India's constitution lacked passion for such views. After that, decentralization was chiefly hampered by the national government's focus on expansive development projects and state-level officials' reluctance to delegate power to elected members of lower-level councils. Decentralization assists in addressing the limited collective action potential of small farmers and other, even poorer groups. It could eventually encourage a more equitable distribution of power between local communications and higher governmental levels as well as between more fortunate and less fortunate groups within local venues (Manor, 1997). Decentralization strengthens civil society. It integrates pre-existing, informal structures and techniques for controlling resources and regional issues into the local government's formal political process. This could enhance the sustainability of development policies and programmes over the long term. As a result of decentralisation, rural residents are more informed about government policies and are better able to discriminate between those that are helpful and those that are not (Crook and Manor, 1998). Currently, decentralization is aiding common folks in honing and using their analytical skills. Information may more easily move from the lowest levels of government to the highest levels thanks to decentralization. As a result, the government may start responding more quickly. It greatly expands the number of people who are aware of the amount of public money available for development at lower levels of political systems. Political stability is maintained as a result. By making government more responsive to people at lower levels, reducing public cynicism about politics, and boosting political legitimacy, decentralization can increase political stability. Second, it fosters political involvement among those who want to work in government by establishing a large number of elected seats in lower-level authorities. This lessens their annoyances, which might threaten their stability. Third, by increasing the number of contests in which political honours can be received, it lessens the disappointment of the opposition parties. Elections are held for regional and local governments in addition to the national legislature and presidency after decentralization. As

a result, it is simpler for opposition parties and interests whose candidates fall short in one of those organisations' elections to continue participating in the democratic process because they may succeed in a different contest in the future (Jenkins, 1997).

In India's Five Year Plan papers, the value of decentralized planning has been emphasized numerous times. However, despite numerous modifications to policy recommendations, this strategy has made slow and unsteady progress. India's economy has reached a stage in its growth where the rapid adoption of a decentralized planning procedure is required in order to ensure the survival of democratic politicization. The structural, technological, institutional, and organizational constraints to growth can only be effectively addressed when the planning process is approached and viewed in the context of specific regions and the local populace. Decentralized governance in the post-1992 era has provided opportunities for women, minorities, and the underprivileged to gain empowerment in order to adopt participatory rural development strategies. Additionally, ideas like participatory development, local development planning, and people-centered government and development have been included into the new *Panchayat Raj* System. Decentralized governance has placed a strong emphasis on empowering *Panchayat* functionaries, representatives, and concerned officials from rural development departments. In order to fulfill its democratic objectives, the Indian government has been attempting to modernize its political and administrative institutions. By establishing three tiers of *Panchayati Raj* system in both rural and urban areas, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 recognized democratic decentralization and people's participation in decision-making. The 11th Schedule allowed for functional devolution to *Panchayati Raj* in rural areas. Public participation in decision-making is essential to political democracy. Political activity engagement by citizens is crucial because a situation that encourages high levels of group participation has stronger democratic potential (Lipset, 1959). Political engagement, according to Norman D. Palmer, is when individuals participate in political activities that directly or indirectly influence the decisions and actions of decision-makers (Palmer, 1976). Any "successful or unsuccessful voluntary action, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods, intended to influence the selection of public policies, the administration of public affairs, or the selection of political leaders at any level of government, local or national" is what is referred to as this (Weiner, 1976).

There will remain a lasting memory of the enormous changes that occurred over the final quarter of the 20th century. The development of technology has an impact on businesses in many sectors, including manufacturing and services, public and private, domestic and international. In order to bring about economic liberalization and the internationalization of goods and services, the majority of economies underwent policy changes during the process of globalization, some of which were quite dramatic. Early in the 1990s, India also saw fierce international competition and started down the path of structural change. The process began with the introduction of the "New Economic Policy" in 1991. Change in an organization requires, among other things, altering its environment, management and employee behavior, strategy, and structure. The organizational structure is one of the most frequent changes that are made. When discussing organizational transformation, it is important to take into account the nature and stage of management in general and the leadership of the organization in particular. At all stages of a firm, leadership has grown in significance over time. Leadership characteristics have also altered. Recent radical changes are related to globalization, the growing usage of microelectronics, and the internet. The widespread use of information technology has sped up communication in general and increased its effectiveness. Information technology is changing how we interact, work, shop, and play. A significant shift in how businesses operate is being facilitated by computers and the internet, from online input procurement to further decentralization and outsourcing. Increased access to information has led to more effective markets. By bringing down communication costs, IT has facilitated the internationalization of the capital market and manufacturing. Innovation has accelerated and competition has risen as a result of globalization. Additionally, it has hastened the adoption of new technology through trade and investment. The execution of several laws, constitutional and legislative requirements, and programmes and plans for rural development have all had an impact on the social structure of rural areas. Inter-caste relations, communication styles, as well as social and cultural life, have all undergone significant transformation. Vulnerable populations have been shielded from criminal activity, violence, and exploitation by the constitution and legal regulations. Although social cohesion in rural areas has weakened as a result of the growth of nationalist pressure organizations and people's associations, the type and character of social contacts have changed with time. Adult voting rights have increased, and most people participate in regular elections. Most homes have at least

