THEOLOGICAL REASONS FOR GENDER INJUSTICE IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

THESIS

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by

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SELF ATTESTATION

Certified that I have personally worked on the research entitled **Theological reasons for Gender Injustice in India: An Analysis**. The data mentioned in the research report have been generated during the work and are genuine. Data information obtained from other agencies have been duly acknowledged. None of the findings/ information pertaining to the work has been concealed. The results embodied in this research report have not be submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

Place: Allahabad — Rev Sheela Jeyaraj

Date: 13 November 2018 — **ID: 10PHTH208**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gender inequality in Chennai caught my attention, when I was about 13 years of age. At that time, I saw a discarded female infant in a dust pin along a road. The fact that I could not anything to save that life lingered in my mind. After my marriage in December 1986, I got three girls; as I was raising them, I heard uninvited comments about the lack of a son in my family and I wanted to find out the reasons behind son preference and corresponding daughter negligence in my neighbourhood. After my daughters began higher studies, I devoted my time to inform myself of gender situation in India. I observed gender injustice in Chennai and wondered why gender studies in the fields of sociology, economy, pedagogy and governance did not generate appropriate ideas and tools to create a gender-just society. I tried to identify the roots of the problem, which possibly nourish other causes for gender injustice. I found a theological root in the Law of Manu (9:137–138), for example, and I wanted to probe it further; these efforts led me to this thesis.

I am grateful to the authorities of the Faculty of Theology at *The Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences* (SHUATS) in Allahabad for giving me an opportunity to explore my quest at a doctoral level. There, I could observe how, under the leadership of the Honourable Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr R. B. Lal, several scholars in the faculties of theology, agriculture, technology and sciences practiced their Christian faith in educating and equipping the students to meet the diverse needs of the country. I express my sincere thanks to Bishop D.K. Sahu, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, for his encouragement, advice and timely help in many occasions.

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There were times, when I did not know how to proceed further. An occasion came, when I happened to meet Mrs. Nirmala Jesudasan and Dr. R.W. Alexander Jesudasan, the Principal of Madras Christian College in Chennai. The way they both counselled me renewed my hope and gave me strength to persevere. I am grateful to them for their timely advice. I am grateful to all librarians in different institutions and friends who helped me to find necessary literature. Dr. Robinson Thamburaj, Associate Professor at Madras Christian College in Chennai, procured me important Tamil works on the position of women in Tamil culture. I thank him for this gesture of kindness.

I am deeply indebted to my parents, Mrs. Esther Kamalam and Mr. T. P. Manickam. Both of them are no longer alive. They would have rejoiced in the success of their daughter. My father especially stood with me during my early theological studies in Chennai. I also wish to record my sincere thanks to Mrs. Esther Rani Ponniah, my mother-in-law. She passed away in May 2003. Her exemplary lifestyle and positive outlook to life, however, remain before me always. For me, she remains an incomparable role model. She considered me not merely her daughter-in-law, but a daughter. My relationship with her was a rare privilege. Though she never enjoyed a formal academic education and became a widow at a young age in 1975, she educated her six children well and contributed her enduring share to enhancing gender justice in India.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for their understanding, support and constant encouragement from the time of my registration in SHUATS until I defended my thesis. My daughters Rebecca, Elisabeth and Ruth often inspired me with the statement: ‘Mummy, you can do it!’ It is perhaps fitting that I dedicate this thesis to them. I wish that their generation would experience a greater and more meaningful degree of gender justice and equality. With joy, I thank my husband, the Reverend Professor Dr Daniel Jeyaraj for standing with me from

the start and finish of this research project. Without his active support, I would have faced insurmountable difficulties in procuring relevant research materials. He patiently explained to me problematic concepts and motivated me to move ahead. Likewise, I thank my siblings, relatives and friends for their support. They accompanied me in my academic journey. Especially, I thank heartily Mrs. Florence Vasantha David, my sister-in-law, for her assistance during my research activities. Above all, with the writer of the Psalm 9:1, "I give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart" (NRSV) for meeting all my needs and granting me grace and peace to complete this research project.

During the course of my research, I developed a special appreciation for the insightful teaching of Genesis 1:27–28: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them" (NRSV). The image of God provides a powerful theological key to unlock the problems of gender injustice, because it upholds the dignity, nobility, equality, freedom and creativity of both women and men; from the beginning of their creation, women and men should complement each other not only in private homes, but also in all aspects of their public life as well. The later assertion that the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God remains the image of God (Colossians 1:15) enabled me to understand gender issues from a different light, namely, human beings can regain or renew the image of God, which they bear. This new theological understanding adds strength to other existing attempts to create a more gender-just society than the one, which the women of my generation have inherited in India. It allows me to hope for a better future for all women and men and work along with all concerned stakeholders towards achieving it in the areas of my influence.

Reverend Sheela Jeyaraj

November 2018

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides the first exclusive analysis of theological reasons for the persistence of gender injustice in India. Gender injustice is not only associated with social, economic, legal, and political factors, but its theological causes have deep roots in foundational Sanskrit religious writings. For example, a father needs a son to liberate his soul from the *Put*-hell, to perform the *anteyeṣṭi* and to regularly maintain the *śrāddha* ceremonies.

It is striking that the influential religious writings such as the *Ṛgveda* or the most important works on Tamil grammar and life such as *Tolkāppiyam* and *Tirukkuṟaḷ* convey ambiguous views of women. The origin stories of women in Sanskrit religious writings do not consider women on par with men. Normally, women are presented as goddesses and demons, as mothers of sons or spiritual temptresses of men. In every age, there were few exceptional individual women, who challenged the male-cantered attitude and behaviour for their times. Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (III.8), Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), Krupabai Sattianadhan (1862–1894), Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and other female reformers were 'rebels' of their time.

Drastic social changes began occurring in the early decades of 19th century. British legislators, Indian reformers, architects of modern legal systems in India and numerous nongovernmental agencies tirelessly sought ways to promote the welfare and wellbeing of women in all aspects of their lives. Thus far, they achieved partial success. As a result, most Indian women, who had formal education, are in better positions than their predecessors.

Women in India do not yet enjoy the full measure of gender justice. Policymakers blame the Indian mindset as the cause for persisting gender injustice. They assume that this mindset remains unchanging and is unchangeable It is evident that gender injustice is more than a social, political, economic and educational issue. It also has theological roots, which should be addressed. This thesis, therefore, offers a theological approach that derives its insights from humans, especially women, being created in God's image enjoying equality, dignity, sanctity, creativity and mutual responsibility (Genesis 1:27) and from a new and higher thinking (*metanoia,* in Mark 1:15).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement xi

Abstract xv

Table of Contents xvii

Abbreviations xxiii

System of Transliteration xxv

Glossary of Select Words xxvii

Introduction 1

1.1 Research justification 1

1.2 Research problem 3

1.3 Research objectives 5

1.4 Research fields 5

1.5 Possible beneficiaries 6

1.6 Clarification of basic concepts 6

1.6.1 Christian theology and gender issues 6

1.6.2 Gender 7

1.6.3 Gender imbalance 9

1.6.4 Gender injustice 11

1.6.5 Sanskrit sources 15

1.6.6 Tamil sources 16

1.6.7 Biblical sources 17

1.7 Research methodology 18

1.7.1 Text critical approaches 18

1.7.2 Self-narrative approach 20

1.7.3 Not-only-but-also approach 21

1.8 Research scope and limitation 23

1.8.1 Regarding the main purpose....23
1.8.2 Regarding the historical frame of reference....24
1.8.3 Regarding the selected literature....25
1.9 Research structure....26
Chapter 1: Literature review....28
1.1 Female infanticide and son preference....28
1.2 *Devadāsī*-System and prostitution....34
1.3 Dowry and violence against women....38
Chapter 2: Women and Gender in Sanskrit Sources....43
2.1 Theological assumption: 'man containing the woman'....43
2.1.1 The Primal Man and the accidental woman....44
2.1.2 The woman as a 'thought' of the Primal Man....47
2.1.3 The Supreme Being as a man and a woman....50
2.1.4 The birth of a son as a sign of his father's 'salvation'....51
2.1.5 The son as the 'promoter' of his father via funeral ceremonies....55
2.2 Women: adorable, ambiguous and abominable....58
2.2.1 Divine Women as Goddesses....58
2.2.2 Divine women as wives and mothers....61
2.2.3 Real women as daughters, wives and mothers....63
2.3 Earliest female philosophers: Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī....67
2.4 The Perfect Wife: Sanskrit views from Tañcāvūr....70
Chapter 3: Women and Gender in Tamil Sources....75
3.1 Growing impact of Sanskrit on the Tamil people....75
3.2 Women in the *Caṅkam*-Period....77
3.2.1 Women in Tolkāppiyam....77
3.2.2 Chaste women in *Akam*-Literature....79
3.2.3 Self-negating women in *Akam*-Literature....81

3.2.4 Self-immolating women in *Akam*-Literature 83
3.3 Women during the Transitional Period (100–600 CE) 86
3.3.1 Impact of Jainism and Buddhism on Tamil women 86
3.3.2 Women in Tirukkuṟaḷ 88
3.4 Women in Cilappatikāram 92
3.5 Women in Tamil Bhakti Movements (600–900 CE) 95
3.6 Women in Tamil writings from (900–1800 CE) 99
3.6.1 Women in Tamil Epic Literature 99
3.6.2 Women in Didactic Literature 101
3.6.3 Women in Siddha Literature 105
3.7 Gender contexts of 19th and 20th century Tamil India 108
3.7.1 Christian missionaries in Tamil India and their contributions 108
3.7.2 Social Changes in Tamil India and their impacts 112
3.8 Reformers and gender equality in Tamil India 114
3.8.1 Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927) 115
3.8.2 Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953) 120
3.8.3 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) 122
3.8.4 Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973) 124
Chapter 4: Women and Gender in British India 126
4.1 British fight against female infanticide in India until 1813 126
4.1.1 Charles Grant's views on India in need of moral transformation 127
4.1.2 Impact of Jonathan Duncan on curbing female infanticide 129
4.1.3 Impact of Alexander Walker on curbing female infanticide 132
4.2 Opening India for Anglican work since 1813 133
4.3 Christian contributions to prohibit *satī* in 1829 134
4.4 British attempts to educate girls in India until 1854 138
4.4.1 Pre-British female education in Tamil India 138

