News from MWCD

Clarification regarding suggestions received by WCD Ministry on issues related to NRI Marriages

The Government of India has constituted an Expert Committee to look into the issues and difficulties faced by Indian nationals married to overseas nationals of Indian origin and suggest amendments in existing laws/policies/regulation. This is in light of a large number of complaints by men/women (and their children) who are caught in difficult situations arising out of breakdown of marriages.

The Expert Committee is headed by Justice Arvind Kumar Goel, ex-Chairperson, NRI Commission, Punjab. The members of the Committee include Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, Ex – MP Chairperson, senior officers of Ministries of Women and Child Development (WCD), Home Affairs (MHA), External Affairs (MEA) and Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Prof. Pam Rajput.

The Expert Committee has held four meetings till date to discuss the issues related to the subject of NRI marriages. WCD Ministry, being the nodal Ministry dealing with issues related to women and children, has been receiving numerous suggestions from a variety of stakeholders including individuals, civil society organizations/institutions on the subject. Some of these suggestions include amendments in certain Acts including the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969; constitution of separate cells in Embassies/Mission abroad to coordinate with local authorities; circulation of Do’s and Don’ts on the subject in the affected areas i.e. villages, towns, colleges and educational institutions; pre-marital and marital counselling to be provided through Family Counselling Centres (FFC) constituted by Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB); constitution of meaningful Consular Division to provide legal and financial assistance; registration for marriage to be made compulsory; mother to be made natural guardian of the child and many more such suggestions.

All such suggestions are being forwarded by the WCD Ministry to the Expert Committee for examination. The Expert Committee will take into account all such suggestions and make its recommendations to the government. The recommendations will be examined by the government in consultation with a larger group of stakeholders to decide on future course of action. It is, therefore, clarified that the suggestions forwarded to the Expert Committee by the WCD Ministry is only a part of process so that views of various stakeholders are duly taken into account by the committee. Any news reports mentioning the same as formal and final recommendations of the Ministry are completely misleading and incorrect.

The Ministry has separately asked NCPCR to look into the issue of shared parenting for children whose parents have had a breakdown of marriages. NCPCR has been asked to take up a wide stakeholder consultation on the issue so that social, psychological, legal and other dimensions of this this issue could be examined.

- PIB

Government offers assistance to Indian women abroad who have been abused/abandoned by overseas Indian spouse

The Ministry of External Affairs is implementing a scheme to provide financial assistance to Indian women abused / abandoned by their Overseas Indian spouses, so that they can get access to counselling and legal services, with Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Scheme is currently operational, in 13 countries namely; United States America (USA), United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Gulf countries (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman and United Arab Emirates (UAE)).

Consular Services Management System (MADAD) is an online portal developed by Ministry of External Affairs to register grievances pertaining to the Consular Services offered by the Indian Mission/Posts abroad. The portal could be utilized to enlist assistance while facing grievances related to marital dispute and other related problems.

- PIB

Social Welfare ● August 2017
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The Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi launched an online complaint management system titled Sexual Harassment electronic–Box (SHe-Box) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace in New Delhi. The complaint management system has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013.

This portal is an initiative to provide a platform to women working or visiting any office of Central Government (Central Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Bodies and Institutions etc.) to file complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace under the SH Act. Those who had already filed a written complaint with the concerned Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) constituted under the SH Act are also eligible to file their complaint through this portal. The SHe-Box portal can be accessed at the link given below:

http://www.wcd-sh.nic.in/

Speaking at the launch, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi said that though currently this facility has been extended to employees of Central Government, the scope of the portal will soon be extended to women employees of private sector also.

The WCD Minister said that there are some surveys, which give the extent of sexual harassment of women at workplace. However, the WCD Ministry will carry out a national level survey to asses and understand the magnitude of the problem.

This portal (SHe-Box) is an effort to provide speedier remedy to women facing sexual harassment at workplace as envisaged under the SH Act. Once a complaint is submitted to the portal, it will be directly sent to the ICC of the concerned Ministry/Department/PSU/Autonomous Body etc. having jurisdiction to inquire into the complaint. Through this portal, WCD as well as complainant can monitor the progress of inquiry conducted by the ICC.
Government of India is the largest employer in the country employing 30.87 lakh people to carry out its various functions. As per the Census of Central Government employees, 2011, women constitute 10.93% (3.37 lakhs) of the total regular Central Government employees.

The WCD Ministry has taken several measures to ensure implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act. The Ministry has published a Handbook on the SH Act with the objective to provide information about the provisions of the Act in an easy to use practical manner. Further, the Ministry in collaboration with Institute of Statistical Training and Management (ISTM), New Delhi has prepared a training module to build the capacity of government officials above the provisions of the SH Act and develop in them professional competence to implement the same. Recently, on 5th May, 2017, the Ministry in collaboration with ISTM organised a day long workshop for chairpersons of Internal Complaint Committee constituted in various Ministries/Departments of Central Government.

Besides, in order to create wide spread awareness about the Act across the country both in organized and unorganized sector, MWCD has identified a pool of 29 resource institutions willing to provide capacity building programs i.e. training, workshops etc on the SH Act. The list of these institutions is available at the link given below:

Link: http://wcd.nic.in/act/recommended-panel-institutes-or-organizations-under-sexual-harassment-women-workplace

Link to Training Module for Two Day Workshop on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013: http://wcd.nic.in/act/training-module-two-day-workshop-sexual-harassment-women-workplace-prevention-prohibition-and

The SHe-Box will provide a platform to these empanelled institutes/organisations to share their capacity building activities with the Ministry which in turn will be able to monitor the activities of these institutes/organizations so empanelled from across the country. As of now, as per the reports received, in the past 5 months, the empanelled institutes/organisations/companies have organised 35 capacity building exercises which were attended by approximately 1700 people.

Ensuring the dignity and safety of women must be first priority for any digital society. Towards realisation of the vision of the Digital India programme, the Ministry is promoting utilisation of information and communication technology to achieve the goal of gender equality and women empowerment. It is an effort to utilise the digital space to enable speedier response to the complaints of women against sexual harassment at workplace.

The Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Smt Krishna Raj; Secretary WCD, Shri Rakesh Srivastava and senior officers of the Ministry as well as its associated organizations were present at the launch event.

-PIB
All Women Crew to Operate Matunga Station in Mumbai

Matunga, an important railway station on Central Railway suburban network located between Dadar and Sion. The Indian Railways took a major step towards the empowerment of women by handing over a station to an all women crew for the first time in the history of Indian Railways. Matunga, situated in the heart of Mumbai city is now have an all women crew including the ticketing staff, security staff and other personnel required to operate the station. The station master too is a woman."A total of 30 women staffers, including 11 booking clerks, five RPF personnel, seven ticket checkers are working under the supervision of station manager .

2 Courageous Assamese Girls Saved 30 Lives When Their Village Was Struck by a Flood

Pinki Gogoi and her friend Puja Gogoi used a bamboo raft to rescue up to 30 people left stranded in a flood and bring them to a local evacuation spot set up by her father. The flood happened early in the morning in Hatilung village in Upper Assam’s Lakhimpur district, catching many people off guard. The Lakhimpur district is highly susceptible to flooding, and the village in which the two girls live has seen the devastation left behind by floods. Pinki’s father Shishu Ram and brother Nipon has also set up tents in safe evacuation zones nearby, ready to offer shelter to those rescued by the girls. The girls’ quick-thinking and bravery has saved the lives of many people and the local government decided to honour them with bravery awards.

Real-Life Dangal: Volleyball Transformed the Gujarat Village & Produced World Champions

Sarakhdi village in Gujarat is one such place that stands testament to how sportswomen and their coaches can change the attitude of the village towards women’s participation in sports. Films like Mary Kom and Dangal have been known to highlight the issues concerning our athletes and sports people, when they choose to take up a sport that is not cricket. But, equally important is the issue of how a society undergoes a transformation when one of its members goes against the accepted norm and manages to achieve success. They’re no longer chastising her for the alleged transgression, but celebrating her success, since she has brought pride to the village.
Children are the asset of a nation. They are the future of a nation because administrator and leaders of future are among the children of today. The progress and development of a country depends upon the children. Children totally depend upon the parents and State due to their immaturity and vulnerability. It is duty on the part of each member of the society to protect the children.

India is a home of largest child population in the world with forty four crore children constituting 24% of the population of the country are adolescent. More than 1/3 of the country’s population is below 18 years of age. Children in our country, due to their number, become victim of exploitation and many of them live without childhood. They often become victim of neglect, deprivation, abuse, crimes etc. within the family and in the outer world also. Due to their tender age and vulnerability they become victim of sexual abuse.

According to Government reports 53% of all Indian children are victims of sexual abuse, while 80% of sexual abuse goes unreported. According to National Crime Records Bureau Report, 2016, following cases of sexual abuse were reported in the country during 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>10854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Procuration of minor girls</td>
<td>3087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Importation of girls from foreign country (below 18 years)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Buying of minors for prostitution</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Selling of minors for prostitution</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Prohibition of Child Marriage Act</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act</td>
<td>14,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Unnatural offence</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Meaning of Sexual Abuse against children

It is the physical and mental violation of a child coupled with sexual intent, usually by an older person who is in some position of trust or power with the child. It means that some sexual acts performed against minor by a parent, relative, guardian, teacher or anyone else. It includes all types of sexual offences viz. child rape, unnatural offences, forced prostitution, child marriage etc. Sexual abuse includes sexual exposure or contact by a person older than a child for the purpose of sexual stimulation or exploitation of the child. Child sex abuse means involvement of dependent, immature children and adolescents in the sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend and to which they are unable to give their informed consent or that violates the social taboos of family roles.

According to World Health Organisation, "Child sexual is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, for which child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent. It involves inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; use of children in pornographic performance and material etc.

Women’s World Summit Foundation, 2003 defines it as: “Girls and boys under the age of 18 are sexually abused when one or more persons engage them in any activity for the purpose of their sole sexual pleasure”.

Types of Sexual Offences

Sexual offences against children can be divided in various categories. Physical sexual abuse means touching, fondling etc. Verbal sexual abuse includes use of sexual language which is uncivilized and inappropriate for the age of child to generate sexual excitement, making lured comments, making obscene phone calls etc. Emotional sexual abuse is also a sort
of commission of sexual offence, which means use of a child by an adult or parent to fulfill inappropriate emotional needs or forcing a child to play the role of a spouse for perpetrator. Child sexual exploitation includes child rape, prostitution, pornography, unnatural offences, child marriage etc. All these are illegal sexual activities which are prohibited by the law.

**Causes of Child Sexual Abuse**

Child sexual abuse is not a problem of one country, it is a worldwide menace. The factors responsible for child sexual abuse vary depending upon economic, social, political, geographical conditions of a society. There are many causes which are responsible for it. Poverty is the main cause. Due to poverty, parents are not able to provide proper protection to their children and the criminals and pimps take benefit of it. Pimps lure the poor parents to send their children to metropolitan cities to financially support the families. These innocent children are sold for the flesh trade in big cities. Other reason is that now there is less social control in the present time. Due to impact of western culture moral and ethical values have declined. Now people do not prefer old traditions of high morals etc. and get involved in such mal practices.

Due to drug and substance addiction such crimes are being committed. The drug addiction and consumption of liquor triggers the rashness. Due to this even the fathers, grandfathers, uncles are committing rape of their own children. Now the children (girls and boys) are not safe in the four walls of their own houses.

There are certain socio religious practices of Indian society which are responsible for child sexual abuse e.g. Devadasi and Jogin system. These are the practices of prostitution in the name of religion and culture. In these practices innocent, young girls are dedicated to temples by the parents where they are sexually abused.

Sometimes lack of parents care also lead to this abuse. Unattended children are kidnapped by the criminals and later on they are sexually exploited and killed. Sometimes children living in slums are lured by perpetrators. Indian masses are illiterate, they are not aware about their rights and to follow legal procedure in the case of violation of their rights. There is no proper enforcement of the existing laws.

**Effects of sexual abuse on the victims**

When a child has to face sexual abuse, she/he becomes mentally disturb, as many times the persons responsible for such abuse are known to the victims. The victims can not disclose it to other family members easily. Such children have to go through physical and psychological trauma, which leaves many effects on such children. Such children show changes in behaviour, extreme mood swings, isolation, withdrawal, uncharacteristic anger, fearfulness, depressive symptoms, anxiety, low self esteem, substance abuse, loss of social competence excessive crying. They start feeling fear of certain places e.g. bathroom, dark corner of the house etc. Sometimes there are physical injuries, bruises, rashes, cuts, limping, pain, itching, bleeding, discharge, gynaecological disorders, summarization etc. Such children have nightmares, they have disturbed and less sleep. These victims also face depression.

Due to child marriage or rape, the girls become pregnant at the age of 10 or 12 years, which ends in misery and tragedy. Such girls are forced to be early mothers, sometimes such girls die or their offsprings suffer from various diseases.