one political member who takes an active part in village politics and political gatherings. Western civilization's impact on globalization, liberalism, privatization, and consumerism culture has resulted in attitudes toward social, economic, and cultural concerns that are generally regarded as good.

Social Inclusion:

Village studies are focused on the development process and social transformation because these factors alter the rural power structure, including community development programmes, social reforms, land reforms, social welfare programmes, social and economic infrastructure development, the green revolution, and other factors. As the changes affected village society and its agrarian economy in the early 1990s, a new phase of globalization, economic liberalization, and privatization cleared the way for new realities. Village social life is impacted by changes in communication, transportation, consumerism, and other things. The interaction of rural and urban areas, industrialization, and the influence of western culture all had an impact on village socio-cultural life. A rise in male population migration from rural to urban areas has occurred as a result of the new policies. As agricultural production and land holdings declined throughout time as a result of declining agricultural output, male migration increased. As joint families have broken up and new value systems have gradually taken hold, the migration has also had an impact on village social and cultural life (Singh & Singh, 2022). This has led to family members clashing over issues of individual interests vs traditional values.

The idea of inclusive growth and development has gained support in the context of the changing political and economic landscape. The phrase is frequently used to refer to both balanced spatial development and the involvement of the weaker, more vulnerable, and marginalized people. Like economics and political science, sociology is highly regarded as a field that studies policy. However, this perception did not become widely accepted or even have currency in India (Oomen,2014:). In the Durkheimian meaning, social exclusion is a common social fact that has existed throughout human history and cannot be entirely eradicated from any civilization. However, in order to establish and implement an inclusion plan that may be used to minimize unnecessary exclusions and lessen the severity of those that are unavoidable, it is vital to understand the nature and types of exclusion (Oomen, 2014). Policymakers are starting to think about how to involve the

downtrodden in the expansion. The 11th Five-Year Plan's (2007-12) Approach Paper placed a strong emphasis on inclusive economic growth and development. The administration also introduced a number of policies, initiatives, and strategies for inclusive growth, focusing on inclusive governance throughout the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17). In order to achieve inclusive growth and development, the government launched a series of programmes and economic packages during COVID-19 under the slogan "Self-Reliant India". The protection and wellbeing of weaker, marginalized, and more vulnerable communities were further secured through legislation amendments and governance reforms.

'Social exclusion' is a term that is only recently used. Social exclusion as a notion first appeared in industrialized nations. According to the DFID(2005), discrimination is "a process through which certain individuals are consistently disadvantaged as a result of being discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, colour, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, handicap, etc.". In 1974, a Frenchman named Rene Lenoir first used the term 'social isolation'. The majority of 'social exclusion' theories center on economic hardship, which prohibits excluded people from contributing to the economy in a positive way. Many scholars and thinkers became interested in it, and they started having in-depth discussions about it. Social exclusion theories have been used to explain a variety of exclusionary behaviors. According to Hilary Silver (1994), social exclusion is a process of declining access, participation, and solidarity. It exhibits a lack of societal integration or social cohesion. It describes a person's inability to participate in social interactions that are customarily expected of them and to develop deep interpersonal bonds. Social exclusion destroys the social relationship. According to Todd Landman (2006), social exclusion is a kind of rights violation "where systematic disparity in treatment of people across social, economic, and political domains can be proved." He continues by stating that abuses of human rights may increase a person's susceptibility to exclusion. The idea of Todd Landman is limited to human rights abuses. Estivill (2003) defined social exclusion as "an accumulation of confluent processes with successive ruptures arising from the core of the economy, politics, and society, which gradually distances and places individuals, groups, communities, and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centers of power, resources, and prevailing values". Prakash Louis (2005) defined social exclusion and discrimination as the action of keeping a social

