

# SOCIAL LEGISLATION AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN TAMIL NADU – A STUDY

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Received: January 31, 2019

Accepted: March 02, 2019

**ABSTRACT:** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, birth of status. Men and Women are two inseparable of human society and they have always shared sorrows and joys together. If men have endeavored to free themselves from slavery, women have not lagged behind. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century it was a common belief that women were fit only for household work that their place was in the kitchen and at best they might come in the drawing room. This paper mainly focuses on the status of women in ancient and modern period. This paper also highlights various women legislation in Tamil Nadu.

**Key Words:** Women status, Legislation, Women Rights. Women Empowerment

## Introduction

*A woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details in the activities of man, and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him<sup>1</sup>.*

**Mahatma Gandhi**

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia from equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful in modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Leader of the opposition. As of 2011, the President of India, the speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) are all women. However, Women in India generally are exposed to numerous social issues. According to a global study conducted by Thomson Reuters, India is the “Fourth most dangerous country” in the world for women<sup>2</sup>. The 21st Century is rightly called the age of women awakening in the world. In every part of the world equality of sexes has been ensured and various laws have been passed to improve the status of women

## Status of Women in Ancient Period

The women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. However, some others hold contrasting views. Work by ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana suggest that women were educated in the early Vedic period. Rig Vedic verses suggest that the women married at a mature age and were probably free to select their husband.<sup>3</sup>

In the Vedic age, women enjoyed a high position in Indian Society. They had full freedom for spiritual progress and intellectual development. Many women rose to become Vedic Scholars, Debaters, Poets and teachers. Some remained unmarried for life-long pursuit knowledge and were known as Bramanavadinis. Women in ancient India occupied a dignified position. Women were married at a mature age, and had full freedom in the choice of their husband. From the solemn affirmations and promises made by the bridegroom to each other, it appears that monogamy was generally prevalent.

All the high avenues of learning were open to women. During this period we come across a reference to some women who excelled in learning and their hymns were included in the Vedas. Some of the outstanding women of that age were Lopmandra, Apala, Kadru, Ghosha, Paulomi and others. The notable Philosopher of the time was Gargi<sup>4</sup>. In ancient period women had freedom of movement, religious rights, and equal to men and they had high status in the society. During the Vedic and post-Vedic period also, women actively took part in the intellectual and social life of the country.

## Medieval Period

Medieval period women status totally changed in Ancient period. Women position in the society further deteriorated during the medieval period when Sati among some Communities, Child Marriages and a ban on a widow remarriages become part of social life among some Communities in India. The marriageable age of the girls was further lowered down. Sati was most popular in this period. Widow Remarriage was withdrawn in the time. Early marriage was followed by early Maternity which increased the morality among women. Women are not allowed for education. The Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent brought the Purdah (keeping Whole Body, Including Face Covered) practice in the Indian society. Hindu Family forced for Purdah system followed. Women were strictly confined to the four walls of home. Their freedom was largely curtailed. Women were made to be totally dependent on men.

Jainism and Buddhism are considered as little progressive to previous times. Women enjoyed a bit of freedom and certain opportunity, particularly in spiritual matters. During this time, female education was encouraged. It was possible that women could become missionaries and even they could remain unmarried. The social position of women in public assemblies and their right to education is neglected. Some women excelled in the field of politics, literature, education and religion. Raziya Sultana the only women monarch to have ever ruled in Delhi. The Gond Queen Durgvati ruled for 15 Years. The Bhakti movement allowed for women in public life. Mirabai, a female saint -poet, was one of the most important Bhakti Movement. Some other female saint- poets from this period include Akka Mahadevi, Rami Janabai, and Lai Ded<sup>5</sup>.

## Modern Period

In the modern period the status of Indian women can be divided into two distinct periods. The British rule, i.e. Pre- Independent India and the Post- Independent India

### Pre-Independence India

The British rule in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century brought some degree of political orderliness, but the social structure, customs and practices remained unchanged. It was the mainly during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the reform movement undertaken by enlightened thinkers and leaders of Indian society like Raja Ram Mohan Ray who the importance of women's participation that status of Indian women started changing for the better. During this period both men and women participated in the National Movement and their unity and Sacrifice paved way for Success of National Movement and Success of women Political Movement.