**Legal Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse**

The children are the future hope of the nation. They are most vulnerable group in the society. Therefore, the children require special care and protection due to their tender age, physical and mental immaturity. It is the duty of State to protect the children from every type of abuse and malpractices. India, being a Welfare State has enacted many laws for the protection of children. Following laws have been enacted in India to protect children from sexual abuse:

(i) **Constitution of India**

Constitution of India is the supreme law of the land. There are number of provisions in the form of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy for the protection of children. Article 14 gives right to equality and equal protection of law to all the citizens. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth etc. Article 15 (3) give power to State to make special laws for women and children. Right to education is a fundamental right under Article 21-A. It imposes duty on the State to impart free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years. Article 23 prohibits human trafficking. It prohibits
sale and purchase of children like chattels. Article 24 prohibits children labour. It prohibits performance of any work that endangers their health and safety. It prohibits the working of children in houses, cinemas etc. Article 39 makes obligatory for State to direct its policy towards security that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner. Children are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

In M.C Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutional prohibition and abolition of the child labour and the employment of child below the age of 14 years in the industries. Taking note of the cause for failure to implement the constitutional mandate, the Court gave directions against the child exploitation.

**Indian Penal Code, 1860**

In the earlier days, the king used to protect its subjects and the subjects in return used to owe its allegiance and pay revenue. The king administered justice and there was no written law at that time. The written and codified law was introduced by the Britishers. Indian Penal Code was the first law with certain categories of offences and punishments for such offences and anti social behaviour.

There was no specific provision to deal with child sexual abuse, but there were general and common provisions. The provisions to protect the children against sexual abuse are:

**Section 366 A. Procuration of Minor Girls -** Whoever, by any means whatsoever, induces any minor girl under the age of eighteen years to go from any place or to do any act with intent that such girl may be, or knowing that it is likely that she will be, forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**Section 366 B. Importation of Girls from Foreign Country-** Whoever imports into India from any country outside India (or from the state of Jammu and Kashmir) any girl under the age of twenty-one years with intent that she may be, or knowing it to be likely that she will be, forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.

Sections 366 A and 366B were inserted in the Code in the year 1923 in pursuance of International Convention for Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, 1910. These provisions of the Code intend to punish the import and export of girls for the purpose of prostitution. These sections are attracted when a person induces a girl, if age of the girl is less than 18 years and 21 years under sections 366A and 366B respectively, to go to any place or imports a girl with intention or knowledge that such girls may be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person. The term illicit intercourse here means sexual intercourse between man and woman who are not husband and wife.

**Section 370A. Exploitation of a Trafficked person** - (1) Whoever, knowingly or having reason to believe that a minor has been trafficked, engages such minor for sexual exploitation in any manner, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years, but which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

(2) Whoever, knowingly by or having reason to believe that a person has been trafficked, engages such person for sexual exploitation in any manner, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years, but which may extend to five year, and shall also be liable to fine.

**Section 372. Selling Minor for the purpose of Prostitution etc.-** Whoever sells, lets to hire, or otherwise disposes of any person under the age of eighteen years with intent that such person shall at any age be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose, or knowing it to be likely that such person will at any age be employed or used for any such purpose, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall be liable to fine.

Explanation I. - When a female under the age of eighteen years is sold, let for hire, or otherwise disposed of to a prostitute or to any person who keeps or manages a brothel, the person so disposing of such female shall, until the contrary is proved, be presumed to have disposed of her with the intent that she shall be used for the purpose of prostitution.

Explanation II. - For the purposes of this section "illicit intercourse" means sexual intercourse between persons not united by marriage or by any union or tie which, though not amounting to a marriage, is recognised by the personal law or
custom of the community to which they belong or, where they belong to different communities, of both such communities, as constituting between them a quasi-marital relation.

Section 373. Buying Minor for purposes of Prostitution, etc.- Whoever buys, hires or otherwise obtains possession of any person under the age of eighteen years with intent that such person shall at any age be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose, or knowing it to be likely that such person will at any age be employed or used for any purpose, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanation I Any prostitute or any person keeping or managing a brothel, who buys, hires or otherwise obtains possession of a female under the age of eighteen years shall, until the contrary is proved, be presumed to have obtained possession of such female with the intent that she shall be used for the purpose of prostitution.

Explanation II “Illicit intercourse” has the same meaning as in section 372.

In Manjappa v. State of Karnataka, the victim of 13 years was kidnapped by appellants and taken to Mumbai with an intention to force her to have illicit intercourse. She was sold for Rupees 5000 for the purpose of prostitution and immoral purposes. The accused were charged under sections 366A, 372, 373 and 34 IPC. Accused engaged the minor victim daily for prostitution against her wish. Apex Court held that victim was below 18 years on the date of occurrence, sentence of 7 years with Rupees 50,000 fine awarded by High Court is reasonable and acceptable.

In Mohd. Ali v. State of U.P, the Apex Court held that the testimony of minor victim of procuration should be accepted without any corroboration with material particulars. Court observed that in the case of offence under section 366A true it is, the grammar of law permits that the testimony of prosecutrix can be accepted without material particulars, for she has to be placed on a higher pedestal than an injured witness.

Section 372 and 373 punish the trade of selling and buying of minors for the purpose of immoral activity of prostitution. Section 372 provides that if anyone has sold, let or hire a person under the age of 18 years with intent or knowledge, that person can be used for the purpose of prostitution. Such victim may be female or male. The section deals with the possession of minor and object of possession i.e. prostitution. It does not specify the nature, duration or intensity of possession. Possession here means control over the activities of the minor. Section 373 deals with the buyers of minors including keepers of brothels, pimps etc. who earn profit from prostitution of girls. The Section 372 and 373 apply to males and females under the age of 18 years. These sections punish the trade of selling and buying minors for the purpose of prostitution. These are in consonance with Article 23 of the Constitution, which prohibit human trafficking.

Section 375 defines rape and 376 deals with punishment for rape. Earlier cases of child rape and exploitation were covered under IPC, but after the enforcement of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, sexual assault, sexual harassment, pornography etc. are covered under it.

In Bachpan Bachao Andolan v. Union of India, a petition was filed in public interest in the wake of serious violations and abuses of children working in circuses. They had no access to their families; they live under extreme in human conditions. They were being sexually abused. It was stated in petition that most of the children were trafficked from poverty-stricken areas of Nepal. The outside world had no meaning for them. In 2004, petitioner got complaints from Nepalese parents that their children were trapped in circuses for more than 10 years and had never allowed to meet them. Girls from other countries were being imported and they were compelled to lead a life where they were victims of emotional, physical and sexual exploitation. Apex Court took serious note of it and directed the authorities to conduct simultaneous raids in all circuses to liberate the children and check the violation of their fundamental rights. Rescued victims were directed to be kept in the Protection Homes.

In The Public at Large v. State of Maharashtra and Others, another petition arose due to suo motto notice taken by the Court of a newspaper article which indicated that minor girls were illegally confined and forced to work as sex workers. The respondents were directed by the court to show cause as to why action had not been taken under Sections 336 and 366 of the Indian Penal Code, and Sections 5 and 6 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. The Court passed directions as under:
To frame a proper scheme so that the women including minors who are procured for sexual slavery are released from the confinement of their procurers;

For implementing this scheme, a proper cell, also involving social workers, be created so that by regular checking, minors and others can be released and rehabilitated in the society; and

Considering the spread of the dreaded disease of AIDS, the State of Maharashtra shall frame a proper scheme with the active assistance of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai for carrying out HIV tests for the willing sex workers so that the disease may not spread.

Based on the directions passed by the Court, raids were carried out and 473 minor girls and child sex workers were rescued by the police and kept in the custody of juvenile homes, etc.

The Court constituted a committee for the rehabilitation of the rescued girls. The Court gave the following directions:

- The respondents, State government, to see that strict vigilance is maintained in the areas where sex workers normally operate and to rescue the child sex workers. Further, adequate steps should be taken to see that those who indulge in trafficking of women should be suitably punished. For this purpose, appropriate directions should be issued to the investigating agencies to take immediate steps.

Court observed that it is high time that the state governments to take serious steps to prevent the trafficking in women, i.e. buying and selling of young girls. These girls may be victims of kidnapping, they may be victims of various deprivations, and they may be victims of circumstances beyond their control. For this purpose, regular raids should be carried out in the area where sex workers operate.

- The State has to set up homes for rehabilitation of rescued sex workers including children to enable these rescued sex workers to acquire alternative skills in order to enable them to have alternative source of employment. It is the duty of the State to take preventive measures to eradicate child sexual abuse. One should not forget that these rescued girls are also fellow human beings who require some support.

- The rescued girls should not be subjected to HIV test. If HIV tests have already been carried out on some of the girls, their identity should not be disclosed and they should not be informed of the result of the test.

- All the rescued girls must be subjected to medical examination for finding out their age and given treatment if they are suffering from any other diseases.

- Rehabilitation of these girls is possible if they are segregated in groups of ten or fifteen and thereafter counselling work is done.

- Until the girls are sent back to their respective States, the State government will direct adequate number of probation officers to carry out the counseling job. The management in charge will permit the police to record statements of the girls. The police should trace the belongings of the girls and restore the same to them.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 - This is a special law which provides protection to all the children under the age of 18 years against sexual abuse. This is a specific Act passed for the protection of children against sexual offences. It is a remarkable step of Indian Parliament to tackle this issue.

The offences of penetrative sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography have been clearly defined. The Act provides for stringent punishments for such offences and punishment varies from simple to rigorous imprisonment. Sexual assault means illegal sexual contact that usually involves force upon a person without consent or it is inflicted upon a person who is not capable to give consent. This Act states that mere penetration of male organs is sufficient to constitute the offence of rape. Penetrative sexual assault includes all forms to sexual activities between the victim child and the penetrator or such offence is punishable with an imprisonment of seven years which may extend to life and fine.

The Act further states that the act of penetrative sexual assault deems to be aggravated when the perpetrator is in a position of trust or confidence with the victim child. Non consensual sexual assault (not-penetrative) is also punishable. It becomes aggravated when such offence is committed against a child who is mentally and physically disabled by a person in a position of trust like teacher, family member, police officer, doctor etc. If a child is used for the purpose of pornographic purposes is also punishable.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 casts a duty on the media to
maintain the dignity of victim child and puts a restriction on the publication of name, address, family details, photographs etc.

In ABC v. Commissioner of Police, the Delhi High Court directed to pay compensation of Rs.6,00,000 to the petitioner’s daughter and Rs.25,000 as litigation costs to the petitioner. The cause of action giving rise to petition relates to the alleged disclosure of First Information Report of petitioner’s daughter alleging a case of sexual abuse against the Hindustan Time and news channel Aaj Tak. Court held that keeping in view the gravity and nature of allegation and social object of preventing societal victimization and embarrassment of the victim, it is duty of media not to disclose the name or identify of victim of sexual abuse.

In Surendra Koli v. State of U.P., the Supreme Court affirmed death sentence of the accused Surendra Koli. The facts of this case were gruesome and horrifying. In this case number of female children was sexually exploited, killed, chopped and eaten by the accused after cooking them. He used to lure the girls from poor families to get them inside the house, where he was working as domestic help. He used to rape them and kill by strangulating them. 15 skills, some body parts, clothes, slippers and other article were recovered by C.B.I. He used to chop the body and cook, human body parts and eat them. The Court declared these killings barbaric and horrifying.

In 2015 Allahabad High Court Bench Commuted the death sentence of Surendra Koli to life imprisonment due to inordinate delay in deciding his mercy petition.

In Child line India Foundation and others v. Allen John Waters and others, the Apex Court took strict notice of sexual abuse of children living in the Anchorage Shelters in Maharashtra. The accused were running shelter home for street children. Accused used to sexually abuse and assault the boys who were wandering in the streets and earning by doing any sort of work for maintaining themselves. Court passed directions for the protection of boys in shelter home and observed that child sexual abuse in institutions is widespread but prosecution are rare and convictions are rarer still. The victims are under the control of pedophiles, they are vulnerable and embarrassed by what has happened to them; they are scared that if they complain they will lose their shelter and food which they need to survive. Supreme Court restored conviction of all the accused in this case.

Act also provides for appointment of special Public Prosecutor and establishment of Special Courts for the purpose of speedy trial.

Recently, Government of India announced certain measures to curb the menace of online child sexual abuse material. Under this order, the Internet Service Providers shall be required to adopt and implement the Internet Watch Foundation Resources by July 31, 2017. This Foundation maintains a dynamic global list of websites which contain child sexual abuse material. In this way online child abuse can be controlled.

In Re: Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu v. Union of India writ petition was taken on the basis of an article published in Hindi Newspaper “Hindustan” titled “Orphanage or Place for Child Abuse. It was mentioned in the article that orphanages in Tamil Nadu as well as government institutions were reportedly involved in systematic sexual abuse of children. A sting operation indicated that sexual services of children were being provided to foreigners and Indian tourists and rates were fixed on phone or in a meeting at the orphanage. Supreme Court issued directions to register all child care institutions by December 31, 2017. Following directions have been issued by the Supreme Court of India:

- Union Government, State Government and UTs must concentrate on rehabilitation and social re-integration of children in need of care and protection.
- Regular inspection of child care institutions must be conducted.
- Individual child care plan must be prepared by the institutions.
- There must be regular social audit of child care institutions to maintain transparency and accountability.