4.4.2 Origins of British education for girls in India 140
4.5 British attempts to educate girls in India since 1854 142
4.5.1 Charles Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854 142
4.5.2 Female education and Protestant missionaries 144
4.6 Impact of Queen Victoria's Declaration on Christians 147
4.7 Key British laws to empower Indian women 148
4.7.1 The Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act (1856) 149
4.7.2 The Indian Penal Code (1860) defending women's dignity and honour 151
4.7.3 The Indian Divorce Act (1869) 153
4.7.4 The Act preventing the murder of female infants (1870) 155
4.7.5 The Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872) 156
4.8 Reforms by Savitribai Phule and Jotirao Govindrao Phule 157
4.9 Reforms by Krupabai Satthianadhan 159
4.10 Reforms by Pandita Ramabai 161
Chapter 5: Women and Gender in Independent India 163
5.1 Constitutional rights, obligations and privileges 163
5.2 Examples of Indian laws empowering women 165
5.3 Supreme Court's judgement on *talaq* (1985 and 2017) 170
5.4 Supreme Court's judgement on women's inheritance 173
5.5 Examples of Indian laws pertaining to girl children 175
5.5.1 Regarding child marriage 175
5.5.2 Regarding trafficking of girls 176
5.5.3 Regarding sex determination and feticide 177
5.6 Agencies trying to move Indians towards gender equality 179
5.6.1 Indian government agencies for gender parity 179
5.6.2 Non-government agencies to empower women 183
5.7 Gender injustice in contemporary India 186

5.7.1 The plight of Dalit women 186
5.7.2 Gender issues at Pan-India level 189
5.7.3 Persistence of child marriages 191
5.7.4 Missing Indian women 194
5.8 Increasing instances of rape 196
5.9 Gender injustice in contemporary Tamil India 203
5.9.1 Efforts to improve gender justice in Tamil Nadu 203
5.9.2 Continuing gender injustice in Tamil Nadu 207
5.9.3 Unchanging gender mindset of Indians 213
Chapter 6: Image of God, Women and Gender in the Bible 218
6.1 Man and Woman in the Image of God in Genesis 218
6.1.1 Man and woman in Genesis 1:26–2:3 219
6.1.2 Man and woman in Genesis 2:4–24 221
6.1.3 Complementarity readings of Genesis 1:26–2:3 and 2:4–24 225
6.1.4 Matriarchal perspectives of Genesis 2:22–3:1–24 228
6.1.5 Ezer: the female helper helping the helpless male 230
6.1.6 Humanity in the Image of God 232
6.2 Image of God in the rest of the Hebrew Bible 234
6.3 Jewish women before and during Jesus' time 237
6.4 Greco-Roman women before and during Jesus' time 241
6.5 Jesus as Image of God and women in the Gospels 244
6.5.1 Jesus as the Image of God and Saviour 245
6.5.2 Jesus and non-Jewish women as a gender issue 247
6.6 Paul and women covering their heads as a gender issue 254
6.7 Paul and women's subordination as a gender issue 257
Conclusion 262
Bibliography 271

Primary sources....271
Printed books....271
Tamil literature in digital form....273
Legal documents of India and UN declarations in digital form....274
Surveys by Government of India....277
Court cases and judgements....278
Unpublished PhD dissertations....279
Secondary sources....281
Essays in journals, edited books and online sources....281
Books....286
Articles from newspapers, magazines and television broadcasts....289

ABBREVIATIONS

BCE	Before Common Era = B.C. Before Christ
c.	*circa* (‘about’)
CE	Common Era = A.D. = *Anno Domini* (‘in the year of the Lord’)
cf.	*confer* (‘consult’)
Ed.	Editor or edition
Eds.	Editors
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
HIV/AIDS	*Human Immunodeficiency Virus* / the *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*
i.e.,	*ist est* (‘that is’)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version Bible (1989)
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
rpt.	Reprint
Skt.	Sanskrit
Tam.	Tamil
Tel.	Telugu
Vol.	Volume

Note: Names of languages such as Hebrew or Greek, the names of the biblical books, the titles of the Sanskrit scriptures and Tamil writings are not abbreviated, but appear in full form. Their transliteration follows the sources, from which they are quoted.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

Tamil vowels and consonants

Tamils vowels and consonants are transliterated according to the system of transliteration prescribed by the *Tamil Lexicon* (1924–1936, rpt. 1982).

Vowels

அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ	எ	ஏ	ஐ	ஒ	ஓ	ஔ	ஃ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	ē	ai	o	ō	au	ak

Consonants

க்	ங்	ச்	ஞ்	ட்	ண்	த்	ந்	ப்	ம்	ய்	ர்	ல்	வ்	ழ்	ள்	ற்	ன்
k	ñ	c	ṅ	ṭ	ṇ	t	n	p	m	y	r	l	v	l̲	ḷ	r̲	n̲

Sanskrit, Hebrew and Greek words

The sources of transliteration of Sanskrit, Hebrew and Greek words are given in the footnote entries.

GLOSSARY OF SELECT WORDS

This alphabetically arranged glossary gives meanings of select words and phrases that are not readily clear. It does not include titles of books, journals or their chapters. Likewise, it does list the names of persons, castes, movements, places, legal documents such as Acts, Constitutions, Declarations and Laws, court cases or institutions.

’ish	Heb.	a man
’ishshāh	Heb.	a woman
accam	Tam.	fear
ādām	Heb.	the man, humanity
Aditi, Āditya	Skt.	the Unlimited, Infinite
Advaita	Skt.	the philosophy of ‘no-two-ness’
Agni	Skt.	fire, Fire-God
Aham	Skt.	I, I am
Aiyaṉār	Tam.	a male village god, a guardian god
Akam	Tam.	inside, within oneself, one’s home
Amantravat	Tam.	a person without any Vedic verse
ammai	Tam.	mother
aṇaṅku	Tam.	a beautiful girl
andros	Gk.	man, husband (as in I Timothy 2:11–15)
Aṅkāḷammaṉ	Tam.	the uniting Mother-Goddess
aṉpu	Tam.	love
anteyeṣṭi	Skt.	the ‘last sacrifice’
aṟam	Tam.	discernment, virtue, ethics
Āraṇyaka	Skt.	forest-teaching
Ardhanārīśvara	Skt.	the lord, whose half is a woman, Śiva
arsén	Gk.	male, man (as in Mark 10:6)
āshāh	Heb.	to make, accomplish
asura	Skt.	a non-hero, demon
Ātman	Skt.	Soul
authenteó	Gk.	to control (as in I Timothy 2:11–15)
bānāh	Heb.	to build
bārā	Heb.	to make, fashion
bhakti	Skt.	ardent devotion
Brahmā	Skt.	the first of the *Trimūrti*
Brahmachārin	Skt.	an unmarried student
Brahman	Skt.	the Supreme Being
Brahmin	Skt.	the first of the four-fold *Varṇa*
Camaṇarkaḷ	Tam.	Jains
Caṅkam	Tam.	an assembly
Cāṉṟāṉmai	Tam.	nobility
Cāṉṟōr	Tam.	noble people

cati	Tam.	the true woman (Skt.: *satī*)
cattiram	Tam.	a way-side rest-houses for pilgrims and travellers
chavvah	Heb.	life, the meaning of the name of the first woman Eve
cilampu	Tam.	anklet
cittar	Tam.	The wise ones (Skt.: *Siddha*)
cukkilam	Tam.	semen
Dakṣa	Skt.	Śiva's father-in-law
dāna	Skt.	a donation
demūth	Heb.	a resemblance, similitude
devadāsī	Skt.	a female servant of god
dharma	Tam.	that which sustains, righteousness, religion
Durgā	Skt.	the Inaccessible Goddess
eikōn	Gk.	an image (as in 1 Corinthians 11:7)
Ellaiyammaṉ	Tam.	mother of boundary, Boundary-Goddess
Elōhīm	Heb.	an honorific plural noun for God
eṅkaḷ teivam	Tam.	our deity
ezer	Heb.	help, helper
Grāmadevatā	Skt.	a village deity, guardian goddess
Gṛhastha	Skt.	a married householder
hésuchia	Gk.	stillness, quietness (as in I Timothy 2:11–15)
Homa	Skt.	a sacrificial fire
homoiósis	Gk.	a resemblence
hupotagé	Gk.	submission (as in I Timothy 2:11–15)
Ilvāḻkkai	Tam.	family life
iṉpam	Tam.	pleasure
iṟaimai	Tam.	being divine
Īśāna	Skt.	sun, the East-knowledge
iṭaikkaṟpu	Tam.	the second-level chastity of a wodow
iyalpu	Tam.	custom
japa	Skt.	recitation
jāti	Skt.	a birth group
kaimai	Tam.	widowhood
kalaimakaḷ	Tam.	a woman, a goddess of education, arts
kalantoṭā makaḷir	Tam.	mensurating women, who do not touch vessels
Kālī	Skt.	the black Goddess
kalvi	Tam.	education
kaṇikaiyar	Tam.	a female dancer, who can sell her services to men
Kaṇṇaki	Tam.	the wife of *Kōvalaṉ*
kaṇṇōṭṭam	Tam.	discernment
karman	Skt.	action, deed
karmasaṃskāra	Skt.	cycle of birth and death
kaṟpu	Tam.	marital chastity, loyalty
karu	Tam.	a foetus
karuṇai	Tam.	compassion
kaṭaikkaṟpu	Tam.	the lowest-level chastity of a widow
kātal	Tam.	love between a lover and his beloved
kiḻavaṉ	Tam.	a mature male