Women played an important part in India's Independence Struggle; some of the famous freedom fighters include Dr. Annie Besant, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Rajukumari Amrit Kaur, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalini and Kasturiba Gandhi, other notable names include Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, was the first and only woman candidate in the Medical College in 1907. Durgabai Desmukh. Sarojini Naidu a poet and a Freedom Fighter, was the first Indian women to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first women to become the governor of a state in India.<sup>6</sup>

### Post - Independence India

After political Independence, India has carried forward the process to a point where at least men and women are equal. Marriage and divorced laws been modified to ensure equality to women. In India, the women are participates all activities such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology etc, now they have legal rights in ancestral property. Women have been extended greatly and today they can enter politics to any higher civil services and other professions without and legal discrimination. They have equal right to vote. Now women reached from grass root political areas. Some of famous women political leaders are Indira Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu. Indira Gandhi was the first woman India and second in Asia to be the Prime Minister of a Country<sup>6</sup>. After Independence women have played an important role in India, women have taken bold steps in all fields in nation.

### Women in Indian Constitution

The Constitution of India guaranteed to secure all citizens, justice, liberty, equality and promote fraternity among them all. The preamble of Indian Constitution contains various goals including. The Constitution recognized the unequal social position to make special prohibitions for women and children even on violation of the obligation not to discriminate among citizens. For that reason, special laws have been enacted for the protection of women workers in factories, mines and plantation; and to provide maternity relief of women workers in organized sectors. Equal opportunity in public employment and office has helped to ensure a significant position and status to Urban, Middle class, educated Indian women, demonstrated in increasing number of women in the public services and in position of political power and social dignity. So, all these rights have increased their participation and have become an instrument of directed social change.

## Research Paper

### Women and Fundamental Rights

- **Article 14:** Equality before law and equal production under the law to all persons.
- **Article 15:** Non-discrimination, inter alia, on the ground sex- specifically in the matter of gaining free access to place of public resort; and state having authority to make special provisions for women.
- **Article 15(3):** Empowers the state to make any special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 16:** Equality of opportunity in public employment.
- **Article 23:** Prohibits trafficking in human beings & forced labour.

### Women and Directive Principles of State Policy

- **Article 39(A):** Articulate the duty to provide adequate means of livelihood for men and women equality.
- **Article 39(B):** Demands a policy providing equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 39(C):** Mandates that the policy of the state should be geared to produce the health for men, women and child.
- **Article 42:** Human conditions of work and maternity relief for women.
- **Article 51 A (E):** Fundamental duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

### Civil and Political Rights of Women

- **Article 325:** Political equality to women and prohibits exclusion from the electoral rolls on the basis of sex, caste, religion etc.
- **Article 14, 15, 16, and 19:** Constitution of India and the Representation of Peoples Act provides for equal participation of women in political process.
- **Article 243(D):** Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women.<sup>7</sup>

### Women Status in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has a great tradition of heritage and culture that has developed over 2000 years and still continues to flourish. This great cultural heritage of the state of Tamil Nadu evolved through the rule of dynastic that ruled the state during various phases of history.

During the Sangam period three types of marriages were adopted. The first was clandestine love and courtship which led to marriage, the second was getting bride through a bull fight and third one was arranged marriage. The practice of the bride groom paying a certain amount of money to the parents of the girl had come in to the vogue. There is no reference regarding the marriage symbol of tying of the "Thali" but, later it becomes an important part of the marriage ceremony.

Patriarchal society was there in Sangam Age. The Sangam literature says that women had the status not equal to men; they had to follow Lots of rules, which were not meant to men. There was no evidence for punishing man who left his wife and went to prostitute. There were evidence, which show that the Sangam age women were treated worst, for example, in Naladiyar a Tamil king named Nannan imprisoned his enemy's wives in a war. He shaved their hair and made it as a rope to tie the elephant.<sup>8</sup>

Ancient Tamil society believed that the self immolation of a 'Sati' would lead her world of the Devas though the word 'Sati' is not there it was known as jumping in to the fire. Such women were known as Nallal. The methods of sati were performed by the methods of Sahamarana and Anumarana.