group out of positions of authority and access to resources. Radhakrishna (2009) defines social exclusion as the systematic exclusion of people and groups from one or more societal components, such as opportunities, privileges, and resources. India adopted democratic socialism after gaining its independence, which had a focus on social inclusion. However, inclusive development gained traction during the 11th Five Year Plan (2007–2012), with inclusive growth becoming as the key political slogan and development goal. There was a stronger focus on inclusive government with the implementation of new policies and activities under the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017). However, the Central Government issued a massive package of economic assistance during the global crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, started reforms in the governance, and developed new strategies for inclusive economic growth and the welfare of the weaker, more disadvantaged, and less powerful parts of society. It has proven challenging to achieve inclusive growth. It demands a change in the thinking of the community as well as of policymakers and bureaucrats. All levels of government must make sure that these services are offered, and this must be a crucial part of our inclusive economic strategy (Singh, et al., 2011).

COVID-19 Pandemic and Self Reliant India:

The COVID-19 pandemic has been dubbed the greatest threat to humankind since the Second World War and the most important global health catastrophe of the century. The entire human population is facing severe health, economic, environmental, and societal issues as a result of its quick global spread. The global economy is being badly impacted by the corona virus outbreak. By testing and treating patients, quarantining suspects through contact tracing, limiting big gatherings, maintaining full or partial lock down, etc., almost all of the world's countries are working to stop the spread of the disease. The migrant economy is poised to experience unprecedented levels of impact from the corona virus outbreak. Due to the lockdown and social isolation, most companies were closed, and only a select few people were permitted to work. Due to travel restrictions, cancelled transportation services, and restricted borders, this led to a significant increase in the number of unemployed migrant workers. Because they have either lost their employment or are earning less than they used to, the migrants are unable to send money home. Even in everyday situations, migrants are frequently the target of discrimination in many

areas of the world. Societies are not very open to strangers and foreigners because of the contemporary fear of infection. People who are migrating from one city to another are feared to be carrying the virus. It is highly likely that discrimination against immigrants will worsen in these conditions. Governments must take steps to prevent discrimination from growing and provoking societal unrest. All the countries' economies, societies, and political systems have been greatly touched by COVID-19. The industries most impacted, however, are travel and hospitality, manufacturing, building and real estate, agriculture, transport, and trade. According to reports, infrastructure, mining, and quarrying were the least impacted industries (Chart-20).

Chart-20: Most Affected Sectors Due to COVID-19 in South Asia
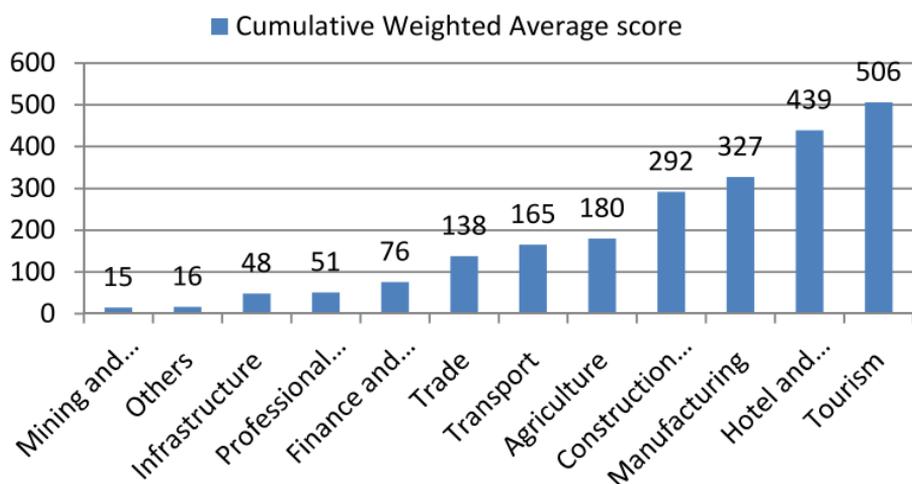
Source: UNESCAP- SSWA Online Survey.

China, India, Germany, Korea, Vietnam are most affected countries due to COVID -19 pandemic. It is reported that GDP has contracted to -23.9 percent in India which is highestas compared too many Asian countries. United Kingdom, France, Italy, Canada, Germany and Japan also witnessed the shrunk of GDP by more than 10 percent, however, it was recorded as low as 3.2 percent in China (Chart-21).