kiḻavi	Tam.	a mature female
kollāmai	Tam.	non-killing
kōtai	Tam.	garland
Kōvalaṉ	Tam.	the husband of *Kaṇṇaki*
kravyavāhana	Skt.	flesh-conveying
Kṣatriya	Skt.	the second of the four-fold *Varṇa*
Kūṟṟu	Tam.	the God of Death
Kusa	Skt.	a son of *Sītā* and *Rāma*, identical to *Lava*
Lakṣmana	Skt.	*Rāmā*'s brother
Lakṣmī	Skt.	a consort of Viṣṇu
laqāch	Heb.	to take
Lava	Skt.	a son of *Sītā* and *Rāma*, identical to *Kusa*
logos	Gk.	Word, referring to the pre-existence of Jesus in John 1:1
Mahābhārata	Skt.	the Great Story, an epic
Mahiṣa	Skt.	a buffalo demon
mai	Tam.	ink
Makkaṭpēṟu	Tam.	blessings of children
mantra	Skt.	a short saying, a prayer
Māriyammaṉ	Tam.	Mother, Goddess of Smallpox'
maṭam	Tam.	folly-like behaviour
Mātavi	Tam.	the female dancer, with him *Kōvalaṉ* lived for a while
mati	Tam.	mind
Māttammā	Tel.	the woman, who has exchanged her husband, a goddess
Mīṉāṭci	Tam.	the fish-eyed Goddess of Madurai
Mohinī	Skt.	an enchantress
mōkam	Tam.	delusion, passion
mokṣa	Skt.	liberation, bliss, salvation
muntuṟutal	Tam.	disgust on uninformed assumptions, childishness, forbearance
Murukaṉ	Tam.	The second son of *Śiva*
mutti	Tam.	bliss (Skt.: *mokṣa*)
nalloḻukam	Tam.	good behaviour
nāṇam	Tam.	shying evil things
nāṇam	Tam.	feminine modesty, prudency
ñāṉam	Tam.	wisdom
Nandīśvara	Skt.	the bull-shaped servant of Śiva
Nāyaṇār	Tam.	leader
neqebah	Heb.	a female person (in Genesis 2:23)
Nirṛti	Skt.	Strength, Wealth, Well-Being
oppuravu	Tam.	reconciliatory attitude
paṟaiyar	Tam.	a drummer, a Pariah community
parattai	Tam.	prostitute
Pārvatī	Skt.	a consort of Śiva
Paśupati	Skt.	the lord of cow, *Śiva*
Pativratā	Skt.	a wife, who adores her husband as a deity
patiyilār	Tam.	a widow
Patnī	Skt.	the wife, whose husband lives, mistress of the house
pattiṉi	Tam.	the wife, who is faithful to her husband

Pauttarkaḷ	Tam.	Buddhists
pāvappiṟavi	Tam.	sin-birth
payirppu	Tam.	disgust on uninformed assumptions
Peṇmai	Tam.	femininity
peṇmai	Tam.	femininity
Peṇvaḻic Cēṟal	Tam.	the husband, who follows the instructions of his wife
perumai	Tam.	greatness
pētamai	Tam.	childishness
pēy	Tam.	devil, goblin, evil, madness
pinda	Skt.	a rice ball
piṟaṉporuḷāḷ	Tam.	the woman, who belongs to another man
poṟai	Tam.	forbearance
poruḷ	Tam.	wealth
potumakaḷ	Tam.	a common woman, a prostitute
Prajāpati	Skt.	the Lord of the Universe
Prakṛti	Skt.	nature, matter, earth
preta	Skt.	ghost, evil spirit, the spirit of a dead person
Pṛthivī	Skt.	Earth
Puja	Skt.	worship
puṉiṟṟu makaḷir	Tam.	mothers, who are untouchables immediately after giving birth
puṉitamāṉa ceyal	Tam.	meritorious deed
Puṟam	Tam.	outside, outside of oneself outside one's home
Puruṣa	Skt.	the Primal Person, man
Putalvaṉ	Tam.	son
putra	Skt.	a son, who delivers the soul of his father from the put-hell
rādāh	Heb.	to reign, dominion, tread, and trample
Rāmāyaṇa	Skt.	*Rāmā*'s journey, an epic
Rātrī	Skt.	Night
Rāvaṇa	Skt.	*Rāmā*'s enemy, the ruler of *Laṅka*
Śaivabhakti	Skt.	*Śiva*-devotion
Śaivite	Skt.	a follower of *Śiva*
Śakti	Skt.	female energy, goddess
Sannyāsin	Skt.	a renouncer
Sarasvatī	Skt.	a consort of Brahmā
satī	Skt.	the true woman, who self-immolates on the funeral pyre of her dead husband
Sītā	Skt.	furrow, the wife of *Rāma*
Śiva	Skt.	*Civam* in Tam., the Supreme Being of the *Śaivites*
sophia	Gk.	wisdom
sózó	Gk.	to heal, preserve, rescue (as in I Timothy 2:11–15)
śrāddha	Skt.	ancestor ceremony
Śruti	Skt.	that which is heard, revealed scripture
Strīdhan	Skt.	gift to the married daughter, dowry
Śūdra	Skt.	the fourth of the four-fold *Varṇa*
Svadharma	Skt.	one's innate *dharma*
talaikkaṟpu	Tam.	the supreme chastity of a widow
tāli	Tam.	a marriage badge

taluk	Urdu	an administrative unit of a district
Tañcāvūr	Tam.	a place of refuge, a region in Tam. Nadu
tapas	Skt.	austerities
tāy	Tam.	A mother
tāymai	Tam.	motherhood
tēvalōkam	Tam.	world of deities
teyvam	Tam.	a deity
thélus	Gk.	female, woman (as in Mark 10:6)
tiṇṇai	Tam.	raised, mound-like mud-benches in front of homes
tiṇṇaipaḷḷikkūṭam	Tam.	a veranda school
tīpukutal	Tam.	entering the fire, self-immolation of a widow
tirumakaḷ,	Tam.	a holy woman, a goddess
tōṭṭi	Tam.	scavenger
Trimūrti	Skt.	three-form, namely Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva
tsela	Heb.	rib, side
tselem	Heb.	an image, likeness
tuṟavaṟam	Tam.	giving up, asceticism
tūymai	Tam.	cleanliness, purity
ulakappotumaṟai	Tam.	the common scripture for the world, all people
ūḻiṉ valimai	Tam.	the power of past *karma*
ūḻviṉai	Tam.	past karma
uraṉ	Tam.	vigour
Urmensch	German	the first man
Urvaśī	Skt.	a female celestial being
Uṣa	Skt.	Dawn
uṭaṉkaṭṭai ēṟutal	Tam.	mounting the burning pyre, self-immolation of a widow
uṭaṉmāytal	Tam.	killing oneself with another person, elf-immolation of a widow
uyarntōr	Tam.	the noble or elevated ones
uyir	Tam.	life
Vāc, Vak	Skt.	speech, sound, creative matter, a goddess
Vaidhavya	Skt.	widowhood
Vaiṣṇavabhakti	Skt.	*Viṣṇu*-devotion
Vaiśya	Skt.	the third of the four-fold *Varṇa*
Vanaprastha	Skt.	a forest-dweller
varaiviṉmakaḷir	Tam.	those women, who sell their services to men
Varṇa	Skt.	(four-fold) socio-religious category
vaṭamoḻi	Tam.	a northern language
vāymai	Tam.	truthfulness in speech
vāyu	Skt.	air, wind, breath
vilaimakaḷ	Tam.	a woman for sale, a prostitute
Virāj	Skt.	Self
Viṣṇu	Skt.	the second person of the Trimūrti
vīṭṭiṟkkut tūramāṉavarkaḷ	Tam.	menstruating women, who stay away from home
vīṭu	Tam.	the final home, attaining individual non-existence
vivāha	Skt.	marriage

vrata	Skt.	a vow
yādha	Heb.	to know, to have sexual intimacy
Yellammā	Tel.	a goddess
YHWH	Heb.	God's name, read as *Adonai* ('Lord') or Ha-Shem ('the Name) or Yahweh
YHWH–'Elōhīm	Heb.	The LORD God
zakar	Heb.	a male person (in Genesis 2:23)
zenanas	Persian	enclosed houses, women's quarters
zo'th	Heb.	this one (feminine)

INTRODUCTION

Gender injustice is a long-standing problem in India. Indian patriarchal mindset has solidified over a long time and finds it hard to ensure necessary justice for girls and women. From their conception to their cremation, women do not enjoy the rights and privileges that are freely available to men. Studies in gender have already examined nearly every problem, which women face and endure. Yet, they do not usually see the problems of women as a matter of justice. For example, the four-volume *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*[1] does not have a separate entry for either *justice* or *injustice*. Unjust gender perceptions and prejudices manifest themselves in biases and discriminatory practices at home as well as in the public sphere. They range from access to nutritious food and education to owning properties and freely making decisions about one's life. Undertaking advisory, preventive and punitive efforts to promote gender equality and negotiated relationships between distressed women and men have borne partial results.