The position of women in Tamil Nadu in the medieval period is concerned; women were not disqualified from the enjoyment of rights. They were under no restraints in their political, social, cultural, religious and economic activities though modesty was considered the highest among their graces. This high ideal of womanhood and feminine virtues could be seen in some of the hymns of the Alvars, such as Tirumangai Alvar, a contemporary of Nandivarman, The women of Tiruvallikeni, in Madras were reflected as the peerless of earth, presumably noted for their beauty and virtues.<sup>9</sup>

The birth of female child was considered as a grief in the medieval period. Because the parents had to pay dowry for the child's marriage and also they had to search bridegroom in their same caste. There was a custom that the girl children should get married before 10 years. So the female infanticide happened. When the female baby was born, they murdered the child by giving liquor or spurge milk, paddy with milk, dumpling cow dunk in the child's mouth and burying them alive. However they tried to control this evil in the medieval period but failed. After independence also this social evil was very common in certain places like Usilam Patti in Madurai District, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Salem of Tamil Nadu.<sup>10</sup>

The Translation of the Tamil word 'Devaradiyal' in Sanskrit is Devadasi. The meaning of the word is 'slave to God'. It is also interpreted as the slave servant of God, handmaiden of God, sacred slave girl, temple girl, temple dancer and temple courtesan. Devadasis were a class of women who were supposed to have been dedicated to the service of temples. Symbolically they were united in marriage with some God. During the simple ceremony called 'Pottukattu or Trinket tying', the girl was married to the God in the temple; she should devote herself to the service of God. After the sacred marriage, they were not allowed to have any further marriage with any human being.<sup>11</sup>

The Self - Respect movement in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Periyar E.V.R. had strongly advocated the necessity in inter-caste marriage and widow marriages. The movement has strongly against to the evils of child marriage and Devadasi system. It started propaganda for encouraging marriages of widows.

Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy was started in Avvai Home. She was the first Women Legislator in British India. And she introduced Devadasi Act was passed in 1947.Suhbulakshmi Ammal, the child widow of Tamil Nadu participated in the campaign of child marriages and other evils. She founded the Sarada Ladies Union, the widows Home and the Sarada Vidyalaya.The ancient Tamil sources tell about the clearly women status in Tamil Nadu.

### **Social Legislation**

Social Legislation is "Laws are a form of Social rule emanating from political agencies" Laws become Legislation when they are made and put into force by law-making body or authority, legislations particularly social legislations have played in important role in bringing Social Change.Social Legislation Consists of laws that provide particular kinds of production or benefits to society or segments thereof in furtherance of social justice.

Laws that seek to promote the common good, generally by protecting and assisting the weaker members of society, are considered to be social legislation. Such legislation includes laws assisting the unemployed, the infirm, the disabled, and the elderly. The social welfare system consists of hundreds of state and federal programs of two general types. Some programs, including Social Security, Medicare, unemployment insurance, and Workers' Compensation, are called social insurance programs because they are designed to protect citizens against hardship due to old age, unemployment, or injury.

Because people receiving benefits from these programs generally have contributed toward their benefits by paying payroll taxes during the years that they worked, these social insurance programs are usually thought of as earned rewards for work. Programs of a second type, often cumulatively called the Welfare System, provide government assistance to those already poor. These social programs have maximum income requirements and include Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Food Stamp Program, Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Insurance

### **Women and Social Legislation in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu had brought lot of Amendments in Women and Social legislation ahead of all other states in India. There legislation helped women to achieved social status, security for life, property rights, etc... The important Act's in Women and Social Legislation are discussed below.

### **Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929**

The girls who escaped the cruel custom of infanticide were married very young i.e., between the ages of five years to ten years, having no opportunity for the improvement of their mental or physical self. It might be argued that since girls did not go to school and had no social life, they were married young. It also secured their purity. Marriages were arranged by parents. Early marriage was convenient because the younger a girl the easier her adjustment to the new environment. The custom involved a number of abuses. The awareness of the importance of marriage and its responsibilities were absent in such marriages.