Conclusion:

Children often become victim of sexual abuse and exploitation within the family and outside the home. Child sexual abuse is clear violation of basic
right of a child and is the result of familial, social, economic, political and psychological factors. All kinds of sexual abuse i.e. child rape, child prostitution, pornography, child marriage etc. result into emotional, physical and psychological trauma for the victims of tender age. The number of such offences is increasing day by day. Not only girls but also young boys are being increasingly subjected to forced sexual assault and exploitation. The child care institutions which are meant for the protection of the children in need exploit them. Apna Ghar incident in Haryana and case of Orphanages in Tamil Nadu have proved this fact. Following are the suggestions to curb sexual abuse against children:

- Social customs like devasi, jognin etc. should be stopped immediately. These practices are derogatory to the dignity of women.
- All State Governments and Union Territories should make efforts to provide proper rehabilitative homes managed by well trained staff, social workers, doctors and psychiatrists.
- There should be social audit of all the child care institutions from time to time.
- Victims of trafficking and prostitution need various kinds of assistance e.g. rehabilitation, education, health care, psychological support etc. Special arrangements should be made by the professionally trained staff.
- Authorities should conduct regular raids on the child care institutions, orphanages etc. to check any type of abuse against the children.
- There should be separate shelter homes for the victims of sexual abuse.
- Children are not able to know that they are being sexually abused. Schools can play positive role by providing information about behavioural pattern of sexual offenders.
- Children must be educated by parents and school to raise their voice whenever there is any type of violation of their rights.
- Proper physical training e.g. judo, Karate should be given to the children to protect themselves at the time of crisis.
- Every case of child sexual abuse should fall in the category of rarest of rare case and no leniency should be shown to the culprits.
- In case, father, grandfather or other relatives are involved in such cases, the child victim should be removed from such place. There should be separate homes for such victims.
- There should be awareness campaign for the masses to teach them that children are valuable part of the society and they have to go through trauma after such abuse.
- All the existing laws and directions given by Apex Court must be implemented property.
- Monetary compensation should be given to the victims of sexual abuse.

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National Women Empowerment Policy – 2001 envisages realizing equal access of education, health and employment opportunities for women. It also commits to enjoyment of all human rights for women free from every form of discrimination and violence. There are several laws in force for protection of women from atrocities. Government is also implementing many promotional programmes to realise social and economic empowerment of women. But crime against women is increasing belying all these stringent laws, legal regulations and empowerment initiatives. The crime against women in the form of domestic violence, molestation, rape and kidnapping is a common phenomenon in all parts of the country irrespective of any regional and linguistic considerations. The diminishing fear of police and law among offenders is a matter of greater concern. Several rape cases were reported in recent past to have taken place out of revenge and social conflicts. Police and law enforcement agencies alone cannot be held responsible for preventing crime against women as women are not safe even with her own family and relatives. Society as a whole needs to take responsibility to prevent heinous crimes against women.

Preface

Women contribute for 49 percent of total population of India. Any nation cannot develop to its maximum abilities denying optimum utilisation and equal participation of women. India is a country with centuries old deep rooted gender discrimination. Gender based discrimination in our society influences every domain of women’s life. The tragedy with women begins before their birth. They are considered unwanted and killed before they breathe in this world. The plight continues at every stage of her life in the form of discrimination in nutrition, health, education, employment, participation and decision making. The unequal treatment does not stop here; it further culminates into torture, humiliation, suppression, physical abuse, rape, kidnapping etc making life of women miserable.

National Women Empowerment Policy – 2001 envisages realizing equal access of education, health and employment opportunities for women. It also commits to enjoyment of all human rights for women free from every form of discrimination and violence. There are several laws in force for protection of women from atrocities. Government is also implementing many promotional programmes to realise social and economic empowerment of women. Despite all these initiatives, crime against women is continuously increasing belying all efforts being made in this direction. Recent cases like Nirbhaya rape in Delhi and Badaun rape in Uttar Pradesh have shaken the soul of the nation. Crime against women particularly rape has become a political and blame game issue in the country rather taking a holistic and united view. The present paper is an attempt to understand and analyse the crime against women including pattern, trend and regional variations using last 5 years data of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI.

Crime Pattern against Women

Atrocity, harassment and insult of women have become a regular phenomena in our society. In the year 2013, total 309546 cases of crimes against women were registered. Actual number of cases may be much more than this figure. Out of total reported cases, highest proportion of 38.4 percent cases contributes to Domestic Violence followed by Molestation (22.9 percent), Kidnapping (16.8 percent), Rape (10.9 percent) and several other crimes. This shows that highest share of crime against women are committed by her own family and relatives in the form of domestic violence. Women are unsafe in the family as well as outside the family. As per the reported data by NCRB-2013, cruelty by husband & relatives (Domestic Violence), assault to outrage modesty (molestation), kidnapping and rape are major crimes contributing about 90 percent of total crimes committed against women in our country.

As estimated from NCRB-2013 data, every hour 14 women suffers domestic violence. Similarly 8 women are molested, 6 women are kidnapped and 4 women are raped every hour in our country.
Table-1 presents the pattern of reported crimes against women in India in the year 2013.

### Table 1- Crime Pattern against Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No</th>
<th>Type of Crime against Women</th>
<th>No of Cases</th>
<th>Percent Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Cruelty by Husband and Relatives</td>
<td>118866</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assault to outrage modesty</td>
<td>70739</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>51881</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>33707</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Insult to Modesty</td>
<td>12589</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dowry Prohibition</td>
<td>10709</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Dowry Death</td>
<td>8083</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Immoral Trafficking</td>
<td>2579</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Indecent Representation</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importation of Girls</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>309546</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCRB-2013

### Increase in Crime against Women

As per NCRB Annual Statistics, crime against women is on continuous rise year by year. On comparing reported crimes against women for the year 2012 and 2013, it was shocking to note that number of crimes in year 2013 has increased by 26.7 percent in comparison to year 2012. In absolute numbers, it increased from 244270 to 309546 in 2013 with an increase of 65276 cases in one year. Analyzing the major crimes against women, it was found that assault on women modesty (molestation) registered an increase of 56 percent followed by kidnapping & abduction (35.6 percent), rape (35.2 percent) and cruelty by husband and relatives (10.9 percent). This phenomenal increase in crime against women may be partially attributed to improved reporting but the substantial increase in crimes cannot be undermined and ignored on this pretext. Graph-1 presents the percent increase in absolute number of crimes against women in year 2013 in comparison to year 2012.

### Trend of Crime Rate against Women

Crime rate depicts the number of crime against women per lakh of midyear female population. It is quite obvious from table-2 that different crimes against women are not increasing only in absolute number in accordance with increase in female population but rate of crime has witnessed continuous increase as stated in last 5 years data of NCRB. The rate for rape has gone up from 1.8 in year 2009 to 5.7 in year 2013. The highest spurt in crime rate has been reported for domestic violence which has increased from 7.7 in 2009 to 20.1 in 2013. Similarly all crimes against women put together have increased 3 times i.e from a level of 17.4 in 2009 to 52.2 in 2013.

### Table 2- Trend of Crime Rate Against Women – 2009-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No</th>
<th>Crime Against Women</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rape (Sec.376 IPC)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kidnapping &amp; Abduction</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assault on Women Modesty (Sec.354 IPC)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cruelty By Husband or his Relatives (Sec.498A IPC)</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other Crimes (Sec.498A IPC)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>ALL Crimes</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCRB-2009-13
As stated in the graph-2, trend in the crime rate against women has witnessed big spurt in 2011 onwards. Though partially it may be attributed to improved reporting but it is also attributed to increase in crime cases deriving out of depleting social and moral values and reduced fear of police and law enforcement agencies.

**Regional Variation in Crime against Women**

Recently, Uttar Pradesh has been in limelight for sequential rape and murder cases in different parts of the state. There is general opinion that crime against women is higher in Hindi heartland consisting Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. But NCRB data depicts lower crime rate against women in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Since population of these Hindi States are more, number of crimes is also more in comparison to smaller states. Rate of crime which shows number of crime cases per lakh of female population represents more authentic interstate comparison of crimes.

**Table 4- Regional Variation in Crime against Women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Rate (Total)</th>
<th>Crime Rate (Rape)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India (52.24)</td>
<td>India (5.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland (6.10), Tamil Nadu (21.93), Manipur (22.84)</td>
<td>&lt;25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya (25.75), Bihar (28.00), Sikkim (31.53), Uttar Pradesh (32.93), Uttarakhand (34.18), Mizoram (35.40), Punjab (38.16), Karnataka (40.11), Jharkhand (41.26), Gujarat (42.63), Himachal Pradesh (43.61), Maharashtra (44.90), Arunachal Pradesh (47.68), Goa (49.49)</td>
<td>25-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh (56.28), Jammu &amp; Kashmir (60.99), Madhya Pradesh (61.64), Kerala (62.43), West Bengal (67.14), Odisha (68.90)</td>
<td>50-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana (75.04), Andhra Pradesh (76.25), Rajasthan (83.13), Tripura (89.75)</td>
<td>75-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Assam (113.93), Delhi (146.79) | >100

Source: NCRB-2013

NCRB-2013 data shows that there is no definite crime pattern on the basis of geography or linguistics. Putting all crime together, it has been found that overall crime rate against women is highest in Delhi (146.79) followed by Assam (113.93), Tripura (89.75), Rajasthan (83.13) and Andhra Pradesh (76.25). On the other hand lowest rate of crime against women has been registered in Nagaland (6.10) followed by Tamil Nadu (21.93), Manipur (22.84), Meghalaya (25.75) and Bihar (28.0). In north India, overall crime rate is lower in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and higher rates were observed in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Similarly, rate for rape cases in ratio to female population has been found highest in Delhi (18.63) followed by Mizoram (17.8), Sikkim (14.58), Tripura (12.84), Assam (12.65), Arunachal Pradesh (12.42) and Madhya Pradesh (12.11). On the other hand it has been found lowest in Bihar (2.32) followed by Gujarat (2.54), Tamil Nadu (2.71), Nagaland (2.82)
and Uttar Pradesh (3.09). It is very surprising to note that rate of rape cases is very high in majority of North-East States.

On the basis of above analysis it can be concluded that crime against women is invariably present in every part of the country and do not follow any geographical or linguistic pattern. In Hindi States Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have witnessed higher crime rates where as in Southern States Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have experienced higher crime rates against women. Similarly in North-East, Assam and Tripura leads the crime list. In other developed states, Haryana has experienced higher rate of crime rate against women. For the country as a whole, the overall crime rate against women is about 52.24 and is 5.69 for rape cases per lakh of female population.

**Rape Cases against Girls/Women: More Facts**

As per NCRB-2013, total 33764 rape cases were reported in year 2013 in the country. Out of total rape cases, about 40 percent rape cases were committed against girl child below the age of 18 years. POCSO Act 2012 enacted for the protection of children against sexual offence needs to be effectively implemented to prevent large number of rapes being committed against children in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No. of Victims</th>
<th>Percent to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Upto 10 Years</td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10-14 Years</td>
<td>2843</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14-18 Years</td>
<td>8877</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18-30 Years</td>
<td>15556</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30-50 Years</td>
<td>4648</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&gt; 50 Years</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33764</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : NCRB-2013

Offender’s relation and proximity to rape victims shows that in majority (94.4 percent) of rape cases, offenders are known to victims. About 8.5 percent of rapes were committed by family & relatives, 32 percent by neighbours and 53.9 percent by other known persons. Only 5.6 percent of offenders were found to be unknown to the victim of rape.

**Conclusion**

The crime against women in the form of domestic violence, molestation, rape and kidnapping is a common phenomenon in all parts of the country irrespective of any regional and linguistic considerations. There are areas in every region of the country having higher rates of crimes against women which also encompasses the areas with lower crime rates. The root cause for crime against women is feudalistic mindset of our society. Male dominates females in every sphere of life. Women are visualized as an object of pleasure, recreation and reproduction. Women empowerment policy has not produced desired results in social and economic empowerment of women in the country.

Though government has enacted several laws like Prevention of Domestic Violence Act–2005, Protection of Children against Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act–2012 Amendment in Article 376 (Rape) in 2013 making it more stringent, and Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at work place Act-2013 to protect women/girls from atrocities and crimes. But crime against women is increasing unaffected from all these stringent laws and legal regulations. The diminishing fear of police and law among offenders is a matter of great concern. Several rape cases were reported in recent past to have taken place out of revenge and social conflicts. Fear of police and law enforcement agencies needs to be re-established to prevent crimes against women. Police and law enforcement agencies alone cannot be held responsible for preventing crime against women as women are not safe even with her own family and relatives. Society as a whole is responsible for heinous crimes against women. The depleting social, cultural and moral values are also responsible for increasing crimes against women. It is high time to work for strengthening these values with larger participation and ownership of civil society.