Chart 21: Shrunk of GDP by COVID Pandemic
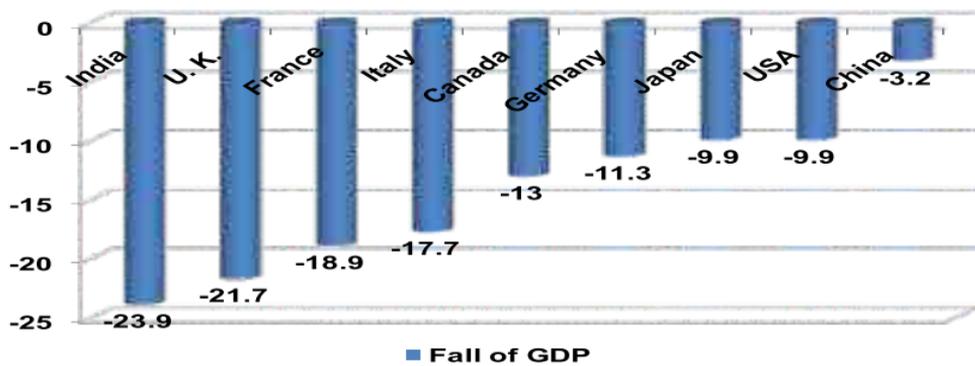
Source: Official GDP Release, CEIC, 2020.

By the end of 2019, there were about 50.8 million displaced individuals, the majority of them was victims of insurgency, natural disasters, and armed conflict. The government of India imposed a total lockdown due to the worldwide crisis, which had a significant impact on migrant workers, labourers, and all other marginalized groups. Globally, there were 25.24 million cases as of August 31, 2020, of which 16.63 million were recovered. The worst-hit nations include Peru, Brazil, India, Russia, and the United States. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have the greatest impact on the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and West Bengal in India. According to an ILO research, 81% of all workers globally are subject to partial or total lockdown. However, because they are the least protected kind of workers, informal labourers will be most negatively impacted. In India, millions of people who depend on the informal sector are struggling to survive. According to UNESCAP-World Bank estimates, COVID-19 will cause 112.8 million people to lose their jobs and 107.66 million to become poorer by the year 2020. Compared to other South Asian nations, this is significantly higher.

According to the World Bank, India's future revenues could be reduced by between $420 billion and $600 billion as a result of the prolonged school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic since pupils' diminished learning levels will result in future output that is lower (2020). In South Asia, there may be up to 5.5 million school dropouts. The dropouts will lose South Asia's gross domestic product and future revenues up to $622 billion, in addition to the significant learning losses for those who choose to stay in school. The bank noted that while South Asian countries only spend $400 billion annually on basic and secondary education, the

overall loss in economic production would be far greater. By the end of 2019, there were about 50.8 million displaced individuals, the majority of them was victims of insurgency, natural disasters, and armed conflict. The government of India imposed a total lockdown due to the worldwide crisis, which had a significant impact on migrant workers, labourers, and all other marginalized groups. Globally, there were 25.24 million cases as of August 31, 2020, of which 16.63 million were recovered. America, India, Brazil, Russia and Peru are the nations who most severely impacted. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have the greatest impact on the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and West Bengal in India. According to an ILO survey, worldwide, 81% of all workers are subject to partial or total lockdown. However, because they are the least protected kind of workers, informal labourers will be most negatively impacted. In India, millions of people who depend on the informal sector are struggling to survive. According to UNESCAP-World Bank estimates, COVID-19 will cause 112.8 million people to lose their jobs and 107.66 million to become poorer by the year 2020. Compared to other South Asian nations, this rate is extremely high (Chart-22).

Chart-22: Potential Job Losses and New Poor Due to COVID-19

(Number in Millions)
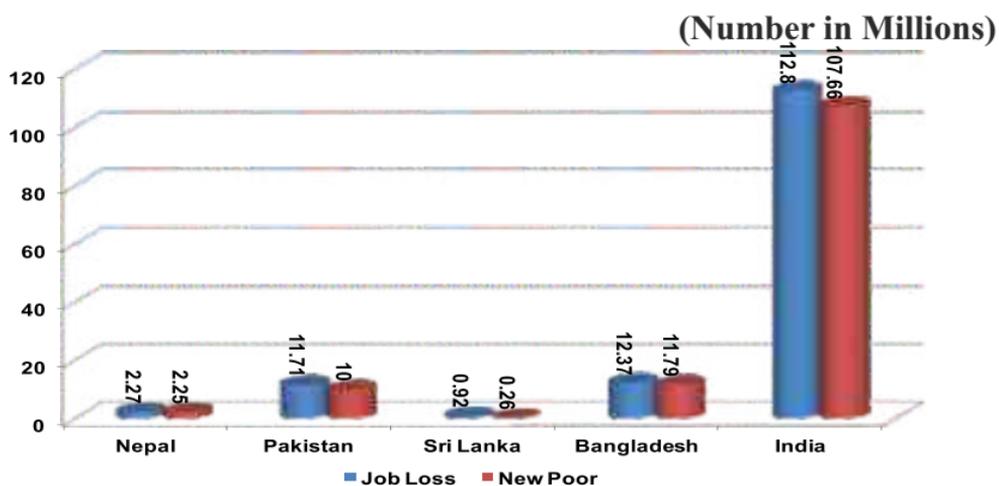
Source: UNESCAP (2020).