For the child-wife, marriage was associated with sweets, beautiful dresses, fireworks and for a few days to be the centre of attraction with perhaps a ride on the horse or in a palanquin in the gay evening procession. After the marriage her companions, most often, were a husband much older in age or a few elderly women in the house. Thus the girl child from the moment of her birth to her death undergoes one continuous life long suffering as a child-wife, as a child-mother and very often as a child-widow. The practice of child marriage was responsible for the high rate of infant mortality. Fuller observes: "Children born every year, only about half the number reach the age of 30 years".<sup>12</sup> The custom was answerable for millions of widows in the country, abnormal deliveries, prolonged illness of mother after confinement, sterility in some cases and prolonged debility or chronic diseases in others.

This Act relates to both the boys and girls because child marriage has a direct bearing on physical and mental health. Carrying the burden of motherhood at an immature age shatters the health of women

and therefore, an attempt was made way back in 1929 to restraint child marriages through the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, which is also known as Sarada Act. This Act was passed with a view to restrain solemnization of child marriage. Under this Act, a "child" means a person who, if a male has not completed 21 years of age, and if female has not completed 18 years of age. Child marriage means a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is child. This Act, prescribed 15 as the minimum age for girls, and 18 for boys, but such was the impact of the social reality and notions that the child marriage were made neither void nor voidable, but once performed they were perfectly valid. Later on this position was maintained by Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978 now rises the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls and 21 for boys. However, the marriage performed in violation of this condition is valid. To this may be added the prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. This act aims at the prohibition of solemnization of Child Marriage within the meaning of Section 2(b) means a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is a child. The child marriage has been made voidable at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of marriage. A child begotten or conceived of a child marriage shall be deemed to be a legitimate child in spite of such marriage being annulled by a decree of nullity under Section 3 of the Act. Marrying a child by a male adult above 18 years of age is punishable with imprisonment or fine or both.

### **Hindu Succession (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, 1989**

Though the Constitution of India has guaranteed equality between the sexes, and even advocated special treatment for women in some areas, the women have not yet attained economic equality. In 1989, when the D.M.K. party assumed the office, it had brought a revolutionary amendment to the Hindu Succession Act of 1956. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly had introduced the Bill in the Assembly on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1989. Constitution of India has proclaimed equality before law as a Fundamental Rights, and where as the exclusion of the daughter from participation in the coparcenary ownership merely by reason of her sex in contrary. And such exclusion of the daughter has led to creation of the socially pernicious dowry system with its attendant social evils.<sup>13</sup>

The Chief Minister Dr.M.Karunanidhi has announced the Hindu Succession Act effect from 25<sup>th</sup> March 1989, and the proposal for the legislation to provide equal rights for women in ancestral property. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1989 adopted an amendment to the Hindu Succession Act 1956.<sup>14</sup> The Hindu Succession (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act of 1989 allows the Daughter of a family to get equal share from the parent's property similar to the sons and also this Legislation to provide equal rights for women in ancestral property.

### **Property Rights of Women in Tamil Nadu**

Women's right to property has been recognized as an important issue. Property rights for women can have an impact on decision making, income pooling, acquisition, and women's overall role and position in the community. Moreover, land is a critical resource for a woman when the household breaks: for example, in the event of desertion by husband, abandonment, divorce, polygamous relationship, illness or death. The historical evidence from South India, especially Tamil Nadu region, suggests that women had considerably stronger rights to property than indicated in the legal texts, and the jurists themselves were aware of the variance between the prescribed rights and customary rights, women clearly owned property and had authority to alienate their property either money or land through gifts or sales.

Tamil Nadu Amendment Act 1 of 1990, sec 2 with effect from 25 March 1989.

