

ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN IN DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT: Empowering women and assisting them to grow as equal partners with men in society to contribute towards the development and prosperity of the nation. As women are half of the population in India, ignoring women's issues may prove to be non-identification of women as resources who could contribute in a great way for the prosperity of the nation. Women are forced to lead a life of exclusion by imposing the various restrictions on them in the name of culture and tradition. Though issues related to women are almost similar across the world, here is an attempt made to focus on the gender-based difficulties women face in their day - today lives. At the same time, taking account of major indicators such as literacy rate, health political participation, work participation of women and crime against women and other issues related to women to understand the present situation of women in the Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka. The major incidents of violation of rights of women in the district in recent years shook the citizens and NGOs to focus on bringing better conditions of life for girls and women so that such incidents would not repeat in the future. Along with the efforts of the government to come out with the fruitful policies for the socio-economic enhancement of the status of women, there is also a need for such agencies to create awareness about such policies to people at various levels.

Key words: Women, Issues, Gender, Dakshina Kannada, status

I Introduction

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing".

No doubt India is moving towards the path of development and making its presence felt at the global level through its achievements in the various fields. Developed nations are indeed showing their interest in collaborating with India in pursuing new ventures. At this juncture attention to be paid to utilise the resources available in the nation in the form of women, due to various factors. As women are half of the population in India, ignoring women's issues may prove to be non-identification of women as resources who could contribute in a great way for the prosperity of the nation. Women are forced to lead a life of exclusion by imposing various restrictions on them in the name of culture and tradition. They were denied the chance to contribute in the public sphere due to her physical and emotional nature. Lack of autonomy given to her pushed her into helpless and dispossessed life. (Devi Ashapura, 1995) Any country to develop has to focus on the status of women in its society. As women too need to be considered as resource and to make them contribute to the development of the nation. Women should be provided with and deserve equal opportunity to participate at every level as women constitute half of its population. (Dakshina Kannada; Human Development report 2014) To enable them to grow as equal contributors in the society, the first and foremost requirement is to take out the hurdles which forbid

women to be the part of the system. So, this paper mainly highlights the issues of women need to be taken as a matter of concern and to take necessary measures to tackle this at every level.

Women in the district of Dakshina Kannada have fairly better-living conditions compared to other districts of Karnataka. Prevalence of matrilineal pattern of families, High literacy rate and as the region is popular for its intelligent population, allowed women to be the part in both the private and public sphere. But, due to the migrant population and other influences, things started changing to the disadvantage of women in the district. Before it is too late there is a need to tackle these things, and various forms of women's organizations started to form with the objective of identifying and tackle gender issues.

Though issues related to women are almost similar across the world, here is an attempt made to focus on the gender-based difficulties women face in their day-to-day lives. To understand and study the present situation of women in D.K. district, it is essential to have a glance at her journey. In this regard, this paper focuses on the issues related to women in general and DK district in Particular. At the same time, taking account of major indicators such as literacy rate, health political participation, work participation of women and crime against women and other issues related to women to understand the present situation of women in the Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka.

1. Purpose and Plan of the Study

The present study is planned as follows:

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the conceptual and operational framework of issues of women ;
- To study the issues and concerns of women by assessing the status of women in the district of Dakshina Kannada of Karnataka; and
- To suggest measures to overcome issues related to women

1.2 Methodology

This study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. The data is derived from various published and unpublished books, journals, magazines, records and websites.

II Status Of Women In Dakshina Kannada District

As per the general belief the district of D K with its enlightened people, treating women would be fair compared to other districts in the state of Karnataka. Of course, it is true but slowly things have started changing due to the external influence and other factors. Several indicators started revealing the fact of ill-treatment levelled against women in the district. This made academicians and non-governmental organisations to pay attention to understand, study and create awareness among local people realise what exactly is not carried on well in the present state of development. In spite of the efforts of the government in forms of various strategies to build gender-balanced society, there has been negative growth in this regard. (Noronha R et al, 2011)

To have a glance at the historical development of the region in terms of its reform movements, several organizations such as Bramho Samaj, Arya Samaj and theosophical society have influenced the region during the late 17th and early 18th century. These organizations contributed in the elimination of caste based and gender based discriminations. Mahatma Gandhi appreciated Kudmul Ranga Rao for his effort in extending modern education to those section of the society which was otherwise denied with the same. (Dakshina Kannada: Human Development report 2014) Likewise, there have been reformists and movements in the district to make it a place of a just society.