**Reference:**

Annual Statistics- 2009-13, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI

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PROBLEM FACED BY PUBLIC TOWARDS PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT

• DR.A.SUJATHA

Public Distribution Shop also known as Fair Price Shop (FPS), it is established by the Government of India, is a kind of shop in India which is used to distribute rations at a subsidized price to the poor. Both the central and the state governments have shared the responsibility of regulating the PDS. While the central government is responsible for procurement, storage, transportation, and bulk allocation of food grains, state governments hold the responsibility for distributing the same to the consumers through the established network of Fair Price Shops (FPSs). State governments are also responsible for allocation and identification of families below poverty line, issue of ration cards, supervision and monitoring the functioning of FPS.

Public Distribution System (PDS) is a poverty alleviation programme and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene and the like are supplied to the people under the PDS at reasonable prices. PDS is a boon to the people living Below the Poverty Line (BPL). PDS is the primary social welfare and anti-poverty programme of the Government of India. Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) has been initiated by the Government of India from the year 1992 in order to serve and provide essential commodities to the people living in remote, backward and hilly areas.

Virudhunagar was a part of Tirunelveli district before 1910, after which it became a part of Ramanathapuram district. After being grafted out as a separate district during 1985, and it has eight taluks which hold 696 FPS.

TABLE 1
Number of Fair Price Shops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Taluks</th>
<th>No. of Shops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rajapalayam</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sivakasi</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sattur</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Virudhunagar</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aruppukottai</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thiruchuli</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kariapatti</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Supply Officer, Virudhunagar

Statement of the Problem

The PDS is one of the most important elements in India. Public distribution is owned and controlled by government for the economic and social welfare of public at large. After independence, particularly after inception of 5 year plans, Public Distribution System has secured a prominent place in providing essential commodities like wheat, rice, sugar, edible oil, black gram and kerosene to consumer.

The present study focuses the problems related to the services offered by the PDS to the public in viruthunagar district. Non availability of stock is the major constraints faced by the respondents in the study area. They may also dissatisfy with the quality of the goods available in the shop so the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the Public Distribution system in viruthunagar district.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyse the Customer preference and Satisfaction of PDS.
2. To analyses the Problems Faced by the public towards Public Distribution System.
3. To offer suggestion based on the findings of the study

Methodology of the study

The required data for the present study is collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary Data has been collected with the help of Interview schedule method. The secondary data for the study has been collected from the various books, magazine, newspaper, journals, and specialized website, the collected data were tabulated and analysed in systematic manner.

Sample Design

In this study the researcher has used Multi-Stage Random Sampling method. Totally there are 127 FPS and 116140 card holders available in sivakasi Taluk. A total of 125 respondents have been selected for the current study.

Tools for Analysis

To analyse and interpret the collected data, the researcher has used the statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, Chi-square test, Ranking Method, Standard Deviation, GAP Analysis to analyse the attitude of public about Public Distribution System. Firstly the researcher evaluate the demographic variables of the sampled respondents namely, age, qualification, Number of member in the family, family income, types of Family Cards and so on.

Age-wise Classification of the Respondents

The researcher has made an attempt to identify the age of the respondents. Table 2 indicates the age of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above 40</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The Table 2 described that 39.20 per cent of the respondents belong to the age category of above 40 years, 32.80 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31 to 40 years and the remaining 28 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of below 30 years respectively. The study reveals that the majority of the card holder belongs to the category of above 40 years.

Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification is one of the vital factors in decision making. The education level of public influences the consumption decision. The education and qualification of the public is exhibited in Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Particulr</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Up to Secondary Level</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Level</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The Table 3 highlights that 40 per cent of the respondents are uneducated, 24 per cent of the respondent are qualified with their degree, 16.8 per cent of the respondents are qualified with Higher Secondary Level, 14.4 per cent of the respondents are under Secondary Level and the remaining 4.8 per cent of the respondent are diploma holders.

Number of Members in the Family

In order to know the size of the family, the researcher has made an attempt to examine the number of members in the family and the results are presented in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Particulr</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 3 Members</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 – 7 Members</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above 7 Members</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The Table 4 reveals that 56 percent of the respondents have 4-7 Members in their family, 37.60 per cent of the respondents have below 3 Members in their family and the remaining 6.40
percent of the respondents have above 7 Members in their family.

**Family Income of the Respondents**

Income is a key element of determining the standard of living. The following table 5 shows the income level of the respondents.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 15000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15001-30000</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above 30000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 exhibits that out of 125 respondents, 63 (51.02 per cent) of the respondents family income is Rs 15001 to 30000, 33(26.04 per cent) of the respondents family income is below Rs 15000 and the remaining 28 (22.04 per cent) of the respondents family income is above Rs 30000 per month.

**Type of Family Card of the Respondents**

Government offers various types of family cards and also provide particular goods for a specific card. The Table 6 shows the type of card used by the respondents.

**TABLE 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage to Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AAY-1 (Blue colour)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Normal (Blue colour)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sugar (White colour)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kerosene (Green colour)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 6 described that 52.80 per cent of the respondents are using kerosene card (Green colour), 25.60 per cent of the respondents are using sugar card (White colour), 16 per cent of the respondents are using Blue colour card (AAY-1) and the remaining 5.60 per cent of the respondents are using Normal card (Blue colour).

**Preference Regarding Utilization of PDS Commodities**

T test is used to find out the preference regarding utilization of PDS commodities. Test value was fixed as 2.5 based on the average mean of a score maximum of 5 for a variable. The table 7 reveals the preference regarding Utilization of PDS Commodities.

**TABLE 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Test Value = 2.5</th>
<th>95 % Confidence Interval of the Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2.704</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>2.544</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>0.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene</td>
<td>3.184</td>
<td>1.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible Oil</td>
<td>2.232</td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Gram</td>
<td>4.192</td>
<td>1.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Powder</td>
<td>4.216</td>
<td>0.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Gram</td>
<td>2.696</td>
<td>1.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed Data 5% level of significance

Table 7 reveals that the mean score of the variable ‘rice’ is 2.704 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 3.296 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 3.02 (lower limit) to 3.58 (upper limit). The result of the study proves that most of the respondents prefer rice consumption of Public Distribution System. In Tamil Nadu most of the people are using rice.

The mean score of the variable ‘wheat’ is 2.544
which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 3.456 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 3.21 (lower limit) to 3.70 (upper limit). Wheat is a healthy food for every human being. The result of the study shows that the majority of the respondents prefer wheat consumption of Public Distribution System goods.

The mean score of the variable ‘sugar’ is 1.600 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 4.400 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 4.19 (lower limit) to 4.61 (upper limit). Sugar is one of the necessary ingredients in our food. The analysis reveals that most of the respondents prefer to consume sugar in Public Distribution System.

The mean score of the variable ‘kerosene’ is 3.184 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 2.816 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 2.52 (lower limit) to 3.11 (upper limit). Kerosene is the basic need for cooking. In modern days Below Poverty Line people are using only kerosene. The results of the study show that majority of the respondents prefer kerosene consumption of Public Distribution System.

The mean score of the variable ‘edible oil’ is 2.232 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 3.768 (Mean difference) from the average level. This mean difference lies between the lower limit 3.53 and the upper limit 4.01 with 95% confident interval of the difference. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 3.56 (lower limit) to 4.01 (upper limit). The study reveals that most of the respondents are preferring edible oil consumption of Public Distribution System.

The mean score of the variable ‘Black Gram’ is 4.192 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 1.808 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 1.58 (lower limit) to 2.04 (upper limit). The mean score of the variable ‘Tea Powder’ is 4.216 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 1.774 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 1.55 (lower limit) to 2.00 (upper limit).

The mean score of the variable ‘Red Gram’ is 2.696 which is significantly higher than the average level (Mean=2.5). It differs by 3.304 (Mean difference) from the average level. At 95% confident interval of the difference the mean lies between 3.04 (lower limit) to 3.56 (upper limit). Red Gram is the one of the healthy food items for children and aged people. This study reveals that majority of the respondents prefer Red Gram consumption of Public Distribution System.

### Table 8: Satisfaction Level of Purchasing Commodities by the Public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Expected Mean Score</th>
<th>Experienced Mean Score</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Service GAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of supply</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.857</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of commodities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsion to purchase further products</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.188</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase standard of living</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.188</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed Data

A service gap of more than 2.5 is considered as a highly critical area to be improved further. A service gap of less than 1.5 is treated as less significant. It is identified that the under mentioned products need further improvement. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the price of the goods in Public Distribution System.

### Problems faced by Public toward public Distribution System

The opinions of respondents about their problems are enhanced through five statements by using standard deviation method and ranking them in ascending orders. Every statement carries the opinion to Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, DisAgree, and Strongly Disagree with 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively. The Table 9 reveals the results of problems in Public Distribution System in the study area.
TABLE 9
Problems in Public Distribution System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Delay in Distribution</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>95.24</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shortage of stock</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>96.26</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hide the Material</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>111.47</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improper response</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>229.11</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improper timing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>97.48</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed Data

The above Table 9 exhibits the problems faced by the respondents in Public Distribution System. The researcher has framed five statements (calculate with mean) to test the level of problems faced by the respondents. Among five statements, delay in distribution holds the First place. Hiding the Material is placed in second position, improper response is placed in third position, Shortage of stock is placed in forth position and improper timing placed in fifth position.

Findings of the study

The finding of the study has summarized below:

- It is inferred that Maximum 39.20 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of above 40 years, almost 40 per cent of the respondents are uneducated.
- Majority (56 %) of the respondents have 4-7 members in their family.
- Maximum 51.20 per cent of the respondents have income from Rs 5001 to 15000.
- More than 52.80 per cent of the respondents using Green colour – Kerosene card.
- Garret ranking method is to identify the most preferable attributes by the respondents. The PDS customer influenced by eight attributes. Among these eight attributes sugar, rice, red gram are placed in first, second and third rank.
- The result of the analysis indicates that the Price of the commodities reveals fewer GAP, so the public are satisfied with the price and Availability of commodities has more GAP, so the public are dissatisfied with availability of commodity.

Suggestion of the study

The following suggestions are offered to improve PDS in Sivakasi Taluk.

- The government may ensure proper transportation and a storage facility to the Fair Price Shops to avoid delay in supply
- Fair Price Shop maintains enough stock of wheat, black gram, tea powder and rice items only. There is non-availability of other essential products (kerosene, sugar) for all time. Hence researcher suggested that the FPS dealers may make availability of all commodities at all time.
- The quality of the rice is not good. As per the analysis the respondents do not prefer rice, so the government may provide better quality of rice.
- Compare to edible oil Gingely oil is good for health so the researcher suggested that the government may offer Gingely oil instead of edible oil.

Conclusion

The study enumerates the attitude of public towards Public distribution System. It is an only system which exterminate out the poverty in the society. The central government takes up the responsibility of procuring and supplying essential commodities at subsidized prices. Especially to the below average people they are providing rations at subsidized cost. The opinion of the public is the Public Distribution System can improve further by providing enhanced quality of products and availability of products in all time.

Associate professor in commerce, cpa college
bodinayakanur.
Empowerment of Non-Form Women workers Throgh Self Help Groups

Dr. T. Ramachandran, K. Maniraju

Self Help Groups is a prospective means to bring in a meaningful reformation in the society with the main objective of eradication of poverty, creation of income generating activities and empowerment of women in particular rural non-form women workers towards the position of members of Self Help Groups after becoming members of SHGs has improved, as the members experience a positive impact on the socio-economic aspect of their life. Woman is a companion of man with equal mental capacities. She is the pivot of the family around the whole activities of man and children revolve. Empowerment is usually interpreted as economic empowerment where income earning opportunities are credited for women either through direct intervention or through the operation of market forces. The concept of self-empowerment is defined as a process in which women are enabled to become autonomous agents of their own development, setting their own life. Economic empowerment implies a better quality of mutual life through sustainable livelihood owned and managed by women. SHGs in social change imply not only the change of outer form of a community or a society but also the social institutions as well as ideas of the people living in that society. In other words, it applies to the changes in the material aspects of life as well as in the ideas, values and attitudes of the people. The broad objective of the study is to analyse the operating system of SHGs for mobilization of saving, delivery of credit to the needy, management of group funds, repayment of loans, building up of leadership, establishing linkage with banks and to examine the social benefits derived by the members.

Importance of the Study

This study seeks to explore the impact of Self Help Groups on the empowerment of non-form women workers in the context of the great importance being given to the group approach while conceptualizing any programme for rural women. Access to credit can help in expansion of material base of non-form women by enabling them to start and expand small businesses, often accompanied by market access, the women also experience ‘Power with in feelings of freedom, strength, self identity and increase in the levels of confidence and self-esteem’. This study is an attempt to measure the impact of micro financial services on non-form women empowerment. Self employment and self sufficiency are needed for the growth of non-form women. Micro finance project provides a better avenue for the development of non-form women workers. It helps them to engage in productive venture by utilizing local resources and skills which consequently lead them to financial upliftment. Improved socio economic position of women workers is necessary for healthy society and home.