Nevertheless, traditional socio-religious constructions of masculinity and femininity, which are not necessarily associated with the biological and psychological differences between women and men, operate at sub-conscious levels of Indians and reveal themselves in all social intuitions including families, schools, politics, economics, law courts, hospitals and even in graveyards. Theological perceptions of masculinity and femininity underlie these socio-cultural issues of gender and gender justice. Thus far, these have remained unexplored.

0.1 Research justification

This thesis examines the theological reasons that lie beneath the gender injustice in India. These reasons serve as roots, which are firmly anchored in the scriptural, social, historical and traditional contexts. Existing studies, as shown in the next chapter on Literature Review, offer useful insights into the demographic, legal, social and economic reasons for gender injustice and their humanist, secular and developmental solutions. They assume that gender injustice is an economic problem associated with the upbringing, education, marriage and dowry of

[1] *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007.

daughters. Indian parents, mostly in rural settings, consider their daughters as moral and economic liabilities. Keeping the virginity of their unmarried daughters poses huge challenges. An unmarried daughter after puberty is a symbol of familial disgrace and shame. Additionally, patriarchal males abuse undefended girls and women not only in the society, but also in their homes; the life of a girl from her conception to her old age remains vulnerable. Legal efforts to protect unborn female foetuses, infants, girls, young and old women, and the educational and reformatory works of government and non-government agencies have resulted in partial success.

Still many forms of violence against women regularly happen; they include child marriages, female feticide, sexual assaults, dowry deaths, domestic violence, trafficking and prostitution. Girls and women suffer from lack of nutrition, formal education and medical care. Most marriageable women do not have freedom to choose their grooms or control their child bearing. Proportionately, few women own immovable properties. Despite the presence and activities of laws and courts, countless preventive and curative measures, gender injustice prevails. Indian parents continue to prefer sons to daughters[2]. This is one of the reasons, why, according to a data from January 2018, 21 million 'unwanted girls' were living in India.[3] Politicians, lawmakers, researchers and social activists blame the unchanging and seemingly unchangeable "mind-set" of Indians as the main cause for the persistence of gender injustice in India. They do not explore the theological reasons that underlie this problem. By examining these reasons, this thesis makes a distinct contribution to current discussion on gender injustice in India.

[2] "Budget 2018: Economic Survey: Arvind Subramanian says impacts of note ban, GST faded, highlights agenda for 2018," available online at https://scroll.in/latest/866790/animal-spirits-need-to-be-conjured-back-says-arvind-subramanian-in-economic-survey (accessed on 30 January 2018): *The Economic Survey of India 2017–2018*, published on 30 January 2018, bluntly stated that "Indian parents continue to have children until they get the desired number of sons".

[3] K. Deepalakshmi, "India's 'unwanted' girls: Economic Survey highlights how preference for sons is hurting daughters," *The Hindu* (30 January 2018), available online at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indias-unwanted-girls-economic-survey-highlights-how-preference-for-sons-is-hurting-daughters/article22592533.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 30 January 2018).

0.2 Research problem

This thesis asks the following main question: Why does gender injustice persist in India even after countless preventive, therapeutic and reformatory attempts to create a gender-just society have been made? This thesis has found out, as will be demonstrated in successive chapters, that powerful theological reasons lie hidden beneath the male-centred temporal and eschatological life in India. Temporally, fathers need sons to perpetuate their social, genealogical and economic legacy. Eschatologically, fathers need sons to free their souls from the Put-hell, to send them to the world of ancestors through the last rite of *anteyeṣṭi* and to observe *śrāddha* ceremonies at periodical intervals.

Tamil India did not remain immune to these Sanskrit notions of sons and fathers. Gradually, the Tamil people accepted and adapted these Sanskrit notions for their own life situations. For an example, they viewed that the spirits of the male ancestors as *teṉpulttār* ('southerners')[4]. The 43rd *Kuṟaḷ* asks the householders to honour their ancestors (*teṉpulttār*). Then they can pay their debts to their deities (*teyvam*), guests (*viruntu*), relatives (*tokkal*) and to themselves (*tāṉ*).[5] Secondly, Dhashanamurthy shows, how the Tamil fathers viewed the salvific role of the sons:

> It is the duty of the sons alone to honour the *teṉpulattār*. The Sanskrit speakers (lit. northerners) viewed those who have not born sons as infertile people. The Tamil too opined that even the mothers who gave birth only to female children or dead foetus were barren only. The Tamils of the *Caṅkam Age* believed that sons were absolutely essential for attaining fame in this world and to enjoy the bliss of the next world.[6]

Recently, Tamil lexicographers question the Sanskrit meaning of the noun *Putra* (the 'son, who pulls his father's soul from the *Put*-hell'). They understand the Tamil noun *puttiraṉ* (Skt.

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[4] Dhashanamurthy, A.: *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum* (in Tamil: *Civilisation and Culture of the Tamil People*), Chennai: Yāḻ Veḷiyīṭu, 1994. p. 155.

[5] Muṉucāmi Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai* (in Tamil: Tirukkuṟaḷ and Commentary, 1912), 176th ed., Tirunelvēli: Caivacittanta Nūṟpatippuk Kaḻakam, 2004, p. 11. Kuṟaḷ 43 reads as follows:

> தென்புலத்தார் தெய்வம் விருந்தொக்கல் தானென்றாங்கு
> ஐம்புலத்தாறு ஓம்பல் தலை
> (teṉpulattār teyvam viruntokkal tāṉeṉṟāṅku
> aimpulattāṟu ōmpal talai).

[6] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, pp. 155–156:"

putra) as an infant son, who is new (*putu*) to the family and who has just sprung forth (*pudalva*).[7] This meaning has not yet replaced theological implication of the Sanskrit word *Putra*. When it gets mixed with material issues such as marriage, inheritance, family lineage and prestige, it controls Indian psyche, which prefer sons to daughters. This thesis contends that the theological reasons have not been helpful to promote gender equality in India.

Therefore, this thesis analyzes the position of scholars, who assume that religious and theological views have not shaped socio-cultural contexts; instead, they propose that socio-cultural contexts of changing human societies have misappropriated the teachings of religious and theological texts. For example, Adair Lummis states that scholars "generally concur that religious tenets are not the cause of women's lesser standing in the liturgy and leadership of religious or secular communities and institutions. Rather, religious values are used to justify and 'explain' practices arising from more worldly sources for curtailing the leadership role of women."[8] She proceeds to examine the contributions or lack of contributions to gender issues in Abrahamic religions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and in Buddhism. Her survey does not engage with Sanskrit or Tamil sources.

0.3 Research objectives

1) To study the unexplored theological reasons that perpetuate gender injustice in India.
2) To examine gender issues in Sanskrit and Tamil sources, Biblical Studies, Women Studies, History of British India and History of Independent India
3) To demonstrate the efforts of the British administrators, English educators, social and religious reformers and Christian missionaries on issues of gender justice
4) To interpret Christian theology based on the Image of God and Christology and Christian efforts to establish gender justice

[7] *Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Pērakarāti* [in Tamil: 'Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil'], Vol. 6: Pa–Pau, Chennai: Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Akaramutalit tiṭṭa Iyakka Veḷiyīṭu, 2005, p. 297.

[8] Adair T. Lummis, "Gender and Religion", *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, ed. Janet Saltzman Chafetz, New York: Springer Science+Business Media LLC, 2006, pp. 601–618:602.

0.4 Research fields

This thesis is multidisciplinary. It draws insights from Sanskrit and Tamil texts on gender issues. It examines historical texts that originated in British India and in Independent India. It benefits from an analysis of relevant aspects from biblical theology, theological anthropology, history of Christianity, religious studies, textual exegesis, gender studies, Tamil studies, and history of India, demography, sociology, and feminism. Thus, this thesis recognises the social, cultural educational, economic and political aspects of the gender injustice. However, it believes that this problem is theological; hence, it offers a theological response to a theological problem.

0.5 Possible beneficiaries

This thesis will benefit all those who are concerned with the persisting problem of gender injustice in India. It has pointed out the hitherto overlooked theological reasons that do not accord equal status to women.

Secondly, those who make policies and laws or engage in governmental, non-governmental or church-based projects related to women and girl children will find this thesis helpful. As they grapple with the social, cultural, economic, educational, political reasons for gender injustice, they can now be aware of the theological reasons that might be lurking in their subconscious minds.

Thirdly, this thesis will benefit the ethnographers and other social scientists who study women-related issues in India. Existing human right issues and legal provisions might not allow these scientists to explicitly ask their interviewees to disclose their personal religious and theological views. However, available knowledge will help them to be sensitive to this issue; if the people voluntarily disclose their religious beliefs and theological persuasions, the scientists can help them to tackle them using theological suggestions mentioned in the sixth chapter.

0.6 Clarification of basic concepts

0.6.1 Christian theology and gender issues

Etymologically, theology is the study of God. However, over the course of time, theology has acquired new meanings and widened its scope. It deals with how human beings understand God, what truth claims they make about God, and they worship and realise this God in their daily life. Allister McGrath has shown how Clement of Alexandria for the first time used the term *theologia* as opposed to the *mythologia* of the non-Christian writers of his time[9]. Until Christianity was fully established in Western Europe, Christians lived among polytheists and studied theology. After Christianity had become the main religion of Europe, theology became a "systematic analysis of the nature, purposes, and activity of God"[10] and it was taught and studied at universities, for example in Paris. During the Middle Ages, "the Latin word *theologia* came to mean 'the disciple of sacred learning,' embracing the totality of Christian doctrine, not merely one of its aspects – namely, the doctrine of God"[11]. Until the dawn of the Enlightenment in 16th and 17th centuries, theological studies occupied the most prominent place (followed by the study of philosophy, law and medicine) in European universities. Enlightenment philosophers questioned its validity. Finally, in early 19th century, Friedrich Schleiermacher's plea for educated clergy for the welfare of the European governments and their peoples led to the formation of theological faculties with three components: "philosophical theology (which identifies the 'essence of Christianity'); historical theology (which deals with the history of the church, in order to understand its present situation and needs); and practical theology (which is concerned with 'techniques' of church leadership and practice"[12].