There have been prominent women personalities contributed to the social and political sphere and marked a difference in the perception of women among people. Especially Rani Abbakka Devi of Ullal and Kamala Devi Chattopadya have exhibited their bravery, exemplary skills of warfare and zeal to be the part of the national movement of India. Kamala Devi once succeeded in proving herself at the national level has even contributed

towards the cause of women in whatever way she could do to bring necessary changes in the existing law and policies to make it convenient for women. (Shailja K N, 2014)

In this perspective, the status of women in Dakshina Kannada District is studied through taking various indicators such as sex ratio, literacy level, health, crimes against women, and political and economic participation of women in the district.

III Demographic details of the district

Table No. 1

Sex Ratio of Dakshina Kannada District

Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
DK	1,048	1,027	1,006	1,015	1,020	1,022	1,018

Source: Dakshina Kannada; Human Development Report 2014

The above table shows the decade wise variation in the sex ratio of the district. There were 1048 females per 1000 males in 1951 in independent India. But there after there was a sharp decline in the sex ratio in 1961 i.e. decline of 21 points and it continued to fall in 1971 with the decline of again 21 points. In 1981 there was positive change and the increase in the sex ratio of 09 points. This trend continued for another two decades by increase in the sex ratio of 05 points and 02 during the 1991 and 2001 respectively. The present decade has shown the decline in sex ratio by 04 points i.e. in 2001 there were 1022 female for every 1000 male. But in 2011 there were 1018 female for every 1000 male.

Though there are more number of female compared to male in the district, which is usually seen in the developed nations, the matter of concern is the decline in the sex ratio. The effort is essential to sustain and maintain the existence of more number of women over men in the district. In spite of the positive historical records in the sex ratio, if not enough attention is paid to maintain the same, this may prove to be dangerous in the interest of women. Alongside the Government of India has introduced new schemes to save the girl child with the slogan of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' which means save and educate the girl child. Hence, surely there is a need to find the cause of the decline of sex ratio and apply necessary measures to overcome it.

IV Literacy and educational levels

Education is a tool to build a better society. It enhances the knowledge and enables women to grow as an enlightened human being. The constitution of India grants free primary education for both boys and girls up to the age of 14 years as the Right to Education Act 2009 passed by the Parliament. Education builds a sense of confidence and she is exposed to the outside world. Educated girls find it easy to get suitable jobs and thereby lead independent lives without being prey for exploitation at home and the work places. The knowledge gained through education prepares women to take an active part and contribute effectively at home and society. Educated women are treated fairly and respectfully by others, hence more number of girls to be encouraged to be educated.

Table No. 2

Literacy Rate of Dakshina Kannada District by Sex 2001-2011(Percentage)

2001			2011			Decadal Growth		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
89.70	77.20	83.40	93.10	84.13	88.57	3.79	8.98	6.20

Source: Census 2001 and 2011.

The above table indicates the literacy rate of both male and female population in the district in one decade. There is an increase in the literacy rate taken in total population, but the interesting point to take note of here is that of increase in the female literacy rate. Though there is an increase in the rate of both male and female, but female literacy rate is more than male in the district. So it gives us the knowledge of realisation among people of the district about the importance of female education. Girls are encouraged to take up higher education, professional and vocational courses etc.

In fact, the district ranks 2nd highest in female literacy rate, among the 30 districts of Karnataka. But the question remains are all these educated and qualified women given the fair treatment they deserve in the family and society? There is a need to create space for such educated women to contribute themselves in the chosen field. But it is always felt that women's place is at home and if they are entering into other activities they are trying to encroach upon others space especially the space meant for men. Due to such tendencies, women come across several issues whenever they make their minds to make use of their knowledge for the betterment of the society and their families.

V Women and health

A Healthy life is expected by any individual human being, and can't be neglected at any cost by anyone. Priority to be given to one's health over all other aspects and remain fit and fine. As the saying goes 'Health is Wealth', we consider health as our asset. But the worst thing we get to see among women is they neglect their health at the cost family. She is too much occupied with taking care of each member in the family that she keeps postponing her visit to doctor for any of her health issues, sometimes which may prove to be dangerous for her life.