In many countries, the COVID-19 epidemic will have an impact on the economy, society, and even the political system. Massive amounts of financial and physical resources will be needed to make progress in reducing the pandemic's effects. Many nations' fiscal policies to date have proven to be woefully insufficient. Typically, women work in low-paying jobs in mainly unorganised industries like agriculture. Additionally, there

are large gender income gaps, much like in most other nations. Approximately 508 million women, or half of the female population in 2020, were not employed. Many migrating urban casual labourers lose both their jobs and their housing. There is a demand-side explanation for the decline in female labour force participation that contends India has failed to provide women with high-quality employment opportunities and welcoming work conditions. In India, the majority of women who report working self-employedly do so primarily as unpaid employees who support family businesses. However, the majority of female-owned businesses operate as single proprietorships without any employees. Manufacturing, services, and construction are the main industries where casual employees are engaged in cities. The majority reside in temporary housing or spaces given by their employers, such as areas near industries or building projects. The handicraft and handloom industries employ more than 50% women, 71% of whom are illiterate. Women are unable to scale their firms due to their lack of technical expertise and commercial experience. Because they are on the front lines of handling waste and are very susceptible to catching the virus, informal waste-pickers are playing a critical role in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

In response to the COVID pandemic and the resurgence of their economies, many nations enacted economic measures. Japan (42.2%) and Singapore (42.2percent of GDP) had the highest fiscal measures percentages (19.7 percent). It was reported in Bhutan, Korea, and Magnolia to be higher than India (10%). On May 12, the Honorable Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, announced a special economic package worth Rs. 20 lakh crore (equivalent to 10% of India's GDP) with the intention of establishing India's independence from the fierce competition in the global supply chain and assisting in the empowerment of the underprivileged, labourers, and migrants who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant India) is supported by five pillars: economics, infrastructure system, vibrant demography, and desire for specific economic and all-encompassing packages. It's time to advocate loudly for our "local" goods and promote them internationally. The emphasis has been on land, labour, money, and laws. In times of need, the central government has regularly provided considerable assistance to the states. In addition to giving states Rs. 12,390 crores in revenue shortfall grants in the first week of April 2020, the government devolved Rs. 46,038 crores in taxes in April 2020. For the needy to fight the struggle, the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana* gave assistance packages of Rs. 1.70

lakh billion. 31 districts in Uttar Pradesh have been added to the 116 districts in India where the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana* has been introduced. The plan has chosen the districts where more than 25000 migrant workers have returned.

On March 26, 2020, the Indian government issued a Rs. 1.70 lakh crore package under the *Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana* to lessen the impact of the lockdown on vulnerable communities. Health care workers, farmers, MGNREGA employees, economically disadvantaged groups, particularly women, the elderly, and unorganized-sector workers, as well as holders of *Jan Dhan* accounts and *Ujjwala* beneficiaries, fall within its purview. For the following three months, the programme will provide an additional 5 kg of wheat or rice and 1 kg of chosen pulses to 80 crore beneficiaries. Additionally, the Central Government instructed the state governments to use the 52,000 crore Building and Construction Workers Welfare Fund to directly help construction workers (DHNS, 2020). Later, the RBI joined in by slashing lending rates significantly and taking a number of novel steps to lend to struggling enterprises (Bloomberg Quint, 2020).Many states, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Karnataka, set up special buses to transport these workers and their families to either state borders or home districts due to the seriousness of the situation (Bohra, 2020; NDTV, 2020). This large-scale migration caused confusion at bus stops, train stations, and national roads, as well as between states. The role of civil society organisations has significantly expanded in the COVID-19 pandemic setting for infection prevention and patient rehabilitation. Government of India declared a complete lock down in the nation due to the worldwide crises, which had a significant influence on the labourers, migrant workers, and all those marginalised people that fight valiantly to survive. Due to the total lock down and ongoing fear of the unknown, these folks are unable to accomplish anything to support them. It is anticipated that the elderly population, such as migrant workers and labourers, will still be in severe crisis and jobless once the lockdown time is through. Their way of life will be severely impacted, which could result in hunger and starvation. Civil society organisations now play a much larger part in the distribution of aid and humanitarian assistance as well as social exclusion, cleanliness, regular waste cleaning, and quarantine. Rehabilitation of the affected and reconstruction of the damaged areas are crucial since COVID 19 prevention has been a national priority, necessitating disaster management measures to deal with the new scenario. More fiscal stimulus was required than was actually implemented to lessen