Problem of the Study

Now a days, SHGs provide economic independence and credit facilities to women. It is a critical step towards the empowerment of women especially in rural areas. These groups occupy a great role in the empowerment of rural women workers. Various questions like how could these groups make any positive impact on women? And if so, how did these groups achieve these positive impacts? What are the major community development initiatives taken by SHGS at the village level? etc… are raised for the study to find out impact of SHGS on women workers empowerment, and also the study attempts to know the degree of influence of micro finance projects in non-form women workers empowerment and to assess the level of improvement in their lives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of empowerment achieved through joining SHGs
2. To make analysis on the socio-economic conditions of non-form women workers after joining SHGs
3. To identify the various benefits derived after joining SHGs
4. To measure the level of satisfaction of respondents with regard to various aspects of SHGs.
Methodology of the Study

- **Population**
  The population of the present study consists of the non-form women workers beneficiaries of SHGs in rural areas of Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.

- **Sample Size**
  A sample of 100 non-form women workers in SHGs is taken for analysing women empowerment through micro finance projects.

- **Method of the Sampling**
  Convenient sampling is adopted for selecting the sample respondents.

- **Sources of data**
  Primary data were collected through well structured interview schedules directly collected from the non-form women workers.

- **Tools of data analysis**
  For the purpose of analysis, Percentage and Weighted Average Scores are used. A five point scale is used for measuring satisfaction.

**Data Analysis**

In this study analysis of empowerment of non-form women workers through SHGs is based on two dimensions: analysis of demographic factors and analysis of women empowerment.

**Table 1: Age wise classification of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 30 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60 years</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60 years</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Age wise classification of respondents reveals that 10 per cent of them belong to the age group of below 30 years, 28 per cent belongs to the age group of 31-40 years, 44 per cent belongs to the age group of 41-60 years, and remaining 18 per cent of beneficiaries are above 60 years. The majority of the respondents are in the age group of 40-60 years.

**Table 2: Educational qualification of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below SSLC</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSLC</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.G</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Educational qualification of respondents reveals that 33 per cent of them have qualification of below SSLC, 31 per cent of them have qualification of SSLC, 10 per cent of them are graduates and 2 per cent of them are post graduates and the remaining 6 per cent of beneficiaries are illiterate. It is found that majority of the respondents have the qualification of below SSLC.

**Table 3: Classification on the basis of occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaried employee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolie</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The analysis of the occupation of respondents reveals that most of the beneficiaries are unemployed persons or house wives 65 per cent, 19 per cent of the respondents are coolie, 10 per cent of the respondents are salaried employees and remaining 6 per cent of the respondents are self employed persons.

**Table 4: Classification on the basis of monthly income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income level</th>
<th>No. of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than Rs10000.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.10001-20000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.20001-30000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.30001-40000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40001</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 72 per cent of
respondents i.e more beneficiaries of micro finance, belong to the income class of less than Rs. 10000. 20 per cent of the respondents have monthly income of Rs.10001- Rs. 20000, 3 per cent of them earn Rs.20001- Rs.30000, no beneficiary earns income of Rs. 30,001 – Rs. 40,000 and remaining 5 per cent of the respondents have monthly income above Rs.40001.

Table 5: Classification on the basis of type of family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family size</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint family</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The survey reveals that majority of the beneficiaries live in nuclear family 91 per cent and 9 per cent of them belong to joint family.

Table 6: Decision makers in the family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision makers</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herself</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The analysis shows that 75 per cent of respondents take family decisions jointly with their husbands. 10 per cent of the respondents take decisions them self. In the family of 10 per cent of the respondents husbands take decisions and in the families of remaining 5 per cent of the respondents others take decisions.

Table 7: Number of years with SHGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No.of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 8 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The survey reveals that most of the beneficiaries have worked with SHG units for 3-4 years 63 per cent, 29 per cent respondents have worked with SHG for 7-8years, whereas only 2 per cent of the respondents worked in SHG for more than 8 years.

Table 8: Sources of micro finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro finance institutions</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of SHG</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Table 9 shows that four reasons are given to the respondents for ranking. The ranks are multiplied by proper weights to have proper analysis.

Table 9 : Ranking of reasons to take loan from SHGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>I Rank</th>
<th>II Rank</th>
<th>III Rank</th>
<th>IV Rank</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close location</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest rate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less requirements and procedures</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Table 10: Ranking of reasons to take loan from SHGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>I x 4</th>
<th>II x 3</th>
<th>III x 2</th>
<th>IV x 1</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close location</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest rate</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less requirements and procedures</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data
Table 10 shows the weighted ranking of reasons. The main reason for taking loan from SHG’s is interest rate factor. Less requirements and procedure is secondly preferred. Availability and close location are the factors preferred in third and fourth positions.

**Table 11: Utilization of loan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income generating activities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non income generating activities</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The majority of beneficiaries using finance for non income generating purpose 77 per cent. 16 per cent of the beneficiaries are using finance for both income generating purpose and non income generating purpose and only 7 per cent of the beneficiary are using money for income generating purposes.

**Table 12: Purpose of credit demanded and utilized**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic consumptions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of old debts</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting micro enterprises</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

It is observed from the table 12 majority of respondents are using micro finance for both domestic and investment purposes. 15 per cent of the respondents use it for health, 13 per cent of the respondents use it for agricultural purposes, 9 per cent of the respondents use the loan amount for starting micro enterprises and remaining 6 per cent of respondents use it for other purposes.

**Table 13: Empowerment achieved after availing micro finance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of empowerment</th>
<th>No. of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic empowerment</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social empowerment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political empowerment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

It is revealed from the analysis that majority of the respondents 80 per cent have achieved economic empowerment, 10 per cent of the respondents have achieved social empowerment, 2 per cent of the respondents have achieved political empowerment, and the remaining 8 per cent have achieved all types of empowerments.

**Table 14: Benefits derived after joining SHGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habit of savings</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic independence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social cohesion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset ownership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from debt</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional employment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

It is observed from the table 14 that, majority of the respondents 55 per cent have developed saving habit after joining SHGs, 8 per cent of the respondents have achieved economic independence, 5 per cent of the respondents have gained self confidence, 3 per cent of the respondents gained social cohesion and freedom from debt, 2 per cent of the respondents have achieved additional employment, 1 per cent of the respondents have achieved asset ownership and 23 per cent of the respondents have gained all of the above benefits.
### Table 15: Level of satisfaction on various factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of loan availed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan duration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and respect from the provider</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing to access credit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of interest</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information provided</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time taken to get loan sanctioned</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of suitable products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement of guarantee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance redressal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment policy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

Table 15 shows that with respect to amount of loan availed, 63 per cent of respondents are dissatisfied and 37 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. In the case of loan duration, 85 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied and only 13 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. In the case of recognition and respects from the provider, 60 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 25 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and only 15 per cent of the respondents dissatisfied. In the case of timing to access credit, 85 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied and only 9 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. In the case of rate of interest, 75 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and only 17 per cent of the respondents dissatisfied. In the case of information provided, 41 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 32 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and 27 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied. In the case of time taken to get loan sanctioned, 89 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied, 6 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and 5 per cent of the respondents are neutral. With respect to availability of suitable products, 75 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 13 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and 12 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied. In case of requirement of guarantee, 90 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 7 per cent of the respondents are satisfied and 3 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied. Regarding grievance redressal, 81 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 13 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied and 6 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. In case of terms and conditions, 52 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied and 48 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. In case of repayment policy, 56 per cent of the respondents are neutral, 26 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied and 18 per cent of the respondents are satisfied. Out of the 12 factors given for measuring the level of satisfaction, the respondents generally remain neutral with respect to 6 factors. The respondents are dissatisfied with respect to 5 factors. The only factor for which the respondents remain satisfied is the rate of interest.

**Major Findings**

- The major findings of the study are,
- Majority of respondents are in the age group of 40-60 years.
- 33 per cent of them have education below SSLC.
- 65 per cent of the beneficiaries are unemployed or housewives.
- In the case of income level, 72 per cent of them are earning a monthly income of less than Rs.10000.
• 91 per cent of the respondents live in nuclear family.
• The study reveals that major micro finance providers are banks 34%, and federation of SHGs 30 per cent.
• Regarding the reasons for taking loans from SHGs, first rank goes to low interest rate 50 per cent.
• The main reason for taking loan from SHG’s is low interest rate and simple procedure.
• The majority of beneficiaries are using finance for non income generating activities.
• The study reveals that majority of respondents are using micro finance for both domestic and investment purposes.
• It is revealed that 80 per cent of the respondents have achieved economic empowerment.
• 75 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with the rate of interest.
• From the study, it is clear that the important impact made by micro finance on respondents is “ability to save and access loan”, which gets maximum score (451).
• From the study, it is clear that the most important change occurred in the socio-economic status is poverty reduction, which gets maximum, score (408). The least change occurred is the awareness of social issues (325).
• All respondents agree that “micro finance is an effective tool for women empowerment”
• The survey reveals that 86% of respondents have improved their level of income after joining the SHGs.
• The study also reveals that, after joining the SHGs 90 per cent respondents’ attained illiteracy and basic health care.

**Conclusion**

The evidence of non-form women worker’s empowerment through Self-Help Groups provides a varied picture. SHGs have the potential to have a powerful impact on women’s empowerment. SHG interventions are recognized as an effective tool for poverty alleviation and improving socio-economic status of the rural women. If women Empowerment is to be pursued as a serious objective by SHG programmes in particular and the larger micro finance community in general, greater emphasis needs to be placed on training, education and creating awareness in order to achieve a higher and more lasting empowerment. The various Micro finance institutions provide Better Avenue for the development of women, especially rural women. Provision of micro finance helps to increase welfare activities and infrastructure building and they have served the cause of women empowerment and socio-economic betterment of the poor.

**References**


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Research Scholar in Economics, Alagappa University, Karaikudi – 630003 & Assistant Professor of Economics, Sethupathi Govt. Arts College, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu.
On a recent visit to my friend’s place in the hills for a short holiday, what gave me a refreshing break from my busy routine was Esha, my friend’s daughter.

Their house is a sprawling estate in the upper part of the expanding town. She was watching TV as she nibbled her dinner laid out on their bed on a plastic table cover when I stepped into the room.

A little self conscious at first, she flashed a bright big smile when I greeted her in my usual cheery note, “Hi Miss Esha, how are you?”

Between invitations to join them for dinner and my polite declining, she eyed me very keenly lifting her brown little head and bright blue eyes in my direction, which I could not ignore. I kept on asking little questions of interest to her.

“So Miss, your school has reopened?”

“Just today,” her father put in.

After dinner, Esha was told to go into the next room and finish her schoolwork, which she reluctantly did. We sipped Kashmiri tea and exchanged news and views.

It was after 10 in the night when I left for the Rest House, close to their house. Promising to spend more time with them the next day, I climbed the flight of 40 stairs or more to the small straight track of road leading to the main road.

The next day, Esha was in school and returned after two in the afternoon. In the meantime, I had a nice chat with my friend through rounds of tea and fresh fruit from their fruit farm around the house.

I do not know what attracted little Esha to me but maybe it was my keen interest in her and her interests.

Panting for breath, as she put down her very heavy school bag that she had been carrying like a rucksack on her little back, she excitedly came into the sunny living room, where I sat and in a breathless voice said, “So you see I’m home.”

“That’s good, I’ve been waiting for you,” I said giving her a gentle tap on her head.

“When did you come?”

“Oh quite some time back.”

“Did you listen to some music?”

“No, not much because we were talking. After lunch I’m going to listen to lots and lots of songs.”

“What songs?” she curiously asked as she changed her uniform.

As I listed a few popular numbers from recent Bollywood movies, she added a completely big list of them from movies unheard of.

“Any more?”

“Yeah, maybe! If I like them.”

“My Papa brings lots of cassettes but you’ll have to find your favourite ones as they are all mixed up,” she said in a concerned manner with gestures with both her hands.

“Never mind that, but first let’s have lunch, your mom’s waiting come on,” I said as I moved into their dining room.

The moment we finished lunch, she dragged me to the living room again and said, “Come on now, which song first?”

I named a number and immediately she scrambled through a pile stacked on their huge windowsill and picked up the right cassette.

While the music played, she rallied around with news about her school, her friends and class.

“You know Aunty, one of my friends borrowed my pen and broke the nib but I didn’t say anything. So my best friend Rini said, ‘aren’t you angry?’ I said, ‘why be angry, everyone can make a mistake, don’t you think so Aunty?’” she asked shaking her little wise head.

“What class are you in Esha?”

“Fourth standard, my Miss has asked us to write 10 to 14 lines about ‘myself,’ ‘my mother,’ ‘my father,’ ‘my grandfather.’ I have written some of them. You know Aunty, one girl in our class wrote, ‘I am a good girl.’ Is it sensible to praise oneself?
Will any sensible girl praise herself?” she asked in a wondering tone and added, “Funny girl!”

Laughing heartily I said, “Yes that's not quite proper, she could have written, ‘my mother says I am a good girl.’”

She became reflective.

I got up to take a stroll in their lawn overlooking the sitting room. All kinds of colourful flowers were in full bloom and grew in wild profusion. There was a wide variety of citrus fruit plants just a way down from there, laden with ripe fruit.

“Let’s sit here Esha,” I suggested sitting on the only stair of the big porch. Potted plants of all varieties, sizes and shapes, arranged neatly in cans and canisters, small and big of all colours and shapes stood neatly on both sides of the porch.