The health of a society is dependent on the health of women. A woman carries the burden of the health of her family and only a healthy woman can maintain a healthy family. She is the very backbone of the whole society, so proper care needs to be provided. Only a healthy woman can bear a healthy child, so girls from the very young age to be nourished properly. On the contrary, due to the lower status of women in the society, they are under fed and this results in the malnourishment among mother and children. Though the government is doing a commendable job in providing nourishments to pregnant women through primary health care centre at the rural and urban areas from past few year, but it should reach to needy and vulnerable women. Let the maximum number of pregnant women avail the benefit given to them by the government of India up till the child attains the age of three. This is a noble cause to support women to remain healthy and awareness in this regard needs to be created by agents involved in this.

Table No. 3

Fertility Rate of Dakshina Kannada District

2001	2011	Decadal growth
1.7	1.5	- 0.2

Source: census 2001, 2011

The above table indicates the fertility rate of D K district in a decade. There is a decline in the fertility rate of 0.2, which of course an indicator of the attention given to the health of girls and women. The associated issues with this are Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Child Mortality Rate (CMR), and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). For any nation to develop such issues need to be tackled with. UN Millennium Development Goals aim at reducing the rate of IMR, CMR and MMR.

As women's health is considered important for healthy generations to come. The development of the nation even depends on the health of its population. The harsh reality before us today is though women in the district are into the race to prove themselves but it is at the cost of their health. Unless the health-related issues of women are tackled with, whatever achievements done in other fields is pointless. Both physical and mental health of women needs to be addressed. Due to the pressure of work at home and workplace, women face

various health-related issues. Anaemia, malnutrition, menstrual problems, pregnancy-related illness, symptoms of menopause and depression are few of the major health-related concerns of women.

VI Political representation of women

Inspired by women's participation during national movement the constitution-makers gave equal political rights to women and men. But in the latter course of time, women's representation and participation were lacking. Due to which thoughts were given to come out with reservation policy for women to have inclusive political development. As per which a historic amendment to the constitution was made in 1992, whereby for the first time thirty-three percentage of reservation for women was passed at the panchayat institutions. (Hegde Shakila, 2016) This proved to be a door opener for women to enter into local politics. Women made use of the opportunity provided and proved themselves as elected representatives to meet the needs and demands of local people.

Women's representation at the Indian Parliament especially lower house Lok Sabha does not give a satisfactory picture, as not a good number of women have occupied seats and enjoyed their positions. As we reflect upon women representation in Lok Sabha, the percentage is found in between 3.4 to 8.7 of the total number of members in the Lok Sabha. (Shrivatsa Rashmi, 2011) A matter of concern as women reservation bill though got introduced in the parliament but could not be passed. It is quite clear that in the political sphere women could not get their due. There are so many factors why women do not want to get themselves involved in politics. But this can't be allowed to continue like this, there is no dearth of educated and enlightened women. (Paylee M V, 2014) These women need to be motivated to enter into elections and politics. Here even the political parties have to play a crucial role in giving fair chance to women.

Table No. 4

No. of Women candidates contested and elected to Lok Sabha seats-Karnataka

Year	Women contested	Women elected
1984	7	2
1989	12	1
1991	13	2
1996	70	1
1998	10	-
1999	11	2
2004	10	2
2009	19	1
2014	21	1

Source: Chief Electoral Office

The above table gives details of the women candidates contested and got elected to Lok Sabha from the state of Karnataka. The table indicates that women were not adequately represented in the Lok Sabha. Although in 1996 good number of women contested for Lok Sabha seats but not able to get elected. And the trend continues of the very low level of representation of women in the Lok Sabha from the state of Karnataka.

Table No. 5

No. of Women candidates contested and elected to Vidhana Sabha seats-Karnataka

Year	Women contested	Women elected
1985	112	8
1989	77	9
1994	113	7
1999	62	5
2004	92	6
2008	106	3
2013	175	6

Source: Chief Electoral Office

The above table shows that in the state of Karnataka for Vidhan Sabha women have been contesting in good numbers in Assembly elections but they fail to get themselves elected to the house. This is mainly because of the choice of voters who perhaps have no faith in the level of service elected women representatives can put in. Obviously, it might lead to negligence of women issues to be addressed with by the government.