Since Schleiermacher's time, Christian theology engages with the experiences, understandings and expressions of people about God and God's self-revelations in their socio-

[9] Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*, (1998), 2nd ed., Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, p. 2.

[10] McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 2.

[11] McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 2.

[12] McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 3–4.

cultural and historical contexts. Written records and enduring socio-religious customs related to these experiences, understandings and expressions help us to assess the place and role of women in their societies and religious institutions. Theologically, women are indispensable to answer the higher-level questions and purposes of humanity in this world. Without referring to and engaging with women and their concerns, the following theological opinions will have partial answers: what are the sources of our theological knowledge about God, the world, organic and inorganic things? What is the enduring purpose of human life? Why do we live the way that we live? Why do we experience evil? How do we respond to it? What would happen to us, our achievements and 'our' people after our death?

The answers to these theological questions are relevant for any discussion on gender issues and realities in India. Indians respond to these questions according to their religious allegiance, social-political standing, economic conditions and their relationship with fellow Indians. Therefore, their opinions an almost every aspect of their belief and life vary. In a democratic setting with the supreme authority of the Constitution and civil society, they can promote gender justice. Knowing the existence of theological causes for gender injustice can be the first step towards achieving gender balance. This thesis shows the how this knowledge can be generated and provides concrete examples. Such engaging theological discussions on gender issues have not yet appeared in India in the form, which this thesis has developed.

0.6.2 Gender

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun *gender* as a biological species with either feminine or masculine characteristics. When it is applied to the human beings, the noun gender refers to socio-cultural prejudices, economic and political treatments.[13] The United Nations has identified five main targets and three sub-targets with appropriate indicators to determine the presence or absence or the degrees of gender equality in a human society[14]: 1) all people

[13] "gender, n.", *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, available online at http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?rskey=E4i3zY&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed 16 February 16, 2018).

[14] "Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," *United Nations: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*, available online at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5 (accessed on 16 February 2018).

should learn to avoid discrimination against women and girls with or without the legal provisions to promote, monitor and enforce gender equality. 2) There should be no sexual violence "against all women girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation". 3) There should not be any harmful practice against women, especially "child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation". 4) All people should recognize and "value [women'] unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate". 5) Policy makers must ensure that all women have the assurance of "full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life". 6) All women should have "universal access to sexual and reproductive health" and rights. This means that there should be a higher proportion of "women aged 15–19 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care" and have "access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education."

The sub-indicators include a) "reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws;" b) enhancing "enabling technology, in particular information and communication technology, to promote the empowerment of women" (e.g., proportion of women owning mobile phones); c) the governments must adopt "and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls at all levels" (e.g., proportion of public money allotted to "gender equality and women's development").

In this context, it is useful to consider the meaning of gender in Tamil. The *Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil* defines the man (*āṇ*) as a male person, who exhibits manliness, courage, superiority, excellence, and risk taking. Etymologically, the word *āṇ* refers to his capacity to govern (*āḷum tiṟaṉ*), to act with determination (*viṉaittiṭpam*), to prove

his strength (*vaṉmai*), light (*oḷi*) and whiteness (*veṇmai*).[15] He expresses his manliness (*āmai*) through his controlling power, virility, conquest, pride, truth (*vāymai*) and his passionate sexual engagement (*āṇpāluṇarcci vaṉmai*).[16] By contrast, this dictionary defines the woman (*peṇ*) as a daughter, bride (*maṇamakaḷ*) and wife (*maṉaivi*). Her womanhood (*peṇṭaṉmai*[17] and *peṇmai*) has nuanced meanings. It refers to her motherhood (*tāymai*) and womanliness (*peṇiṇtaṉmai*). The woman can delight a man with her sexual pleasures (*peṇiṉpam*), self-restraint behaviour (*niṟai*)[18] and womanly grace (*peṇṇalam*).

Nowadays, the concept of *Peṇṇiyam* has gained importance. The work of the reformers like Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927), Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973) reinforced it. The power of modern English-medium education, mass media, Internet, mobile phones, women's ability to travel to other places within and outside of India for higher education or work or marriage, their self-understanding has changed.

0.6.3 Gender imbalance

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines injustice as an "unbalanced condition"[19], which is unnatural, cloudy and harmful. Gender imbalance affects women in their families, societies, educational institutions, work places and public spaces. Census reports on Indian population from 1872 till the most recent Census of 2011 illustrate gender imbalance. In 2011, the authors of the Census Report identified four main reasons that caused gender imbalance: son preference, female foeticide, neglect of girl babies and their early death. They mentioned that

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[15] *Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Pērakarāti* [in Tamil: 'Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil'], Vol. 1: a–au, Chennai: Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Akaramutalit tiṭṭa Iyakka Veḷiyīṭu, 2005, pp. 62–63.

[16] *Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Pērakarāti* [in Tamil: 'Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil'], Vol. 1: a–au, Chennai: Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Akaramutalit tiṭṭa Iyakka Veḷiyīṭu, 2005, p. 72.

[17] *Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Pērakarāti* [in Tamil: 'Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil'], Vol. 6: Pa–Pau, Chennai: Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Akaramutalit tiṭṭa Iyakka Veḷiyīṭu, 2005, p. 5.

[18] *Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Pērakarāti* [in Tamil: 'Great Etymological Dictionary of Tamil'], Vol. 6: Pa–Pau, Chennai: Centamiḻ Coṟpiṟappiyal Akaramutalit tiṭṭa Iyakka Veḷiyīṭu, 2005, p. 16.

[19] "imbalance, n.": *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, available online at http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91668?redirectedFrom=imbalance& (accessed January 31, 2018)

normally 943 to 952 girl babies were born for 1000 male births. Hence, 50 girls are missing already at birth for 1,000 males.[20] As they grew up, more girls tended to die. The sex ratio between girls and boys below six years of age remained 914:1,000. After the girls crossed the sixth of their life, the number of girls improved slightly. For example, by 7 years of their age, there were 944 girls for 1,000 boys.[21] As adults, only 943 women were available for 1,000 men. If this trend continues unattended, the gender imbalance would become an unalterable.[22]

Nowadays, gender imbalance is not a matter of numbers, but the quality of women's lives, opportunities and accomplishments. For example, the *Human Development Report 2016*[23] had eight factors to assess human progress: good health, access to knowledge, human rights, human security, decent standard of living, non-discrimination, dignity, and self-determination[24]. What this report tells about human development applies to gender issues as well.[25]

Likewise, the *Economic Survey 2017–2018* named seventeen gender-related indicators, which consist of five agencies, two attitudes and ten outcomes. The five agencies deal with how women decide their affairs. These include 1) their health, 2) large household purchases, 3) visits to families and relatives, 4) their own earnings and 5) the use of contraception. The two attitudes contain 6) their opinion on son preference and 7) their abuse in their own homes. The ten outcomes are the following:

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[20] "Sex Composition of Population", *Census of India* (2011), *Census India*, available online at http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/maharastra/8%20-%20Chapter%205.pdf (accessed on 19 Feb 2018).

[21] "Statement 13: Sex Ratio of Total population and child population in the age group 0-6 and 7+ years: 2001 and 2011", *Census of India*, *Census Report*, available online at http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/s13_sex_ratio.pdf (accessed on 19 Feb 2018).

[22] "History of Census in India", *Census of India 2011*, *Census Report*, available online at http://censusindia.gov.in/Ad_Campaign/drop_in_articles/05-History_of_Census_in_India.pdf (accessed on 19 Feb 2018).

[23] Selim Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016–Human Development for Everyone: Overview*, New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2016, available online at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/HDR2016_EN_Overview_Web.pdf (accessed on 11 April 2018).

[24] Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016–Human Development for Everyone: Overview*, pp. viii and 2.

[25] The thesis considers either overtly or by implication these eight factors in the following chapters and it will revisit them in the fifth chapter (5.6.2).

> "8) Using reversible contraception, if using any method of contraception, 9) Employed [between the age of 15–49], 10) Employed in non-manual sector [between the age of 15–49], 11) Earning more or equal to husband, 12) Educated, 13) Not experiencing physical or emotional violence, 14) Not experiencing sexual violence, 15) Median age at first child birth [for 1988–99], 16) Median age at first marriage and 17) Sex ratio of last birth (females per hundred births)."[26]

These indicators show that in deciding their own health, Indian women did better in 2015–16 (74.5%) than in 2005–6 (62.5%). During this decade, the age of woman at her first childbirth improved by 1.3 years (i.e., 6.9%). 46.5% of women do not use contraception; only 32.8% can control their reversible contraception. The number of women in 2015–6 (24%) was lower than the women employed in 2005–6 (36%). Otherwise, the employed women earn more and could afford leisure.[27] Gender balance seems to improve, but it is not yet there.

0.6.4 Gender injustice

The persistent gender imbalance in India is a manifestation of a much deeper problem, namely gender injustice. The concepts of justice and injustice are too vast and complex for a brief treatment. This section highlights few meanings of justice in Sanskrit, Tamil, the Holy Bible and in Indian Constitution.