the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 in South Asia. Sri Lanka reported having the largest gap, followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh. Around 71 percent of the necessary funding for the stimulus was covered by India's fiscal initiatives (Chart-23).

Chart-23: COVID-19 Related Fiscal Measures as Percent of GDP, Selected Countries

■ Fiscal Support Package as Percent of GDP
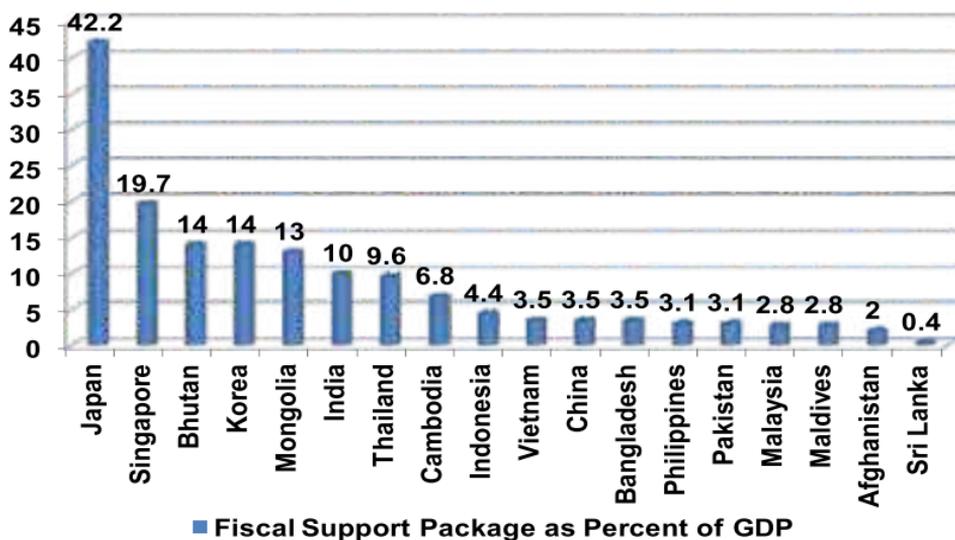
Source: Based on UNESCAP COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker ADB COVID-19 Policy Database and Various National Sources.

In comparison to the global average, South Asia was reported to have low health expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Afghanistan and Bangladesh both had low levels in South Asian nations. Compared to the global average of 5.8 percent and 4.5 percent for East Asian nations, South Asia spends less than one percent of GDP on health. Many nations in the subregion have public health infrastructure that is significantly worse than the global average when measured in terms of the number of beds and health staff. This is because weak investments in the health sector seem to have had this effect. In order to combat the epidemic, weaknesses in the public health system have been revealed. Additionally, the sub-region does not have sufficient access to broadband connectivity and fundamental sanitary services to support alternate working arrangements throughout the confinement phase. However, Bhutan, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka generally have better access to these necessities than other nations in the region (UNESCAP, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on society, the economy, and the lives of the poor, immigrants, and disadvantaged

employees. Even though the migrant workers have returned to their home country, finding them suitable employment is a difficult challenge because the majority of labourers and migrant employees are inexperienced. The governments undoubtedly work hard to develop an environment that is favourable for migrant workers in terms of business and policy, but there are few job opportunities available because the agricultural sector has already taken on additional workers, and opportunities for employment under current rural development and employment programmes are overused. As a result, governments are turning to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector for significant employment opportunities for migrant workers. In light of their expanding work options, skill upgrading is required. The holistic empowerment of migrant workers and their dependents calls for the use of different methodologies and multifaceted strategies. Along with the efficient application of rules and regulations, social security and welfare programmes must be implemented effectively. It would take similarly extraordinary solutions to mitigate these extraordinary challenges. These include sizable relief and stimulus packages focused on the needs of the populace; community involvement; and successful measures involving the entire government and society.