Table No. 6

Representation of women in the Zilla, Taluk and Gram Panchayat in Dakshina Kannada District

Year	Zilla Panchayat		Taluk Panchayat		Gram Panchayat	
	No. of Women Members	% of seats of women	No. of women members	% of seats of women	No. of women members	% of seats of women
2005	12	34.3	52	40.3	1462	44.6
2010	18	52.43	71	55.04	1472	44.23
2016	18	50.00	69	50.74	1757	51.69

Source: Election Commission, Government of Karnataka

The table shows that there is a sharp increase in the number of women elected to panchayat bodies after the 2010 election with 50 percent reservation of seats are given to women in the state of Karnataka. Both at urban and rural level women are seen involving themselves with the panchayat institutions. In a democratic set up like India equality in gender participation at all level of the position of governance is required to provide gender just society. More number of women representation could result, the development and empowerment of women. Though initially, women took time to stabilize themselves in decision making positions. But with constant involvement in politics, women make use of their power independently. Once they are trained to be successful

representatives at the local level, such women might take chance to contest for seats at the state assemblies and Parliament.

Up to 1993 except the state of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab where few women were elected as representatives, in the rest of the states there were hardly any women members seen in the political position. (Elavarani M, Palanichamy, 2018) To a large extent use of money and muscle power has restricted women to get into politics. Violence against women in politics poses the threat to aspiring women to get themselves involved in the political processes, unless they have some political background. So politics remains a prohibited zone for women in India. (Sharma Anitha, 2018) It is also observed that many a time women in politics have undergone character assassination, which can't be easily digested by common women, who are gentle by nature. All these factors have led to less representation of women in politics at various levels.

Along with the observance of UN Women's Day Women Organizations must involve themselves in building political consciousness among women. Motivating and training them to actively involve themselves in the political process of the nation. The entry of women in politics is the need of the hour to put an end to societal evil practices against women. (Pradhan Tanushree, 2018) To make our nation a truly democratic nation we foresee at national, state and local level, women should be encouraged to occupy half of the seats and participate in building the nation.

VII Economic participation of women

With the increase in the literacy rate among girls more girls are seen in the job market. Especially after independence women started entering into jobs as labourers in industries and companies. With this, there is a shift in trends of jobs from manufacturing to service. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), along with the service sector job women's presence in the labour market has expanded considerably. Initially, women were employed in the lower positions but, women started exhibited their determination and hard work and obtained higher posts in the job market. In contemporary India, women are taking up toughest of the tough jobs, earlier those were meant for only men. But women are also seen exploited and harassed in the workplace, though there is a law passed to protect women against sexual harassment at workplaces. Such incidences are increasing with women occupying lower positions particularly in unorganised sector and those are vulnerable.

The Economic participation of women is seen with the perspective of the overall development of the family and society. Hence, in recent years, attention is paid to involve women through SHGs and NGOs with the linkage of Banks. Especially in rural India women are provided with financial assistance with training of Entrepreneurship development. Rural women came forward to avail opportunities provided and started getting the knowledge about systematic financial transactions. (Ramadevi N, 2018) Hence, the era of the inclusive economy has started, money started flowing in the hands of women. But she has to manage it appropriately, there are many cases where women are simply trapped in loans because of her commitments to family. Ultimately she is made to face the pressure of repayment of those debts with interest.

In the job market, gender bias is felt as women are not paid equally with their counterparts for the same nature of service put in. In the unorganised sectors they don't follow the equal remuneration policy, though there is a law to this effect in the constitution of India. In the district of D K, rural and urban areas the disparity in the payment of wages to men and women persists. In the process of demand of Labour Unions women issues are side-lined. Hence, women organizations have to come forward to get the attention of the government and authority and come out with fruitful policies in the interest of gender. Let there be a forum to tackle the grievances of such women working in the unorganized sector. (Sangappa Jyothi and Kave Laxman, 2010) Women put in more amount of labour than men, but in spite of that her labour can't be ignored and she surely needs to be paid equally with men. Proper mechanism need to work out in this regard to remove such ill practices against women to degrade them.

Table No. 7

Gender Gap in Work Participation in Dakshina Kannada District

Male workers		Female worker		Total	Gender Gap
No.	Percent	No.	Percent	Number	Percent
620903	62.23	376818	37.77	997721	24.46

Source: Census 2011

The above table shows that there is a gender gap of 24.46 percentage in work participation in the district. As women mainly occupy in the non-remunerative job or employed in the non-organised sector, her job is not taken in account many a time. There are various factors which has pushed women to remain jobless or perform household chores. As women are naturally given with the task of bearing and rearing children, when it comes to the choice of quitting the job she has to do the sacrifice. She is forced to remain at home and take care of children and other family members.

Women in the district at large are engaged in the household industry or agrarian work. Urban poor and rural women are predominantly dependent on beedi rolling for their livelihood. Women put in physical labour in the cultivation but hardly few women are recognised as cultivators, as property is registered in the name of male. So this is evident that she is not given her proper share in her economic participation and her position continue to be subordinate to male in the economic sphere even.