Firstly, The *Cologne Digital Sanskrit Dictionary* (http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/tamil/index.html) and the *Dictionary Spoken Sanskrit* (http://spokensanskrit.org/) contain seventy-four different words for justice, of which the following are commonly used: *dharma* ('that which sustains, prescribed conduct and duty, law, practice, right, religion, God of Justice'), *nyāya* ('justice, law, rule, legal proceeding, judgement'), *yutatā* ('justice, most-fitting') and *sāmya* ('equality, sameness'). All Sanskrit codes of conduct are gathered in their *dharmaśāstra*s ('treatises on law, customs, and religion'), of which the most important one is the *Law of Manu*. The *ithihāsa*s ('traditional narratives of former events, histories, legends') such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābharatā* illustrate the importance of justice in personal, domestic and public spheres. As far as gender justice is concerned, the second chapter examines some episodes of these Sanskrit sources.

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[26] *Economic Survey of India, 2017–2018*, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Economic Division–Department of Economic Affairs–Ministry of Finance–Government of India, January 2018, p. 106.

[27] *Economic Survey of India, 2017–2018*, 2018, pp. 105–110.

Injustice means *adharma* (‘unrighteousness, irreligion, impiety, wickedness sin, guilt’), *vidharma* (‘unlawful’), *anīti* (‘immorality, indiscretion, impropriety, foolish conduct’), *balātkāra* (‘employing violence, rape, oppression’) and *vaisamya* (‘inequality, calamity, distress’). Not observing or challenging either the patriarchy or the low standard of women in most Sanskrit sources entail injustice.

Secondly, Tamil notions of justice and injustice are associated with the Sanskrit meanings and yet they retain their own characteristics. For example, the nouns *anīti* and *nīti* are not merely immorality and morality as in Sanskrit, but they stand for injustice and justice[28]. Hence, a judge is called *nītipati* (‘lord of justice’). Similarly, the nouns *aniyāyam and niyāyam* stand for unjust and just actions or the presence or absence of natural virtues[29]. However, the Sanskrit notion of dharma differs considerably from the Tamil notion of *aṟam* (‘virtue’). The *Tamil Lexicon* correctly derives it from the verb *aṟuttal* (‘to cut, share’ and thus to be virtuous’)[30]. Accordingly, all aspects of one’s life, privileges, obligations, possessions and rites should be divided and shared as far as possible in an equal manner. Violation of *aṟam* amounts to *pāvam* (‘vice’, sin) and *maraṇam* (‘death’). In this regard, the God of Death is called *aṟakkaṭavuḷ* (Skt. yama)[31]. Other Tamil noun for justice include *iṟai* (the ‘God’ of impartiality and justice)[32], *neṟi* (an established ‘way, precept’)[33] and *maṟai* (‘that which shields from harm’)[34]. These concepts developed in a patriarchal society and reveal gender bias. The third chapter provides a critical investigation of these biases and attempted remedies.

Thirdly, biblical teachings on justice and injustice have had immense consequences for gender issues in India. The fifth and sixth chapters do not explicitly name the biblical concepts of justice and injustice; but they explore their implications for gender issues from historical and contextual perspectives. Biblical authors derive their ideas of justice directly from the

[28] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 85 and Vol. IV, p. 2298.

[29] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 84 and Vol. IV, p. 2258.

[30] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 174.

[31] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. II, p. 1772.

[32] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 265.

[33] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. IV, p. 2352.

[34] *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. V, p. 3124.

characteristics of God: God is just, righteous, holy and impartial. It is impossible to discuss the nuanced meanings of the Hebrew and Greek concepts of justice within the limited space of this introduction. The following major teachings are helpful to gain a brief overview of the biblical teachings on justice.

The Hebrew nouns for justice *misphat* and *tsedaqah* also stand for righteousness. For example, the *Brown-Driver-Briggs Dictionary*[35] explains *misphat* in relation to God's judgements (Deuteronomy 1:17), the place of pronouncing judgements (Isaiah 28:6), the process of arriving at judgement (Isaiah 3:14), pronouncing judgement (Deuteronomy 17:11) and executing judgement (Deuteronomy 32:41). Justice matters for human beings (Micah 6:8, Isaiah 1:17, 56:1) because God is just and right (Isaiah 30:18, Psalm 89:15). God's judgements are always just (Jeremiah 8:7, Psalm 119:7). Human beings have right to justice (Deuteronomy 18:3, Jeremiah 32:7). Likewise, the noun *tsedaqah* ('righteousness') has rich meaning and usage[36]. The rulers including judges should be righteous (Isaiah 5:7). God's laws are righteous (Deuteronomy 33:21). God is righteous (Psalm 36:7) and will vindicate the righteous people (Micah 7:9). God's righteousness extends to the weak and fatherless (Psalm 82:3) and God is the Father to the fatherless and a defender of widows (Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 68:5). Hence, no one should oppress the widow and the fatherless (Zechariah 7:10).

The New Testament uses the Greek noun *dikaiosuné* to denote "justice, justness, righteousness, righteousness of which God is the source or author, but practically: a divine righteousness"[37]. It is a judicial verdict (Matthew 3:15, 5:6, 10 and 20; 6:1). As a virtue, justice gives each one his/her due and emphasises the notion that God is impartial (2 Peter 1:1) and just (Romans 9:28). God's impartiality applies to both women and men, whether they were Jews or non-Jews.

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[35] "misphat", *Brown-Driver-Briggs Dictionary* in *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/hebrew/4941.htm (accessed on 9 June 2018).

[36] "*tsedaqah*", *Brown-Driver-Briggs Dictionary* in *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/hebrew/6666.htm (accessed on 9 June 2018).

[37] "*dikaiosuné*", *Strong's Concordance* in *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/str/greek/1343.htm (accessed on 9 June 2018).

Fourthly, the constitutional guarantee of justice is the most important means to assure gender justice in India. The Sanskrit, Tamil and Biblical norms, definitions and means of achieving justice remain valid at least to some extent in their respective communities. Their normativity and applicability are limited in a democratic country like India. As discussed in Section 5.1, the Preamble of the *Constitution of India*[38] names social, economic and political justice as the first guarantee along with liberty, equality and fraternity. Its *Fundamental Right* 38(1) requires the State "to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life"[39].The *Fundamental Right* 38(2) asks the State to "strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities"[40] for all people. The *Fundamental Right 39* directs the State to secure for all women and men citizens "adequate means of livelihood", "ownership and control of the material resources of the community" best distributed for the common good, an economic system that benefits all people, and "equal pay for equal work for both men and women"[41]. The social, economic and political justice is essential for gender justice in India. The guarantee of equality is closely associated with the guarantee of equality before the law (Article 14), for the non-discriminatory treatment "on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth" (Article 15), for opportunities in public employment (Article 16)[42]. Thus, the Constitution of India remains the most important authority for achieving gender justice in India. It has to operate in a socio-religious context, which has most of its long-lasting roots in the religious heritage of the people.

[38] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", *Legislative Department: Government of India*, available at http://www.legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/coi-4March2016.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[39] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", p. 21.

[40] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", p. 21.

[41] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", p. 21.

[42] Anurag Shyam Rastogi, "Concept Of Social Justice Under Indian Constitution", *Lawyers Club in India*, available at http://www.lawyersclubindia.com/articles/Concept-Of-Social-Justice-Under-Indian-Constitution-3685.asp (accessed on 9 June 2018).

0.6.5 Sanskrit sources

Sanskrit sources provide the earliest evidence for the existence of gender injustice in India. Firstly, these sources include religious writings (i.e., *śruti*, 'that which is revealed', e.g., the Vedas) and religious literature (i.e., *smṛti*, 'that which is remembered', e.g., epics such as *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, *Purāṇa*s, 'ancient stories', commentaries, and the like). Secondly, they consist of attitudes, assumptions and purposes, which then expresses themselves in the rites of passage, methods of worshipping the Divine, honouring women and men, raising children, and going after that which makes sense and gives meaning to one's life. Thirdly, Sanskrit sources include contemporary gender-related socio-religious practices that receive their inspiration from 'theological' beliefs and customs.

Therefore, this thesis explores the representative theological ideas on women and their creation in select Sanskrit sources such as the *Ṛgveda*, the *Law of Manu*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, and the *Śivapurāṇa*. The author of this thesis does not read Sanskrit. Hence, she depends on reliable English translations of these texts. Most of her examples come from the *Ṛgveda* and the *Law of Manu*. Kumkum Roy's insightful statement names these two sources, which have exerted proportionately more enduring impact on Indian mind and society than any other Sanskrit sources thus far:

> Although (or perhaps because) the image of the Hindu woman is located within the context of the present, it has been endowed with an impressive past, to which at least lip services continue to be paid rather consistently. This past is constituted, basically, from two elements, one defined as the Vedic age, and the second associated with the *Manusmirti*. The focus of these two areas of the past is by no means accidental. The *Veda*s are the earliest textual sources available in India, and are, by definition, sacred and by extension sacrosanct. The *Manusmirti*, on the other hand, is amongst the most well-known prescriptive texts of early India. Hence, appropriating ideas [e.g., gender injustice in India] actually or even purportedly contained within such textual traditions is probably inevitable in any enterprise which seeks to claim respectable antiquity[43].

Doniger, who is known for her Sanskrit scholarship, summarises the importance of *Law of Manu* as follows:

[43] Kumkum Roy, "'Where Women are Worshipped, there the Gods Rejoice': The Mirage of the Ancestress of the Hindu Women", *Women and the Hindu Right—A Collection of Essays*, (1995), rpt. eds. Tankia Sarkar and Urvashi Butalla, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996, pp. 10–28:11.