“Who planted all these Esha?”

“My grandfather. He loved them and took great care of them, when he was alive. Even when a plant refused to grow, he watered it and made great effort to make it grow.”

I smiled at her way of explaining to me her grandfather’s diligent efforts with action and imitation of her grandpa’s style of bending over the potted plant. The serious look on her face imitating her grandfather’s expression that she must have observed keenly, made me laugh.

“Now who waters them?”

“My mummy, she likes gardening.”

Noticing a very tiny black caterpillar crawling up to where we sat, I said, “Look at that Esha, what’s that?” I asked.

“It’s a very dangerous creature; it will cause itching if you touch it,” she said in a dramatic voice and tone and got up with electric speed to pick up a twig and moved the insect’s direction and course.

“Get my purse, Esha, I have some chewing gum for you,” I said suddenly remembering my chewing habit and the two packets of Wrigley chewing gum I had brought from Canada.

She ran in and came back with lightening speed holding my purse. As I hunted through its different sections, she watched me quietly. When I handed over the packets to her, she observed them closely before opening them and said in a soft, musing tone, “this chewing gum packet is different, where did you get them from?”

“My sister got them from Canada or America, I think” I said absent-mindedly.

“America!” she exclaimed and gleefully pulled out five sticks of chewing gum double wrapped in silver foil paper, with sheared trimming.

“This is lovely, I shall keep these silver papers in my notebook, but I’ll show them to mummy first,” and she flitted away with her two ponytails dancing on her shoulders.

She ran from one room to the other, calling out to her mother. She finally found her in the washroom instructing the house cleaner about some washing.

“Mummy look, what Aunty has given me.”

She came out running to where I stood closely examining the citrus fruit.

“Is it lemon Esha?”

“No not lemon, but it makes very good juice, want to try?” she asked.

“We can …,” I said, plucking two ripe ones.

“I’ll get it made,” she said taking them from my hand and running in again shouted an order, “Two glasses of juice for me and Aunty.”

My friend joined us after a while with two glasses of juice on a tray. Esha jumped and ran in to change the cassette and darted out again to sip and see if the juice was OK.

“Good?” she asked.

“Yes! It tastes different but it is good,” I said.

Her mother brought two garden chairs for us to sit in a sunny patch outside the huge French window with a spacious seat on which was spread a Tibetan rug. Close by, was a stereo amplifier. Esha jumped to take her seat on an elevated platform close to where we sat and dangled her feet with red slippers.

Her playful movements flipped the juice from her glass and she picked up the spoon to dip it into her glass and put it back into her mouth with spoonfuls of the juice, ignoring her mother’s gentle snubs.

She jumped up and down, running in and out, tiptoeing carefully on the uncultivated narrow paths between neat patches of vegetable saplings and shoots propping out from the earthy surface.

“Esha, be careful, you’ll spoil the vegetable saplings,” her mother warned.

“There’s nothing growing where I am walking Ma,” she tried to pacify her mother.
“Look carefully,” her mother, ordered.

Esha bent to examine the earth closely and exclaimed, “Yes! I can see them now.”

Suddenly she stood erect and asked in an excited tone, “Have you ever seen an ant parade Aunty?”

“Ant parade? What is that?” I asked, amused.

“Come I’ll show you,” she made me get up from my chair and led me to a citrus fruit tree where there was fallen fruit under it.

Pointing out to black ants moving in a straight row, she said, “See Aunty how they move. They never break the line. Even if you try to disturb them or break their line, they’ll run in again to join the line or their leader.”

I said, “Did you see them carrying a grain on their head?”

“Yes, yes!” she laughed gleefully, “like Hanuman carrying the mountain, they defend it with all their might and never let go of it, like a huge big army, it’s great fun to watch them,” she roared with laughter, as I walked back to my seat.

I got up to wash my face, at their garden tap, around which they had built a small parapet, after finishing my juice. The winter sun shone brightly and Esha followed me to the tap.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“Going to wash my face, my eyes need a splash of cold water, every now and then.”

“Why?”

“I don’t know I feel a burning sensation sometimes.”

Seeing me apply soap, which did not lather well, she said, “It’s not lathering because your hands are dirty, you must always wash your hands first,” she talked like an experienced person.

“Yes you are right but I wanted to have a quick wash for I find it difficult to sit on my haunches like this for long.”

“Sit like me leaving your legs in.”

“My feet will get wet Esha.”

“Then what, it is comfortable this way.”

As I patted my face dry with a small face towel, Esha reflectively said, “Now we are friends Aunty?”

“Why now Esha, I’ve known you ever since you were a baby.”

“Then I was small now I am big.”

“So you will remember now?”

“Yes I will!” she put in happily.

“What creeper is this Esha?” I asked pointing to the one growing close to the tap, “Pumpkin?”

“No, it’s cucumber.”

“And that?”

“That’s pumpkin.” She asserted.

“They both look alike,” I put in defensively.

“Look carefully, the leaves of pumpkin are darker in shade,” she pointed out the difference like a real gardener.

As I started applying a little lip colour, she asked, “Are you going out somewhere Aunty?”

“We can, if you want to,” I answered.

She came to inspect my make-up pouch that contained my comb, lipsticks, perfume bottle, wet wipes, nail trimmer and tweezers, and said, “You are carrying so many things aunty, are you a film actress?”

I laughed. “What makes you think that? When you travel, you need all these little things handy, that’s all,” I explained.

The short trip to the Bazaar where she wanted to do a little shopping was another revelation into her little questioning mind. She shopped with ease and took me around like a seasoned shopper but when it came to deciding what kind of hair clips she should buy, she readily sought my opinion.

As we walked through the market, she said, “That’s my friend’s house,” for the second time.

“Does she come to your house?”

“Yes, sometimes, but Mummy never lets me go out anywhere or to anyone’s house alone.”

“Why?”

“Don’t know, perhaps because I am the only daughter.”

“Maybe, she doesn’t want you to be roaming around alone.”

“Yes I know, but once in a while at least.”

“Don’t you go out with your mummy?”
“Yes I do but with friends it is different.”
“How?”
“You can talk so comfortably, whatever one wants to.”
“You can do the same with your Mom, make her your friend.”
“Oh no! I cannot”
“Why Esha, she loves you and you love her too, don’t you?”
“Yes I do but she snubs me and even smacks me, friends don’t do that,” she looked at me, having the last word, while I laughed heartily.

She took me through the winding lanes on to a new road and new path through another person’s house to her own, when an elderly woman greeted her from her porch and asked her where she was off to. Esha replied very gently, “My aunty wanted to see a new route to our house so I thought of bringing her this way,” she smiled.

The path was narrow through thorny bushes and vegetation. Suddenly we came upon a foreigner who greeted her to which she responded with her childlike ease.

After a few steps however, she stopped and looked at me and said, “These foreigners are very strange; they keep saying ‘hello’ if you meet them on the way although you may not know them.”

“That’s because they like to be friendly I think,” I put in.

“You know what aunty, if foreigners offer something and you take it, they don’t mind it or they won’t say you are greedy but if you refuse, they won’t offer again like we do, once, twice, thrice. So if you refuse a foreigner once, the matter ends there,” she said with a finality and finesse I quietly admired.

When we returned home, my friend made some tea and we relaxed in the living room. Esha walked in and out and finally brought her doll to show me. The doll wore a slightly oversized pink frock.

“It’s too big for the doll, whose frock is it Esha?”
“It is mine, when I was very little, I like pink colour very much and I shall not give it to anyone.”

“Ask your mummy to stitch another nice frock for your doll.”

What she said suddenly, when we were alone for a moment surprised me. She said, “You know aunty, my teacher has asked us to write about ‘my sister and brother’ and I don’t have any brother or sister,” she said pensively.

“Never mind, imagine you have a brother and write.

“I would have had a brother but God didn’t want it perhaps,” she observed in a sad tone. Apparently, she knew about her mother’s miscarriage last year. Her awareness and acceptance of the fact impressed me.

Kids these days are becoming so smart and well informed I mused silently as I sipped tea. Seeing her hair ruffled up and messy, I said, “Esha bring your comb and let me brush your hair and tie it in a pony tail with this rubber band.”

She came rushing to see what rubber band I was holding and asked, “Is this too from Canada?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t you have more?”

“No, I am sorry dear, had I known I was coming here, I would bring some but it was not a planned trip and I just came down you see, but maybe next time when I come, I’ll get some more nice things for you.”

“But I don’t have anything to give you.”

“Oh! Come on Esha, you don’t really have to do that.”

“No, I must. Will you like a picture of Taj Mahal? I have collected so many from the box of crackers we bought for Diwali.”

“OK” I said not wanting to disappoint her.

As my friend got busy preparing dinner, Esha settled down before the TV to watch one of her science fiction movie. These interested her a great deal and she kept asking questions about the things she saw and her father on and off replied to them, softly.

Next day was a holiday, so she was home when I went in to say ‘goodbye’ to my friend and my little friend Esha. She walked up all the 40 stairs holding my hand, leaving her mother in the garden, asking me to come again soon and refusing to go back and wanting to come up all the way to the main road until I made her go saying gently, “You must return now sweetheart,” as I gently gave her a hug. I watched her for a moment descending the steps, constantly stopping on the way, to wave and shout “bye, bye.”
As I made my way to the bus stand, I kept thinking about Esha and the joy she gave me by her innocent and cheerful chatter, her insight, her understanding and her perceptive nature. What made her so sensitive, so observant and affectionate? I wondered. Was it her solitude and the natural surroundings, the natural wilderness around her house, her education in a mission school in the town or was it an inborn talent and openness of mind to appreciate and understand another person’s view of life?

Her keen interest to know to and learn more about the outside world was something I really liked about her. She looked so happy and lovely amidst the old, rambling natural, surroundings! I mused.

It would be so good, I silently thought, if every child in the world could have the beautiful surroundings that Esha had. Her childlike wonder, her simplicity, her playfulness, her openness, her desire to share, to learn, to question were amazing features about her personality but what left an indelible impression on my mind was her sensitivity and her ability to adapt, understand and accept. She was a child of nature, without pretence, spontaneous, alive and exuberant.

Deep down in her heart there was a desire for a kid brother or sister for I still remember what she said about the time when her grandfather passed away.

She said, “All my cousins had come, the house was full of people, we could play, but it was a time for sorrow, how could I play?”

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The Success-Story of PDS, a Little Dimmed

● Chandrakumar Chandra

The Public Distribution System (PDS) of the Central Government caters in varying degrees to three priority groups – BPL families,’ the poorest of the poor’ (Antyodaya) and persons eligible for old age pension. This scheme was still a tanscentst age at the time of formation of Chhattisgarh state in November 2000.

The State Government in Chhattisgarh has since moved forward decisively to put in place a system that went beyond the provisions of the Central Government scheme. For instance, apart from BPL families catered to by the scheme, it has included families in a slightly higher income slab who also need this nutritional support. The scheme provides a subsidy that makes food grains available to priority groups at a much lower cost than the market. The State Government has increased the subsidy provided by Central Government and is distributing food grains at a rock-bottom price of Rs.2 per kg. Further, for families who are amongst the ‘poorest of poor’ the price is an unbelievable Rs.1 per kg.

The system has been streamlined through digitization and automation through creative use of information and communications technology. In 2008, the PDS outlets or Fair Price Shops (FPS) across the state were computerized. A unified ration card database was created; online real-time inventory management system introduced at warehouses; call centres and a citizen interface web site established. An innovative system of SMS alerts informed people about the movement of rations from the storehouses to their specific outlet.

It is no small wonder that the PDS in Chhattisgarh has been widely hailed as a model and won laurels. It was selected for the “Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Public Administration”. The Supreme Court of India recommended the replication of the Chhattisgarh model to the other states.

It is however quite another story in Saradhih Gram Panchayat, Dabhara block, Janjgir Champa district, Chhattisgarh. A highly fertile agricultural land on river Mahanadi’s basin with paddy as the main crop, the community here is largely small and marginal farmers. Mostly from the dalit community, they are poor and are thus a priority group under the PDS scheme. However they find no reason to cheer.
Of the three wards or mohalla as in the Panchayat, locals say that PDS outlets in all the three wards do not receive the required supply of food grain. One or even two of the wards invariably receive less. The food grain is supplied first to one ward, then to others. The first ward would thus get its full supply as per its requirement. The supply gradually runs out when it reaches the second and then the third ward. No-one can predict which ward will be given the supply first but either way a section of the community from one or the other ward remains bereft of its entitlement. The Gram Rojgar Sevak of MGNREGA says some 35-40 households are left out, every month.

Families who have been left out simply have to cope from one month to the other. The next time round, if their ward comes first in the order of supplies – they can expect to get the due. But the supply pattern being haphazard, they cannot bank on it. This means that individuals and entire families lay themselves open to the risk of hunger and under-nourishment.

It also means that families who are poor and on the margins, have to fork out substantial amounts from their meagre earnings to purchase rice at the market price. Puniram Mali, 80 from Patrapali mohalla rues, “The system of grain distribution is going all wrong. It is not timely and the grain is not enough”, his weather-beaten face downcast. Ranglal Majhi, Panch, Saradih Panchayat sums up the mood on the ground “People here feel let down”, he says.