- Equal rights to daughter in co- parcenary property
- Joint Hindu Family governed by Mitakshara law, the daughter of a co-parcener shall by birth become a co-parcener in her own right in the same manner as the son and have the same rights in the co- parcenary as would have had if they had been a son, inclusive of the right to claim by survivorship and shall be subject to the same liabilities and disabilities in respect there to as the son.
- At a partition such a joint Hindu Family the Co-parcenary property shall be so divided as to allot to a daughter the same share as is allotable to a son
- Any property to which a female Hindu becomes entitled by virtue of the provisions of clause (i) shall be held by her with the incidents of co- parcenary ownership and shall be regarded not withstanding anything contained in this act or any other law for the time being in force, as property capable of being disposed of by her will or other testamentary disposition
- When a female Hindu Dies after the commencement of the Hindu Succession( Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act 1989 having at the time of her death an interest in a Mitakshara co-parcenary

property by virtue of the provisions of 29-A? Her interest in the property shall devolve by survivorship upon the surviving members of the co-parcenary and not in accordance with Act.

- Any immovable property of an interest or in any business carried on by him or her, whether solely or in conjunction with others, devolves under s 29 A or s 29 B upon two or more heirs and any one of such heirs proposes to transfer his or her interest in the property or business, the other heirs shall have a preferential right to acquire the interest proposed to be transferred.
- When a male Hindu dies possessed of property after the coming into force of the Act, leaving his widow as his sole heir, she inherits the property as a class 1 heir. In the circumstances, the question of applicability of s 14 does not arise on succession after the Act come in to force. The Widow inherits an absolute estate, even without calling aid this section.<sup>15</sup>

### **Prohibition of Eve-Teasing Tamil Nadu Act 1998**

Eve-teasing in public places has been a perennial problem. Recently, incidents of eve-teasing leading to serious injuries to, and even death of a woman have come to the notice of the Government. The Government are of the view that eve-teasing is a menace to society as a whole and has to be eradicated. With this in view, the Government decided to prohibit eve-teasing in the State of Tamil Nadu.

Eve-Teasing is a euphemism, a conduct which attracts penal action but it is seen, only in one State, a Statute has been enacted, that is State of Tamil Nadu to contain the same, the consequence of which may at times drastic. Eve-teasing led to the death of a woman in the year 1998 in the State of Tamil Nadu which led the Government bringing an ordinance, namely, the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Eve-Teasing Ordinance, 1998, which later became an Act, namely, the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Eve-Teasing Act, 1998.

Accordingly, the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Eve-teasing Ordinance, 1998 (Tamil Nadu Ordinance No. 4 of 1998) was promulgated by the Governor and the same was published in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette Extraordinary, dated the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1998. The Bill seeks to replace the said Ordinance.

#### **Section 294 IPC:**

Section 294 says that “Whoever, to the annoyance of others: (a) does any obscene act in any public place, or (b) sings, recites or utters any obscene song; ballad or words, in or near any public place, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine, or with both”.

#### **Section 509 IPC:**

Section 509 IPC says, “Whoever intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending, that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine or with both”.

### **Guidelines on Sexual Harassments:**

- All the State Governments and Union Territories are directed to depute plain clothed female police officers in the precincts of bus-stands and stops, railway stations, metro stations, cinema theatres, shopping malls, parks, beaches, public service vehicles, places of worship etc. so as to monitor and supervise incidents of eve-teasing.
- There will be a further direction to the State Government and Union Territories to install CCTV in strategic positions which itself would be a deterrent and if detected, the offender could be caught.
- Persons in-charge of the educational institutions, places of worship, cinema theatres, railway stations, bus-stands have to take steps as they deem fit to prevent eve-teasing, within their precincts and, on a complaint being made, they must pass on the information to the nearest police station or the Women’s Help Centre.
- Where any incident of eve-teasing is committed in a public service vehicle either by the passengers or the persons in charge of the vehicle, the crew of such vehicle shall, on a complaint made by the aggrieved person, take such vehicle to the nearest police station and give information to the police. Failure to do so should lead to cancellation of the permit to ply,
- State Governments and Union Territories are directed to establish Women Helpline in various cities and towns, so as to curb eve-teasing within three months.
- Suitable boards cautioning such act of eve-teasing be exhibited in all public places including precincts of educational institutions, bus stands, railway stations, cinema theatres, parks, beaches, public service vehicles, places of worship etc.
- Responsibility is also on the passers-by and on noticing such incident; they should also report the

same to the nearest police station or to Women Helpline to save the victims from such crimes.