> Manu is a pivotal text of the dominant form of Hinduism as it emerged historically and at least in part in reaction to its religious and ideological predecessors and competitors. More compendiously than any other text, it provides a direct line to the most influential construction of the Hindu religion and Indic society as a whole. No modern study of Hindu family life, psychology, concepts of the body, sex, relationships between humans and animals, attitudes to money and material possessions, politics, law, caste, purification and pollution, ritual, social practice and ideals, and world-renunciation and worldly goals, can ignore Manu.[44]

In addition to the enduring impact of the fundamental Sanskrit texts, Sanskrit language itself experiences a revival in several parts of India. In 2007, Laurie L. Patton interviewed eighty Brahmin women in Maharashtra, western India[45]. 62 women told her that they use Sanskrit from their childhood as part of their household duties. 65 women use it to honour their fathers or grandfathers who had taught them, but now were no longer alive. 37 women could recite Sanskrit mantras and participate in rituals. Most of these women said that their Sanskrit domestic rituals filled them "with colour, light, fascination and variation"[46] The power of Sanskrit continues. It is not a dead language of the past. Patton's interviewees use Sanskrit mantras to "help them through moments of transition, crisis, or grief, whether it was remove difficulty in childbirth in the Mumbai hospital, or to learn to face a new future as widow"[47] These women, well-educated well-employed women in cities like Pune and Mumbai were content with religious their participation at home and recitation of Sanskrit *mantra*s. Their experience was true, but it did not represent the experiences of women, who are otherwise greatly disadvantaged and suffer as non-entities. The fact that the Sanskrit language experiences a renaissance affirms the importance of Sanskrit sources for gender studies.

0.6.6 Tamil sources

The author of this thesis is a native speaker of the Tamil language. Hence, she directly engages with the relevant Tamil texts pertaining to women and their gender relationships. She

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[44] Wendy Doniger (translator): *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes–Translated by Wendy Doniger with Brian K. Smith*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, Indian Imprint in Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 2000, p. xvii.

[45] Laurie L. Patton, "The Cat in the Courtyard: The Performance of Sanskrit and the Religious Experience of Women", *Women's Lives, Women's Rituals in the Hindu Tradition*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 19–34.

[46] Patton, "The Cat in the Courtyard […,]," p. 26.

[47] Patton, "The Cat in the Courtyard […,]," p. 31.

quotes the original Tamil texts and gives their English meaning. It begins with the *Tolkāppiyam*, the oldest available written grammar on the Tamil language and life. Then it considers the gender-related issues in select works of *akam*-literature, poems in *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, the Jain epic of *Cilappatikāram*, Tamil literature on *bhakti*, ethics and Siddha-wisdom. Then, this thesis discusses the contributions of Christian missionaries to address women issues in Tamil India. This study of the Tamil sources ends with an analysis of representative Tamil reformers in 19th and 20th century of Tamil India.

0.6.7 Biblical sources

The text of the Bible as we have it today serves as the most authoritative source for Christian beliefs and practices. Its historical roots nourish from the history of "Israel and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ" [48]. As far as gender studies are concerned, Susan Ackerman's finding is relevant:

> The Hebrew Bible is, in many respects, a man's book. Its authors are arguably all male, […]. The Hebrew Bible's worldview is likewise overwhelmingly male; […]. The Bible's main actors are […] predominantly male: the patriarchs of Genesis, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the redeemer Moses, who is the principal figure of Exodus-Deuteronomy; the all-male priesthood that is part of Moses' levitical line; the war leaders of Joshua and Judges [… prophets and kings are men]. Indeed, over 90 percent of the 1400 or so individuals who are given names in the Hebrew Bible are men. Still, almost 10 percent of named characters in the Hebrew Bible are women.[49]

The characteristics of the women such as Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Miriam, Deborah, Bathsheba, Esther, Rahab, Ruth, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah, the Shulamite woman in 2 Kings 4:8–17 have inspired many women. The Hebrew Bible does not talk about the daughters of patriarchs, but names their sons. Occasional references to daughters are not encouraging: daughters disgrace their fathers (e.g., Lot's unnamed daughters and their incestuous relationship with their father in Genesis 19:32–38). Ackerman concludes that the Hebrew Bible "is a book that was primarily written by men, for men, and about men, and thus the biblical text is not particularly forthcoming when it comes to the lives and

[48] McGrath, *Historical Theology,* p. 5

[49] Susan Ackerman, "Women in Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, Online publication in April 2016, DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.45 (accessed 31 January 2018).

experiences of women"[50]. In this context, the sixth chapter of this thesis highlights the theological truth about woman's creation in God's image (Genesis 1–2) and its implication for women in Judaism during the times of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and how they viewed and treated women.

0.7 Research methodology

This thesis follows text-critical, self-narrative and not-only-but-also approaches. It draws insights from Gender Studies, Biblical Studies, Tamil Studies, Religious Studies, History and Sociology of India and synthesises them in a critical manner.

0.7.1 Text critical approaches

The primary approach of this thesis is textual analysis. Alan McKee defines it as a way gathering information about how humans "make sense of their world" and making "educated guess" about the original texts[51]. Additionally, this thesis draws insights from Benjamin Bloom's six-fold model of interpreting texts[52]: 1) Gather information. 2) Understand it in its multiple contexts. 3) Identify, how scholars applied it to specific contexts. 4) Analyse the different components of ideas and their outcomes. 5) Synthesise your findings and create testable hypotheses. 6) Evaluate the outcomes and make informed judgements. These six principles are vital for an informed textual exegesis. They Bloom's model provides insights to examine the English translations of the ancient texts in Sanskrit, Tamil and Hebrew on the one hand, and the gender-related legal documents and the writings of the Tamil reformers on the other.

Regarding the study of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland have recommended twelve principles[53]. This thesis applies some of them to

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[50] Ackerman, "Women in Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible".

[51] Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginners' Guide*, London: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 1.

[52] Benjamin S. Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Education Goals, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain*, London: Longman, 1956.

[53] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland: *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, translated by Erroll. F. Rhodes, (1987), 2nd ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 280–281.

examine Sanskrit (most in chapter 2) and Hebrew texts (mostly in chapter 6). It makes references to Greek texts, but it does not engage with them in a deeper level. On the other hand, it analyses the Tamil texts in their original versions and consults appropriate English translations.

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland recommend their readers to read Greek texts of the New Testament and understand their obvious meanings. "Only *one* reading can be original, however many variant readings there may be"[54]. Therefore, the readers should not introduce into the main text any explanatory glosses or make any interpolations. The evidence of the manuscript is vital; Variants in manuscripts must be always "considered in the context of the tradition. Otherwise there is too great a danger of reconstructing a 'test tube text' which never existed in any time or place"[55]. In this perspective, for example, the received Hebrew text of Genesis 1:27 makes a better sense. It states that *'Elōhīm* created *hā-ādām* ('the man,' a singular noun both for an individual male person and the entire humanity) in his *tselem* ('image, likeness'). In the image of *'Elōhīm* he created *'ōtōw* ('it', an untranslatable word). He created *'ōtām* ('them', a plural pronoun) as *zāḵār* ('male') and *neqebah* ('female'). This thesis does not wrestle with nuanced discussions of biblical scholars on this verse[56]. The implication of this text is clear: God created both the man and the woman as equal beings; both share God's breath; both are endowed with dignity, worth, equality and responsibility to care for each other.

This thesis has also considered two additional principles, which Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland have recommended for the textual analysis of New Testament manuscripts in Greek.

> There is truth in the maxim: lectio difficilior lectio potior ('the more difficult reading is the more probable reading'). But this principle must not be taken too mechanically, with the most difficult reading (lectio difficilima) adopted as original simply because of its degree of difficulty. The

[54] Aland, *The Text of the New Testament,* p. 280.

[55] Aland, *The Text of the New Testament,* p. 281.

[56] For a discussion on textual variations, see Ed Noort, "The Creation of Man and Woman in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastrn Traditions", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 1–18, especially pages 4, 10 and 11.

> venerable maxim lectio brevior lectio potior ('the shorter reading is the more probable reading') is certainly right in many instances. But here again the principle cannot be applied mechanically"[57].

While considering these text-critical principles, it is necessary to understand the socio-cultural contexts[58], in which the authors 'created' these religious texts. However, it is not easy to conclusively to reconstruct the nature and characteristics of the socio-cultural, political and religious contexts of the Sanskrit and Hebrew texts or the Tamil texts of the *Caṅkam Period* (c. 500 BCE–100 CE). Likewise, scholarly judgements on the origin of the texts of the Vedas or the Hebrew Bible remain divided. In this context it is not easy to arrive at any definitive conclusion about, whether the religious texts had created the socio-cultural conditions of the people or whether the people's socio-cultural conditions shaped the origin of the religious texts. As far as this thesis is concerned, the Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek and Tamil texts remained the same from the last decades of the 18th century to the first few months of the year 2018. Therefore, this thesis examines these texts as they are and engages with them only to the extent of their suitability to the place of women gender in them.

0.7.2 Self-narrative approach

This thesis has incorporated various insights gained from the *Life History Methodology*.[59] The author of this thesis is an ordained female clergy person belonging to the Church of South India. Her maternal relatives were *Śaivites* and *Vaiṣṇavites*; they lived in a suburb of the metropolitan city of Chennai. During her teenage years, she unexpectedly saw a discarded female infant in cement trash tub. This encounter shocked her to the core and this image of a living girl baby in the trash tub remained in her mind ever after. After her theological training and marriage, she got three daughters and raised them. In the meantime, she interacted with several women in Tamil Nadu, who have girl children and therefore suffered social ostracism. She wanted to examine the deeper roots for dislike towards female children. The origin of this thesis lay in her quest for these hidden roots. According to Ben Crewe and Shadd Maruna, self-narrative reveals the attitudes and persuasions of the narrator regarding the realities,

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[57] Aland, *The Text of the New Testament,* p. 281.

[58] McLung E. Fleming, "Artefact Study: A Proposed Model", *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 9, 1974, pp. 153–173.