Urban Transformation:

The demand for urban infrastructure and services is gradually rising, and it is made worse by other connected phenomena such as a high proportion of young people in urban areas and an increase in the number of urban poor people and their low income levels. Gradually, urban development plans have evolved to empower ULBs by decentralizing decision-making, allowing them to manage their own finances, build infrastructure, and provide urban services. By transferring 18 of the functions stated in the 12th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the urban governance framework aims to increase ULBs' autonomy. This devolution has not, however, been consistent throughout all States and has not always given cities the autonomy that was desired. The five flagship urban Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) have noticed a change in how the schemes are implemented, with ULBs and local institutions serving as the primary implementing agencies for planning, designing, implementing, and managing the services. They are also making contributions to the sectoral needs identified under each of the liveability parameters. Under infrastructure services, it has been noted that targeted housing and shelter

interventions have improved city conditions by increasing home ownership and home quality (more pucca houses and improved dwelling units). However, it has been discovered that as urbanization increases, our cities' green spaces are getting smaller. Mass rapid transit systems have received a lot of investment in the area of transportation and mobility, but the bus transport capacity is still insufficient and highlights the increasing public transit demands with a more integrated approach. The status of water supply, sanitation and waste-water management, solid waste management, and air quality and pollution are all covered by natural resource management. It should be mentioned that access to drinking water amenities on household property has slightly improved during the past few years. Water scarcity, however, is now posing a problem for Indian cities. In addition, improving the existing capacity of 33% requires addressing the crucial obstacle of access to clean, treated water. With the help of targeted Missions like AMRUT and SBM (U), solid waste management, sanitation, and sewerage have been mainstreamed; however, to stop the environmental degradation that our cities are experiencing, these sectors still need more attention at the treatment and disposal end of their value chains. It has been noted that there is growing cause for concern over the air quality in Indian cities. India is home to 21 of the world's 30 most polluted cities. The Smart City Mission programmes has also shifted towards making cities climate resilient with introducing climate assessment framework and climate smart initiatives. AMRUT 2.0 is focusing on water resources management in urban centers while SBM 2.0 is focusing on making cities garbage free and effective management of solid and liquid wastes.

Safety and security, health, education, and identity and culture are all included in social services. It should be highlighted that the City Government plays a relatively small role in providing these services. While the provision of such social services and their operation are largely the responsibility of other State Departments and Central agencies, access to and the sufficiency of social infrastructure have received significant attention through urban central sector schemes , wherein city government functions (spatial planning, land allocation, etc.) have a direct bearing on access to social services. As a result, formal coordination and integrated planning among all stakeholders are urgently needed for sustainable operations in order to improve the quality of life through the provision of social services. Governance encompasses aspects such as financial sustainability, citizen participation, IT and e-Governance, and capacity building. Although all urban missions have made significant efforts to

improve governance, it is still felt that the existing structures need to be strengthened and the initiatives need to be institutionalized. The current institutional organizationsfor citizen engagement, like as ward committees and area *sabhas*, have remained inadequate, despite the fact that urban CSS established numerous Mission-focused outreach programmes and platforms to give residents' voices more recognition. Urban central sector schemes have expanded their capacity building efforts and deployed technology/data interventions that lean towards a mission-focused approach, it has been highlighted. However, the inadequacy of IT skills and data silos, as well as the lack of an urban sector perspective on capacity building, is preventing cities from extending IT and e-Governance beyond Mission bounds. Regarding the financial viability, it should be emphasized that the national government has placed more emphasis on the urban sector, where central spending has increased over the past 20 years. This pressure for spending is also evident at the state level, where urban CSS accounts for a substantial portion of spending (between 60 and 80 percent). But a significant obstacle still exists in terms of financial sustainability at the implementation level. India has exceptionally low municipal tax receipts compared to other nations, at only 0.3 percent of the GDP. On the other hand, the substantial dependence of ULBs on inter-government transfers, namely central sector schemes and Finance Commissions, results from the lack of qualifying instruments for market funding and the restricted action by State level financial intermediaries.