- The State Governments and Union Territories of India would take adequate and effective measures by issuing suitable instructions to the concerned authorities including the District Collectors and the District Superintendent of Police so as to take effective and proper measures to curb such incidents of eve-teasing.<sup>16</sup>

### **Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women Act 2008**

To safe guard the welfare of women and issues relating to the status of women and to make recommendations to the Government for suitable action, the Government has constituted the State Commission for Women on 19.03.1993. The Government has decided to constitute the Commission statutorily and to give more powers to the Commission. Accordingly, Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women Act, 2008 has been enacted. This Act has been notified in the Government Gazette on 27-05-2008 and came in to force on 30-07-2008

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To safeguard the welfare of women.
- To enquire into the gender issues relating to the status of women.
- To make recommendations to the Government for appropriate actions to be taken on the issues related to Women Welfare.<sup>17</sup>

### **Activities:**

This Commission is headed by a retired High Court Justice as chairperson and 9 members. This Commission is working as an advisory body to government to review the existing Laws, Policies, and Programmes for women and protecting the interests and rights of the women with special reference to gender issues relating to the status of women. The activities of the commission are as follows.

- Investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for Women under the Constitution and other laws.
- Present to state government annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of these safeguards and Make in such reports, recommendations for the effective implementation of those safeguards for improving the conditions of Women.
- Review, from time to time the existing, provisions of the constitution and other Laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest Remedial legislative measures to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or short comings in such Legislations.
- Take up the cases of violation of provisions of the constitution and of other laws relating to women with appropriate authorities.
- Call for special studies or investigations into specific problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommend strategies for their removal.
- Inspect cause to be inspected, any jail, remand home, women institution or Other place of custody where women are kept as prisoner or otherwise, and Take up with the concerned authorities for remedial action, if found Necessary.

### **Programmes:**

This Commission has conducted the following campaigns and awareness programmes for the welfare of women.

- Awareness programme on the Domestic Violence Act through Pupperty-Yatra and Street-play in all Districts.
- Awareness programme on Environment and Women in Chennai, Coimbatore, Kancheepuram and Thiruvarur Districts.
- Awareness programme on the compulsory registration of marriages act in Coimbatore, Vilupuram and Dharmapuri Districts.
- Public Hearing on the problems faced by the women workers in textile mills.
- Public Hearing on the problems faced by Transgender.
- Consultation Meeting on combating Trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation.
- Consultation on Gender Budgeting.
- Consultation on the prohibition of child marriage act.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

The women's equality is still a distant dream and constitutional provisions to empower them are only words in paper. But, the government has passed several acts for the development of women. It gave them wide powers to examine all issues relating to safeguards provided to women under the Constitution, make recommendations to the government for the implementation of those safeguards and suggest measures for improving the condition of women. Women were also empowered to initiate special studies or investigations into issues relating to women. They were to advise and participate in the planning process for social and economic issues relating to women.

During the last few decades many laws were passed for the development of women. In this way efforts are being made through legal means to give facilities to women. Today a few women are in high posts in the political field. For the progress of women, many steps have been taken by the Central and the State Governments. Thus, the promotion and progress of women clearly indicates and justify their present day social status and role in the society. Particularly after independence, the women enjoy greater freedom not only in the social field but also in the other fields. They are bold enough to face any challenge in the society and at the same time they are sufficiently efficient to tackle all problems. Women have elevated their status and role in the society. These social legislations have considerably improved the status of women in Hindu society and granted most of their demands. In this scenario of violence, women's equality is still a distant dream and constitutional provisions to empower them are only words in paper. Most of the women are housewives, who perform alone all household drudgery. To conclude that, the existing social legislation is not adequate to rectify the women issues. Legal system aiming at elimination of all forms discrimination against women should be strengthened. In addition to that, the level of awareness of the women laws should also be strengthened among women.

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