VIII Crime against women

The studies and surveys held at the international level reveal that India is not a safe country for women in the world. Women are highly insecure in public transport and public places, it is evident from the several incidents of crimes against women and women tourists in India. There were 24923 incidents of rape cases booked in 2012. After Nirbaya case¹, which brought negative popularity to India the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 was passed whereby rape convicts are to be dealt with stringent punishment. Due to the male-dominated mind-set women have to face various forms of violence both mental and physical at home and public places. Gender stereotypes are manifested in the form of male domination at the social and economic field. In 2007 the state of Karnataka enforced the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, to safeguard women against all forms of atrocities and harassment within the four walls of the home. In the D K District women are active and would like to contribute herself in all possible ways. As she started entering into zone believed to be only meant for men due to traditional setup. She had to face new challenges to get herself adjusted with the family members and colleagues at the workplace, not prepared to accept the changes. Due to which she has to shoulder the dual responsibilities and try to manage and balance between both her role at home and job.

¹ The brutal gang rape of a 23 year old student in a running bus in, who boarded the bus with her boyfriend after watching movie, in the capital state of the nation Delhi in 2012. Which became sensational news as she died due to internal injuries in Singapore hospital, where she was taken for treatment. Several women organizations came forward to demand the amendment in the existing rape laws.

Table No. 8

Crimes against Women Registered in Dakshina Kannada District

Type of Crimes	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Physical violence	24	20	36	80
Mental torture	0	25	21	46
Financial harassment	0	0	0	0
Dowry related crime	4	15	27	46
Adultery	0	0	0	0
Family quarrel	0	0	0	0
Divorce	0	0	0	0
Rape	5	28	16	49
Property dispute and quarrel	0	0	0	0
Court cases registered	0	9	17	26
Sexual violence	0	24	27	51
others	31	44	49	124
Total	64	165	193	422

Source: Crime Records Bureau of Dakshina Kannada

The above table reveals the types of crimes against women registered at the Crime Records Bureau from 2009 to 2012. But this may not be the actual rate of crime, because there may be so many cases go unregistered and reported. Many a time girls are forced to be silent as the offender is the relative or family member, especially the case of rape of minors or young women are covered up. (Noronha R, et al, 2011) But then, the data reveals that there has been a rise in the number of crimes recorded. Local people are more enlightened about the existing laws and to take necessary measures when such cases take place around them.

Though the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Prevention Act is passed by the Indian Parliament in 2013,² a large number of young women are working as sales girls are denied with the basic needs at the workplace. Desperate need of jobs for survival makes them to adjust to the situation and sometimes this may lead to several health issues among women. Let the measure be taken to extend the safeguard for women even working in the private sectors.

The year-wise data shows the increasing trend in the crimes committed against women. The highest number of crimes against women relate to physical violence. In 2009-10, the number of cases registered was 24 which increased to 36 in 2011-12. Other major crimes against women as per the registered cases were sexual violence and harassment of women. In 2011, 28 rape cases were registered Mangalore city. Surprisingly, 16 cases of harassment of women for dowry in the district have been reported during the last three years. 46 cases were also registered in the case of mental torture. It is possible that in the past most of such cases were not reported but now with setting up Women Counselling Centres in taluk and improved education level of women, the reporting of such cases will increase.

Table No. 9

Crime against Women in Dakshina Kannada District: 2015

State	Rape	Assault on women	Insult to the Modesty of women
DK	33	181	12
Karnataka	589	5112	154
India	34651	82422	82422

² The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Prevention Act, 2013 is legislative act passed by the Indian Parliament, to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of women employees.

Source: Karnataka District Factbook Dakshina Kannada District

The above table shows that the crimes booked against women in the year 2015 in Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka and India. Crimes such as rape, assault on women and insult to the modesty of women are seen in the district of Dakshina Kannada. In 2015 there have been 33 cases of rape, 181 cases of assault on women and 12 cases of insult to the modesty of women registered in the district, which is relatively low compared to the state of Karnataka and India. There is one police station for women out of the total 29 police station in the DK district.³

Table No. 10

Crime against women in the year 2014 and 2015

2014			2015		
Rape	Molestation	Dowry death	Rape	Molestation	Dowry death
40	94	10	52	103	1

Source: Police Station, Pandeshwar, Mangalore

The data drawn from the police station in Mangalore Taluk on the crime against women during 2014 and 2015, reveals that there was steady rise in the rape and molestation cases, but the rate of dowry death is declined.