Section: F
Conclusion:

The commemoration of the 250th birth anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy is being celebrated by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. This event is being held under the banner of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a revolutionary who brought about socio-religious, educational, and women-centric reforms. He fought for the protection of rights of women throughout his whole life. India owes a great debt of gratitude to him for the significant contributions that he has made throughout the life. He was a man who was way ahead of his time and had original ideas on how social changes could be implemented and his thoughts are still relevant. In order to furtherance of the cause of modern education in India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded a number of academic institutions, schools, and colleges in addition to a number of social and intellectual organizations. In order to pique students' interest in science and

encourage them to pursue it as a career path, he advocated for the classroom instruction of scientifically oriented disciplines including Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Botany. The *Brahmo Samaj* was established in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy with the intention of enlightening the masses and igniting the flame of religious reformation in India. In addition to being an organization, the *Brahmo Samaj* was also one of India's first social and religious reform movements. It held the belief that the truth and goodness may be found in all religions, as well as the brotherhood of all people. It was a significant contributor to the country's transition away from antiquated and unnecessary rituals. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a relentless social reformer who is credited with ushering in an age of enlightenment and liberal reformist modernization in India. He is also known as the 'Father of Modern India's Renaissance' Because of the significant reforms he introduced during the 18th and 19th centuries in India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered to be the 'father of Modern Indian Renaissance'. His elimination of the harsh and savage *Sati Pratha* was the measure that made the most of its impact. His work was essential in the movement to do away with the practice of purdah as well as marriages between minors. The role that Raja Ram Mohan Roy played and the contributions that he made are still relevant today in terms of shaping growth and development that is gender just and socially inclusive, as well as in terms of guiding India toward global leadership and making India self-sufficient.

Undoubtedly, gender equality is central to the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Gender equality, leading to increased work opportunities, enhanced capacities for livelihood developments, enhanced social protection and overall increasing voice may enable women to participate equally in productive employment, contributing to women's development leading to economic growth of the nation. No nation can afford development without considering women who constitute about half of the stock of human resources. Thus, engendering growth has been internationally recognized instrument of development by incorporating gender perspective and concerns at all levels and stages of development planning, policy, programmes and delivery mechanisms. The issue of engendering development and women empowerment has been in the central stage with the shifting of paradigm of development and governance at the global level and particularly in India. Gender budgeting has emerged as an important instrument for gender mainstream and women empowerment across the globe. It has been well recognized by the policy makers and feminist economists that gender budgeting is imperative for

gender equality and engendering development planning. Gender budgeting refers to the systematic examination of the budget programmes and policies for the impact on women. Studies show that programmes and policies design to improve women's economic opportunities lead to higher rates of economic growth. Gender budgeting has gained prominence in the policy circles in the recent years. Engendering development and inclusive growth requires an enabling environment in which women's contribution to the economy can be tapped and enhanced in a substantial and holistic way. This environment needs to ensure from conception to death – an environment that provides physical, emotional, economic and political and community security to girls and women. The engendered development also requires addressing the issues of accountability, capacity building and governance that are of utmost importance for gender equity and inclusive growth. Women's role in decision making institutions needs to be enhanced through providing them reservation and enforcement and implementation of all pro-women legislations. It is also imperative to eliminate all forms of violence against women through improving institutional mechanisms and enhanced budgetary resources. There is also need to redefine poverty through gender lens. In order to promote pro-women inclusive growth, it is imperative to create and strengthen institutional mechanism for addressing the destitute, marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable women. Women empowerment is the buzzword now-a-days. No country can afford development without considering women. However, development has bypassed women in India despite worshiping and paying respect to women in mythology and historical texts. Gender disparities vary vastly across cultural, geographical and historical context. India is a large country with vast economic and socio-cultural diversity in its varied regions. The development issues related to women in a large country like India will not only be inappropriate but sometimes even misleading. Women specific and women related legislations have been enacted to safeguard the rights and interest of women, besides protecting against discrimination, violence, and atrocities and also to prevent socially undesirable practices. In past, government of India has undertaken a large number of schemes aimed at the socio-economic development of women under various Five Year Plans.

Women are major contributors to India's economy and important constituent of development. Their empowerment is essential for distributive justice for the nation's growth. Engendering national development plans is imperative for gender main streaming and their empowerment. Engendered development plans would include a gender

dimension in all macro policies and budgetary support for their implementation. Engendering public policy and gender budgeting are the major gender commitments by Government of India. Gender budgeting has three basic dimensions. One, the empowerment has to be holistic and it should cover political, social and economic implications for women. It should be universal in terms of equal opportunities. The second dimension is that it should be participative and inclusive. This requires that planning, policy and implementation process should have a bottom to top approach, where women have a voice from the gross roots to the highest echelons of power. The third dimension of gender budgeting is the need for convergence. Women's needs are multi-dimensional – access to health and nutrition, water and sanitation, asset based marketing, credit, technology, education and skills, political participation etc. Thus, convergence of development policies, programmes, schemes and institutional resources is imperative for engendering and inclusive development. There is also the need for revision in existing urban development schemes and programmes so that gender issues may be incorporated and their concerns are effectively addressed.

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