Interestingly, there are several local players involved in the PDS delivery. In 2004 PDS outlets were handed over to community institutions such as Self Help Groups, Gram Panchayats and Van Suraksha Samitis. It was a move towards de-privatisation aimed at improving accountability and efficiency on the ground. In Saradih, the Annapurna Mahila Self Help Group (SHG) plays a key role. receiving supplies, maintaining lists of eligible individuals/families and overseeing the distribution. Despite this substantive involvement on the ground, they are not equipped to address the lapses that they see month after month.

The shortages are a recurring thing, says SHG members. According to Ram Bai Bhujiyian, President, Annapurna Mahila SHG, “Every month the quantities we receive of rice, sugar and salt are far lower than the allocated quantities. What can we do?” Other SHG members add, “Every month is a hurdle we have to cross, Stocks run out much before the demands are met. For instance in October 2016, rice was short by 20 quintals and sugar by two quintals.” This kind of shortage has become the norm, they say, frustration writ large on their faces. The supply of kerosene oil however has been adequate but that cannot compensate for supplies of vital food grains.

Distressed by the endemic shortages, SHG members have raised the issue with the concerned block authorities at the Janpad Panchayat. The matter could not be addressed at this level and the members were asked to approach the Food Security official at the district level. Perhaps the lapses in Saradih are an aberration. Or perhaps they are indicative of a larger malaise that has gone unnoticed. This could be a matter to be debated and examined by the authorities to take corrective action. This could immediately begin with addressing the woes of the people in Saradih who are being bypassed month after month, denied their due.

Chhattisgarh is a forerunner in the area of food security. It has been hailed as the first state to make the ‘Right to Food Security’ a law when it enacted The Chhattisgarh Food Security and Nutrition Security Act in 2012. It needs to live up to this promise. (Charkha Features)
School Education is the bedrock of higher education. A major cause for declining standards in higher education is deteriorating standards of school education. The situation is really serious.

According to the 2011 census report, as many as 6.54 crore people in the age-group of 5-19 years in the country have never attended any school while another 4.49 crore have dropped out of schools in the last decade. Not a few factors have smudged the quality of education in India.

**Phenomenal Progress**

When compared to the situation prevailing five decades ago, the status of primary education at present is quite impressive. However, when compared with other countries, India lags far behind.

**Rapid Expansion**

The enrolment in India’s elementary schools increased from 168.3 million in 2005-06 to 193.1 million in 2010-11, and to 197.7 million in 2014-15.

In 2011, population in the age group of 5-19 years was 38.01 crore; 26.98 crore were attending schools (71 per cent). India has 15 lakh schools and over 80 lakh teachers, which is a great achievement after independence.

**Right to Education**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 ensures that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory quality in a formal school. Compulsory education casts an obligation on the appropriate government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age-group. A specified pupil-teacher ratio has to be maintained for each school. There should be no physical punishment or mental harassment. Education should also be value-oriented.

**I. Major Problems**

School education in India is facing many challenges. The syllabus should be related to the changing conditions and emerging problems. How to motivate the students and teachers is also a challenging task.

**Poor Quality**

Pratham’s (an NGO) recent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for rural India documented the deficiencies in learning levels.

According to the Report, the proportion of Class VIII students who could solve a three-digit by one-digit division problem was 43.23 per cent in 2016, and that of Class III students who could perform a two-digit subtraction 27.7 per cent.

Among the Class III students, 32 per cent could read simple English words. The proportion of Class VIII students who could read simple English sentence was just 45.2 per cent.

We have to pay special attention to the needs of first generation learners. There is a lot of difference between home culture and school culture in their case. Residential schools like the Navodaya Vidyalayas are one way to improve learning levels.

Crowded classes are also responsible for poor quality of education, particularly teaching. As of April 2016, the student-classroom ratio for secondary schools in India stood at 47 per class room. Of course, the student-classroom ratio varies from state to state. It was 27 in J & K, 35 in Rajasthan, 46 in Delhi, 74 in West Bengal and 103 in Bihar (The New Indian Express, April 12, 2017).

In the coming years, we have to pay special attention to toning up of quality of education in our schools.

**Inadequate Infrastructure**

Only 60 per cent of schools have play-grounds, 16 per cent have libraries, 60 per cent have electricity, 26 per cent have computers, and only 64 per cent have compound walls.

Only a few schools have permanent buildings. Most of the schools that have a building are government-owned. One in five schools is in need of repair.

Nearly one-third of rural households do not have a secondary school within 5 Km. Nearly 12.2 rural households are situated beyond 5 Km (BusinessLine, November 19, 2016).

Educational infrastructure need to be improved through public-private partnership and involvement of the corporate sector, civil society and the NGOs.

**Non-Detention System**

Most states are adopting the non-detention system. Students are promoted to the next class automatically upto the VIII standard. Educationists feel that this practice has caused enormous damage to the education system. The teachers are indifferent to teaching, the students do not take studies seriously.
Theoretically, a student who does not know even the alphabets and the three ‘R’s can appear for the 10th board examination (editorial, The New Indian Express, October 21, 2016). There is a need for fresh look at the non-detention system.

School Drop-outs

There is high incidence of school drop-outs. Data relating to 2013-14 show 19.8 per cent students dropout before completing V standard, 36.3 per cent before VIII standard, 47.4 per cent before X standard.

The slow-learners are afraid of heavy syllabus and too many books. The average student feels it cumbersome. A 10-year child is forced to carry a bag weighing 8 Kgs. Children burdened with heavy school bags suffer from pain and fatigue.

The Southern and Western states of India do much better in arresting drop-out rates (less than 2 per cent) compared to the Eastern, Northern and North Eastern States (drop-out rates ranging from 8 to 10 per cent).

A number of factors contribute to school drop-outs. These include: child marriage, inability to cope with studies, taking up odd jobs, and absence of adequate infrastructure in schools.

Closure of Schools

In many states, closure of government schools is taking place. The reason given is, lack of student strength. The policy aims to close down schools with students less than 10, and transfer these students to neighbouring government/aided schools. Also, there is undue demand for English-medium schools.

There is a four per cent fall in government school enrolment, and, in contract, there is an eight per cent increase in private school enrolment.

II. Strengthening School Education

The school education segment suffers from paucity of funds. The government has been trying to enhance allocations for education sector. The education sector got a whopping 9.9 per cent hike in the Union Budget 2017-18, with an outlay of Rs.79,685.95 crore, up from Rs.72,394 crore in 2016-17. Of the total outlay, Rs.46,356.25 crore was for the school sector and the rest for higher education.

The Union Budget 2017-18 allocated Rs.23,500 crore (Rs.22,500 crore in the previous budget) for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the flagship central scheme for universalisation of school education for implementation of RTE.

Toning up Quality

The Government is keen on improving the quality of school education. The Union Budget 2017-18 proposed Innovation Fund for secondary education, to encourage local innovation for ensuring universal access, gender parity and quality improvement.

The programme will help to develop educationally backward regions, and utilize local resources, and knowledge for the over-all development of the country.

Mid-Day Meal

The mid-day meal scheme serves as an incentive for poor students to attend school, especially in rural areas. It is the world’s largest school feeding scheme reaching out to about 12 crore children in over 12.65 lakh schools/ EGS centres across the country. Studies show the scheme has a positive impact on school attendance.

The implementation of the scheme is far from satisfactory. Spate of poisoning cases witnessed across the country in recent years is really shocking. The scheme was launched in 1995. It is now governed by the National Food Security Act, 2013.

The Union Human Resource Development Ministry has issued circulars to all state governments to make Aadhaar mandatory for students, cooking staff and helpers in order to curb irregularities in the implementation of the scheme.

The Union Budget 2017-18 allocated Rs.10,000 crore for the scheme, up by Rs.300 crore from the previous budget. The government provides Rs.4.86 per student for primary schools, and Rs.6.78 per student for high schools.

Wanted Detention System

The centre is planning to do away with the non-detention policy at the middle and high school levels. Necessary changes will have to be made in the Right to Education Act which governs school education. The policy was introduced to arrest high incidence of school drop-outs, and also improve the nutritional status of school students. It is necessary to see that only students with sufficient knowledge are promoted.

New Education Policy

The new National Policy on Education 2016 recognises the vital role teachers play in the educational field. There is a need for professionalizing teaching.

The Policy states that the outlay on education should be raised to at least six per cent of the GDP without further loss of time. It also insisted on compulsory licensing of certification for teachers in government and private schools. The no detention policy should be continued for young children until completion of Class V.

The Policy also stated that schools with low enrolment and inadequate infrastructure should be, wherever possible, converted to composite schools for better infrastructure, teacher availability and efficient re-deployment.

Parents given full name for her was Rupinder Kaur but everyone’s convenience had reduced it to Rupi. Her mother had visualised a ray of hope in her daughter in otherwise a devastated self life. Rupi had never ever seen her parents leading a normal life. Most of the time the parents were not on speaking terms but whenever they broke silence, it lead to a fight as though the couple was made to quarrel and they wanted to prove that each of the two were good at lung power. And eventually they had drifted apart.

A divorce was unthinkable and uncommon in Punjabi society of the day. It had far reaching implications for the couple and unfortunate consequences for their only daughter’s life. Their sole property a large residential villa in Mohali, Punjab got sold off. In addition to a payable lump sum, father was obligated to finance some of other family expenses. The full custody of only daughter Rupi, was given to mother. The father resigned his job and eventually migrated to metropolis Bombay to join another corporate. The mother however bought a smaller two-bed room apartment close to the same colony and continued living there to minimise disruption in her daughter’s educational path.

After completing her higher secondary, influenced by her one close classmate, Rupi joined Chandigarh College Of Arts as student for graduation programme. At the end of the college day she would rush to meet her mother as if she had been missing her lap. She would chirp the goings on of the day like a KG student. The mother also treated her as a most precious possession as if Rupi was still on breast feed. Rupi was mature enough to appreciate what a divorce means so she would never ask any question about her papa from Mom.

The fourth year batch of the college was about to complete the degree and the institution had announced opening of a “Hall Of The Former Students.” The project entailed display of only the best works of previous two-three batches in the proposed Hall. The project took some three months to complete. The display was to be curated by about to be promoted, third year students. Rupi helmed the curating team. In the process of curating, at first all the available works were laid on floor and then those were placed in order of preference for display. An attempt was made to study the theme of every work for allocating it a suitable slot in the hall. Temporarily some works had been contributed by the faculty as well.

There was one painting which touched Rupi’s heart. She would view it from different angles and then allot a slot. She again would take it down and re-allot the slot. This went on until she decided that either she would like it to put up in the beginning or at the end. In the beginning so that to make the first strong impression among viewers. The last so that the visitors depart with the best taste like a sweet course eaten at the end of the meal.

Titled ‘Tenderness In The Air’ the painting had a huge fluffy-roundish exotic flower with a slim, almost invisible stump originating out of waters. It gave the impression as if the tenderness personified was floating in the air. Surprisingly the gaudy colours had been avoided and a soft brush of black and white on the canvas had created the miracle effect. One felt like touching it again and again for the softness it projected. The absence of the gaudy colours was suggestive of the deprivation of the comforts in the life of the creator of the work. The slim and dry stump was indicative of the weak social support and lonliness for the childhood phase. And the fluffiness was pointing to the generosity of the Almighty in creating the ever tender universe. The small size probably was suggestive of the rarity of the humans possessing tenderness of heart. Reading an abstract work is not easy. Inside the sensitive brain of the artist there is vast universe which he may like to express. This was Rupi’s personal understanding about the work.
Rupinder turned the work over and over. Many thoughts were flashing her mind. Can a fresh student create the meaningful painting like this unless he has some painful personal experiences! Does this painting reflect the individuality of the artist or is it a chance imaginative creation. By the time she herself comes in the final year will she be able to create a mature work like this, she wondered! And she decided to make it the first hanging close to the entrance. But before putting up on the wall she made it a point to capture some impressions in her own camera for herself. Through hard work she will elevate herself to that level, she felt inspired. It appeared to Rupi as if her own life had been mounted in the frame. Has the world not deprived her of the bestness even though she was born to both surviving parents. She has been only child of parents and yet devoid of the indulgence, she deserves. Has not she a weak base! For her school fee and house utility bills her mother is still dependent on father. After drifting apart life has not been smooth sailing for the Mom. Her Mom is too weak to afford her the strength a child needs to go far enough in life and yet the mother is unimaginably tender hearted. No artwork can ever portray the tenderness of her mother. Or it could be that the former art student too had a life like herself and the work is born out of his own pains and emotions.

A strong yearning arose in her heart to see the artist behind the work. But he is already out of the college. Even if she wants to reach him his latest whereabouts are not known to her. But the most important was eliciting the name and address of the youngman. The youngman had signed the painting but his name could not be ascertained. He took help of teachers and other students but to no avail. Finally he sought assistance of canteen staff who could vaguely remember a boy with some unique habits, a very handsome boy who generally kept aloof. Even in the canteen he would be sitting in some lonely corner. No body knew him by name. This all reflected about the individuality of the former student. Rupi felt amused that coincidentally the painting of the boy also has been kept aloof. “Yes, I shall try to search and see the boy at some appropriate point of time in my life.” she muttered barely audible to herself. Why she was so much interested in the artist behind, she herself did not know. The work had evoked unprecedented interest inside her.