Families with the drunkard and irresponsible husbands where wives are compelled to take up jobs. These helpless women have to bear the responsibility of the whole family. Moreover, they are constantly tortured physically and mentally by husbands for money for liquor. Usually, such women lack knowledge about the legal, socio-economic assistance provided to them by the government or other agencies. In such a circumstances the life of women will be hell, but they bear all sufferings for the sake of children and the continuity of their family life.

The Women and Child Development Committee in its annual report to the state assembly highlighted on the 335 missing girls in the Dakshina Kannada District in three years and thereby appealed to the state government to intervene in this regard. In the district of, D K women face various forms of crimes on day-today basis. Some are registered others go unregistered, these crimes are levelled against women who are innocent and silently bear the pain for the survival of themselves and their families. Its high time women must speak up against all forms of violence and crimes against women. Though there is adequate legislation passed to assist women but if those are not applied will remain only on documents.

IX Insecure public spaces for women

The modern, educated young women entered into the public domain to serve in their various capacities. Such a transition in the system gave rise to resistance and conflicts. New forms of jobs and roles are taken up by skilled and qualified women at higher positions. This has led to the hardship in digestion of a change in the work atmosphere among those men brought up with the traditional mind set of gender-specific roles. Women are targeted and unnecessarily troubled by male colleagues in all the possible ways. This discourages women generally soft by nature and disturbs their health both mental and physical.

Young girls and women are not safe in public places in recent years due to the development of certain elements in the district. Violation of women's rights such as in 2009 incident of women chased by the mob, slapped, kicked and dragged by their hair at one of the pubs at the outskirts of Mangalore, by men follower of the political party. After years of proceedings and hearings in the judiciary at district and high court, culprits were let free without any stringent punishment as there wasn't enough evidence of their crime in the pub. In the name of moral, values and culture women's freedom of movement is restricted which creates an atmosphere of fear among women.

There are increasing cases of rape, murder and suicide among teenage girls of school and college students in the district. With the pressure of organizations, activists and parents authorities are made to undertake

³ Source Director General of Police, as on 31-3-2012

investigation but very often since influencing people are involved in it, we have failed in providing justice. This further leads to the recurrence of such incidence as our system is projected as not paying much attention to atrocities on women. Such negligence shown by authorities towards gender issues surely is a matter of concern at this juncture.

In the region of D K women are left with greater responsibilities, especially when they are unmarried, widows or single parents. These women are made to face social stigma and are easy prey to those evil-minded men with the intention to abuse women and young girls. As they lack the support of their family these women either have to suffer or fight their battle on their own. Seeking the support of police or authority in times of need would be difficult for her due to the attitude of people. This makes them vulnerable, prone to exploitation and forced to lead a life with constant fear and threat.

There is also a sort of moral policing done on the young couples at shopping malls, parks and other public places, especially if both belong to different caste/religion. Right to life and freedom of movement including access to public spaces to all persons irrespective of their gender is a significant variable in assessing gender equality. Women have entered the public spaces to a much greater extent than in the past in the district of DK.

X Suggestions

- Prepare women to embrace the change and act accordingly to fit the modern expectations of society.
- Active participation of governmental and non-governmental organisations to work with women for their effective contributions in socio-economic and political fields.
- Women to be treated as equal partners at home, workplace and society.
- Education and Health of women to be given at most priority by women and families.
- Recognise the achievements of women in the various areas and project them as role models.
- Awareness to be created among the rural women about the policies of the government towards women empowerment.
- Paying attention to minimise the crimes and atrocities on women at home and public places
- Adopt measures for the inclusive growth of rural and urban poor women.

XI Conclusion

Women are pushed to face several problems, due to the traditional and cultural aspects. The major incidents of violation of rights of women in the district in recent years shook the citizens and NGOs to focus on bringing better conditions of life for girls and women, so that such incidents do not repeat in the future. The male-dominated social, economic, political and cultural fields, restricts women's freedom to involve themselves as equal partners in the private and public sphere. Looking at all these issues of indicates that there is an urgent need to address the gender related issues. Along with the efforts of government to come out with the fruitful policies for the socio- economic enhancement of the status of women, there is also a need for such agencies contributing to create awareness about such policies to people at various level. There are number of originations taken up this task and contributing satisfactorily in reaching out to women at the grass-roots levels. In all the possible ways these organizations are extending their support towards the cause of women.

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