And finally the day came when she herself stood in the venue for convocation to be awarded a degree. She created a painting almost similar to the one she had always admired with the only difference that there was some additional fluffy stuff in the waters surrounding the roots of the slim stem and hung up alongside the favourite painting. It was titled ‘The Tenderness Begets Tenderness’. In her camera she captured fresh impressions of the juxtaposed pictures. For a while she felt as if she had fallen in love with the imagined figure of the boy behind the painting.

There were a couple of job offers and Rupi’s choice fell on the one which came from a commercial designing company from Delhi where she moved along her Mom. Her Mom was pressurising her for marriage but having seen the unfortunate life of her own parents, Rupi was not much receptive to any such idea though she did not wish to be burden on Mom’s emotions for all times to come. Not yearning for any wealth, all that she wished was that her life partner should be a caring one and must like to get along well. The boy behind the painting too was only in her thoughts. She did not know even his name. The CEO of the company mediated to unite her with another co-professional named Bhupinder Singh, called by his short name Bhupi. “He is soft spoken, good hearted youngman though he hails from a poor family. Some of our best works are his creation.” CEO had said. Rupi’s Mom also had blessed her. The engagement ceremony was held amidst friends and peers within the company. She had handed her personal camera to the would be hubby who having shot some pictures for her was seeing intently on the previous impressions on the lense.

In keeping with Punjabi post-marriage tradition, by way of munh dikhai, i.e formally seeing the bride’s face by the groom for the first time, the hubby’s gift was a large size wrapping. It was covered with a soft paper with rose petals pasted on the outermost covering. In the groom’s house next morning she opened the package to find a mounted painting, titled “Tenderness In My Flanks”. Signed by Bhupi it was an enlarged work of what all along Rupi had in her dreams.

Six years are gone since. Rupi and Bhupi have jointly created one more work titled “Tenderness All Around”. It has two big floating flowers hugging one small flower in their midst. The small flower with a strong stump is symbolic of their little daughter who will be four in two months time. The joint work is prominently displayed in their living room.
AashrayAdhikarAbhiyan (AAA) originated as a citizens’ campaign to fight for the rights of the homeless people in India and make the State accountable towards their rights.

In India, the Mental Health Act was passed on May 22, 1987. The law was described in its opening paragraph as “An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the treatment and care of mentally ill persons, to make better provision with respect to their properly and affairs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

However, when Paramjeet Kaur, the founder of AshrayAdhikarAbhiyan (AAA), did a survey in 2000, she found 53,765 homeless people on the streets of Delhi, of whom approximately half suffered from mental illness.

“Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan (AAA) originated as a citizens’ campaign to fight for the rights of the homeless people in India and make the State accountable towards their rights. At the time of its inception, there was no blue print available on this issue in the country. Therefore the journey was hard and filled with obstacles. The first few years were spent on spreading word about this issue, counting the people living /sleeping under the open sky,” says Paramjeet.

Paramjeet had been working for about 18 years with NGOs that worked for the underprivileged. One thing that bothered her during this time was the adult homelessness. The kids from the street were abandoned once they were adults and once again they would become homeless. The other major reasons for abandoning an adult by their family were mental illness and old age. Thus she decided to run her own NGO, which would focus only on these adult homeless people who are more vulnerable to mental disorders due to the mental trauma they had been through. She approached the college and school students who were interested in this social cause and surveyed the streets of Delhi for 15 nights.

This was the first-ever head count by any NGO of the homeless in the city.

The homeless are often one of the most vulnerable groups. They are often deprived of civic amenities such as water and sanitation; denied access to medical treatment; forced to work for below the minimum wage; face daily beating and harassment from the police; and are compelled to sleep in the open because of the lack of government shelters. Their human rights, including the right to shelter, the right to health and the right against exploitation are violated every single day.

Once the data was ready AAA started working on two points:» To mobilize and empower the homeless so that they are able to assert their rights and live with honour and dignity.» To make the citizens and public institutions of Delhi recognize that the homeless have inalienable rights and that it is their responsibility to help the homeless live in dignity.

Since the start in 2000, AAA has initiated several programs to bring this mission into practice: providing shelters to the homeless people, reaching the homeless people by doing Night Out’s, providing basic health care through the Health Outreach Clinic and providing legal aid.

It has been working in collaboration with Delhi Government through Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to manage shelters across Delhi. Round the year, it runs permanent shelters. During winter, it also runs additional
temporary shelters in cabins, buildings or tents. These shelters are provided by the government. Currently, AAA runs 26 shelters in Delhi round the clock, which houses 3,015 people. Within the shelters, AAA offers them a clean place, a blanket to sleep, electricity, fresh drinking water, bathroom, water coolers during summer, first aid and a weekly doctor’s team visit with free medicines, system for admission to hospitals in case of emergency.

So far, AAA has managed over 12 million beds and delivered health care service to over 1 million people.

Every year during the winter season, AAA, in collaboration with Delhi government, makes efforts for the creation of additional shelters. All the shelters are managed by the trained homeless community workers. During this period, the entire focus is on saving these people from the chilling cold of the city.

Night-outs are planned to reach out to homeless people in their different concentration areas in Delhi twice a week – from 10 PM to 4 AM. It is done by a team of three trained employees of AAA, which drives through the streets of Delhi looking for homeless people. Night-outs help to address medical emergencies, intervene in cases of police atrocities, assist homeless people in seeking /accessing shelter and respond to immediate basic needs such as blankets and/or clothes in winter. Civil society volunteers, students and interns are always welcome to join this night action programme.

A clinic is organized specially for the mentally ill homeless people in the open at Meena Bazar, Urdu park and Jama Masjid with the help of senior psychiatrists from Institute of Human Behavior and Allied Sciences (IHBAS). Delhi State Legal Service Authority (DSLSA) helps in securing the presence of a Metropolitan Magistrate to pass appropriate order under the Mental Health Act 1987 for necessary treatment. AAA undertakes responsibility of bringing severely mentally ill patients from streets to the clinic for diagnosis and treatment. AAA has the responsibility of record keeping of the mentally ill homeless who come to the clinic so that their presence can be secured for subsequent clinics as required by the doctors. Support mechanisms (Food, Clothing, Hygiene items & Shelter) are also provided to these patients.

“By living constantly vulnerable lives, the homeless end up being people with low self-esteem, confidence and poor health. Our objective has been to mobilise, empower and strengthen homeless people so they can assert their rights to live with honour and dignity,” says Paramjeet.

Once the patient feels better, workshops, training sessions, including informal counselling sessions, are organized to support them to emerge out of difficult circumstances and live independently.

These homeless people are also helped in getting an identity proof and voter ID card.

Since the problem of homelessness is complex and gigantic in nature, this problem can’t be solved by AAA alone. Therefore AAA believes in networking with like-minded organizations, forums and Institutions.

(Courtesy : The Better India)
A freedom fighter, public activist, lawyer, politician and member of the Planning commission - Dr. Durgabai Deshmukh, was the mother of social service in India. This multi-faceted personality served the society as Parliamentarian, an institution builder and a pioneer in social development.

Durgabai familiar with the name of DurgabaiDeshmukh was born on July 15, 1909 at Rajahmundry. At the tender age of 11, she joined the Indian National Congress. She participated in the Non-cooperation Movement when she was hardly 12 years of age. After the suspension of Non-Cooperation Movement, she propagated the ideals of Gandhiji in the villages around Rajahmundry and Kakinada by establishing schools for giving training to women in spinning and weaving. She also started the Balika Hindi Pathshala for women and children in Kakinada in 1921 and boycotted the English school where she was studying. At that time, more than 400 women twice of her age enrolled themselves in the school.

Along with Andhra Kesari T. Prakasam, she participated in Salt Satyagraha movement in Madras city in May, 1930. She was arrested and imprisoned as a C class prisoner in 1932. In 1939, she passed her BA degree with Hons. and M.A. in 1940. Two years later, she completed her Bachelor of Law and served as an advocate in the Madras High Court. She become a Member of the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and was elected to the steering committee as its only woman member. In 1953 she married Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, the Union Finance Minister, better known as the first Indian to be appointed as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. She became a Member of the first Indian Delegation to China headed by Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit in 1950s a vital element for the progress of the nation. She was instrumental in the enactment of many social welfare laws.

As a visionary leader, she conceptualised the idea of several organisations that carried out the work of social empowerment especially for women and children. Her vision was far-sighted and encompassed the evolution of several social welfare institutions. She founded Andhra Mahila Sabha and expanded its programmes to need based activities such as weaving, paper making and Condensed Courses of Education for adult women. Apart from visualizing the conventional and tried and trusted methods of social development such as schools for girls, orthopaedic centre and maternity homes under Andhra Mahila Sabha, she also pioneered the concept of unusual programmes such as Holiday camps for poor children so that they can get taste of life away from their villages. Her desire to spread awareness about the rights and duties of citizenship and the necessity for the participation of women in the public life of the country gave birth to scheme of Awareness Generation Camps for rural women.

As a missionary, she set a life long example for social workers in India. She founded Central Social Welfare Board in 1953. Under the stewardship of
Dr. Durgabai Deshmukh, policies of the Board were framed and shaped in. More than 10,000 organisations were brought on the official map of Central Board and 30,000 welfare centres were set up covering 1,50,000 villages through the network of State Social Welfare Boards set up in each State/UT in 1954. Every project in her life was taken up with missionary zeal and enthusiasm. She also inspired her fellow workers to put their contributions in social empowerment. This missionary spirit of Durgabai was reflected in the institutions created by her that are still strong and vibrant today. They are Balika Relief Association, Council for Social Development, Central Social Welfare Board, Population Council of India and India International Centre.

Durgabai also pioneered the concept of Public Private Partnership as a means of national development. She reasoned very early that the people and the State should be equal stakeholders in the country’s progress. In this way, a unique and innovative concept of Public Private Partnership was introduced and government funds were channelized for social welfare and development of the society. Durgabai was the reservoir of talent. With her unique and innovative vision, she worked in close collaboration with the stalwarts of that time, Pt. Jawarlal Nehru, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sh. C. Rajagopalchari and others. Durgabai’s words, “One has to have some kind of aim in life and to work for the realization of that aim, work with selfless devotion and spirit of sacrifice and help others less privileged than yourself”, reflects in every aspect of the projects undertaken by her. Her devotion and dedication to work for women and children laid the basic foundation in building up Central Social Welfare Board. As the Chairperson of the Central Social Welfare Board, she toured the country without rest to gain first hand knowledge about the implementation of programmes and also the functioning of good voluntary organisations serving the disadvantaged women and children of the society. She steered the course of the Board’s journey from 1953 to 1962 and imparted her distinct flair for activism in the sphere of women’s welfare and development.

All through the battle of life till death - she dedicated herself to the ideals and principles of selfless service.

Durgabai’s outstanding contribution to the field of literacy won her the Nehru Literacy Award in 1973. She was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1975 and the UNESCO Award in 1978.

Durgabai Deshmukh died on 9th May, 1981 and the country had lost one of the most dynamic and charismatic leader forever.

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**Celebration of International Yoga Day at Hyderabad**

To mark the importance of Yoga, the Telangana State Social Welfare Board celebrated International Yoga day on 21st June, 2017 by organizing a Yoga Session in the premises of GanganVihar Building, Nampally, Hyderabad. Smt. Sandya, representative of Bhodhi Tree organisation, Kondapur took up the session.

The Chairperson, Telagana State Board welcomed all the participants and briefed about the importance of Yoga exercises in daily life. All staff members of State Board participated in the session.
On the occasion of retirement of Smt. Shashi Dudeja, and Sh. Joginder Singh, Assistants, the Recreation Club of Central Social Welfare Board organized a farewell party at Mantrana hall on 30th June, 2017 where all officers and staff members of the Board bid a farewell to them.

Smt. Shashi Dudeja served the Board for 39 years and Sh. Joginder Singh contributed his services for 34 years. Both the employees retired from the post of Assistant on superannuation.

The farewell party began with presentation of floral bouquet by Smt. Neelam Bhardwaj, Executive Director of the Board. Gifts on behalf of recreation Club and staff members were presented to them.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. D.S. Bhukkal and Sh. A.K. Sinha, Joint Directors of the Board appreciated the efforts of Sh. Joginder Singh and Smt. Dudeja and expressed their gratitude for immense contributions made by them. Sh. Sudarshan Kumar, Deputy Director and Sh. Dalip Chandna recalled their memories and shared their work experiences working with them. Smt. Shashi Dudeja and Sh. Joginder Singh thanked all the officials for their support and cooperation.

At the end, Smt. Bhardwaj, ED shed light on the working skills of Sh. Joginder Singh and Smt. Dudeja and praised their dedication and sincerity. On behalf of the all the members of the Board, Madam conveyed best wishes to both of them for healthy, wealthy and happy post retirement life.

- Ravinder Sharma
64th Year of Successful Publication

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