[59] Ben Crewe and Shadd Maruna: "Self-Narratives and Ethnographic Fieldwork", *The Sage Handbook of Fieldwork,* eds. Dick Hobbs and Richard Wright, London: Sage Publications, 2006, pp. 108–122.

meanings of life and the like. Self-narrators reconstruct their stories in way that they make sense to them.[60] The self-narrative approach should not stand alone and it should verify its opinions with the findings of scholars of the same and related fields of academic inquiry and make its claims as objective as possible.

The journey of writing this thesis took its author into paths that she did not anticipate earlier. She discovered new theological reasons for gender injustice, which she found hard to reckon with. She could not digest the theological teachings of the *Law of Manu*. Similarly, it was not easy for her to appreciate the patriarchal nature of the Hebrew Bible. Despite these male-dominated narratives of the Hebrew Bible, the author of this thesis gratefully received inspiration from the example, teachings and interactions of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels. As a Jew, he knew the patriarchal traditions of his day and went against them in several instances. Yet, he gradually prepared his disciples to exhibit love and peace towards all people without any gender difference.

The journey of this thesis required a high degree of emotional stability of the researcher. The fresh image of the living female infant discarded into the cement trash tub remained in her mind for a long time. She herself bore three daughters. Consequently, she began to understand the socio-cultural implications of having girl babies; her relatives, church members, neighbours and casual acquaintances habitually ask her, whether she had any sons; when they realized that she had only daughters, they were disappointed and unhappy. In these contexts, she learned to uphold the dignity and preciousness of all women including daughters and the complementary nature of women and men to each other. Issues surrounding gender balance are complex. Yet, cultivating positive attitude towards women in private and public spheres can create favourable conditions that will lead to a more humane future for women and men together.

0.7.3 Not-only-but-also approach

No institutional religion is free from gender-bias. Men tend to make the decisions in areas related to public spheres; women are praised as goddesses and respected as mothers;

[60] Crewe, “Self-Narratives and Ethnographic Fieldwork”, pp. 111–112.

unmarried women and daughters have difficult times. India is a country with multiple religious and secular belongings, identities and activities. Each religious and secular tradition has its own histories, memories, loyalties and priorities. Therefore, this thesis does not propose a single approach for realising gender equality and justice.

Issues relating to women and gender in Sanskrit sources are complex. The absence of a creation narrative of women illustrates the man-focused religious writings and sacred practices. Women are adorned as goddesses. Real women are presented with several limitations. Yet, the Sanskrit sources, particularly the Ṛgveda, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and the Law of Manu, are normative in defining the place of women in Indian societies. Any attempt to engage with gender issues has to begin with these sources that somehow control the psyche of Indian men.

Likewise, issues relating to women and gender in Tamil sources are also equally complex. *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest grammar of the Tamil language and life, assigned certain subordinate characteristics to women. The *Akam*-Literature speaks about chaste women, self-negating women and self-immolating women. Famous writings such as *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and *Cilappatikāram* present an ambiguous picture of women. Similarly, Tamil *bhakti* traditions knew of few acknowledged women leaders. After the introduction of Christianity into Tamil India since 18th century and the work of Tamil reformers, women concerns were brought to the forefront. Yet, gender equality remains a distant dream.

At pan-India level several factors impacted from late 18th to mid-20th century. British colonial administration, British engagements with Sanskrit customs and religious writings, English education for the elite men, Christian missionary activities among the marginalised communities, female education, the introduction of women-related laws (e.g., the Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act of 1856) and the achievements of reformers such as Pandita Ramabai sharpened Indian consciousness regarding women and their issues. After India attained independence in 1947, constitutional and legal provisions became available for the improvement of women in private, educational, economic and political spheres. Their laws and reform efforts at national, regional and local levels are remarkable. Yet, policy makers and

concerned activists decry the power of patriarchal mind-set of Indian men. Its roots are theological, which have remained unattended until now.

The role of women and gender provide a more comprehensive theological view on the creation narrative of the woman, who was not only equal to man in dignity and worth, but also became his helper. The theological conviction that the woman and the man were created in God's image remains profound. Its manifestation in the Judeo-Christian traditions, however, remains ambiguous. The letters in the New Testament contain difficult passages that engage with diverse issues on women and gender. Finally, Jesus' acknowledgement of women and men created in God's image and his call for *metanoia*, i.e., a new thinking, can be a good theological response to a theological problem of patriarchy.

All these traditions and efforts have their own merits and demerits. Therefore, choosing a specific approach against another one will remain insufficient. Each attempt to help people to realise gender balance has its own merits and limitations. To arrive at a desired level of gender balance, this thesis proposes a complementary approach. While several academic, research, social, educational and other efforts are there to address the questions related to gender injustice in India, this thesis proposes a collective not-only-but-also approach. This thesis particularly adds theological voices and opinions to the ongoing struggle for gender balance.

0.8 Research scope and limitation

0.8.1 Regarding the main purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to identify and examine the hitherto neglected theological reasons for the continuing existence of gender injustice in India, and particularly in Tamil Nadu. As mentioned earlier in this introduction, existing studies on gender injustice in India highlighted socio-economic reasons; they have resorted to the constitutional rights and guarantees for gender equality and justice. They examined different legal Acts that defend the dignity of women and promote their welfare through education, right to own and manage properties, political participation and economic empowerment. Despite these efforts, gender injustice continues in various forms. Its theological roots lie hidden; but they continue to feed the manifested versions of gender injustice and inequality. Using creation narratives found in

Sanskrit and Tamil and Biblical sources, this thesis uncovers these roots and adds them to the known socio-economic, cultural, political and religious reasons.

In this respect, this thesis does not study the place and significance of women in all sacred religious writings of the Hindus and Christians. Instead, it focuses its attention on the creation narratives that are found in select Sanskrit and Tamil religious writings and their impact in the history of India from late 18th century to the present time. It does not examine the creation narratives or the role of women found in the sacred writings of the Muslims, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Sikhs, and countless primal religious traditions. In this context, Section 5.3 makes an exception: the courage of the Muslim woman Shah Bano Begum in opposing the validity of the *Triple Talaq* and in getting maintenance from her husband, who had divorced her, marked a turning point in the legal history of post-independent India.

0.8.2 Regarding the historical frame of reference

The historical aspects of this thesis begin with Jonathan Duncan's record on infanticide in Banaras dated 2 October 1789 and ends with May 2018. Thus, it covers the history of gender injustice in India over 229 years. In 1813, the East India Company established Anglican bishopric in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. Senior civil servants like Charles Grant and William Bentinck, who were known for their evangelical Christianity, worked to end the practices of *sati* and female infanticide. Their successors passed more laws to improve the social standard of countless Indians. After the British Crown took over the territories of the East India Company in 1858, British laws were valid in British India until Indian Independence in 1947. Lawmakers of Independent India developed indigenous laws either in agreement with or in opposition to the earlier laws. The publications of the *Law of Commission of India* provide important insights into the gender-related legal provisions.

0.8.3 Regarding the selected literature

This thesis examines reliable English translations of Sanskrit, Hebrew and Greek texts and Tamil original texts. Sanskrit sources, as shown above, have enduring impacts on the minds and behaviour of their adherents. Christian scholars resort to the meanings of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament. Several aspects of this thesis relate to the women of

Tamil Nadu. The author of this thesis was born and raised there and hence, she understands the background of women there better. Moreover, the reality of gender injustice in Tamil Nadu plays a significant role in this thesis. As already mentioned above under the section 0.7.1, this thesis does not enter the scholarly debates about authors and their socio-cultural environments.

This thesis makes use of reliable Tamil texts (e.g., *Caṅkam* Literature, Didactic Literature, and the like) in digital forms (e.g., scanned copies). Where appropriate, it cites them. Otherwise, it prefers printed texts to digital texts.

The available body of Tamil literature on every historic period is so rich that this thesis cannot adequately treat it. Therefore, it engages with representative examples that explain the role of women in the Tamil society. As this thesis is solely textual, it consults existing ethnographic studies such as Census Reports, journal essays and newspaper articles and unpublished doctoral dissertations.

This thesis quotes Tamil texts in the footnote apparatus and gives their transliterated texts and English meaning. Its system of transliteration follows that of the *Tamil Lexicon* (1924–1936, rpt. 1982). It does not refer to all legal provisions, reports by governmental and non-governmental organisations, and to the results of countless researchers and their gender-related publications in India. Instead, it concentrates only on those primary and secondary materials that have direct relevance for gender injustice in India and their manifestations in Tamil Nadu. Finally, this thesis retains conventional English spelling of key ideas (e.g., karma) and the names of people and places. For example, the author of the book *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum* (‘Tamil Civilization and Culture’) transliterates his name as *Dhashanamurthy* (and not as *Taṭciṇāmūrtti*).

0.9 Research structure

The first chapter succinctly reviews the representative literature on gender injustice in India under two themes: works on history and ethnographic works. Existing scholarship names several socio-cultural, educational, economic, political and other reasons for the existence of gender injustice. They have not examined the religious and theological reasons that somehow

maintain gender balance in India. The subsequent chapters of this thesis fill this gap in our current knowledge.

The second chapter analyses the position of women in the most fundamental writings in Sanskrit, namely *Ṛgveda*, the *Law of Manu* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Portrayals of women as divine beings and as humans have their consequences for gender justice and injustice. Amid the world of men, women theologians such as Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī offer a glimpse into the world of women of their times. This chapter concludes with a brief examination of *Stridharmapaddhati* ('The Perfect Wife'), a Sanskrit work composed probably by Tryambakarāyamakhin (1665–1750), also known as *Tryambaka* or *Tryambakayajan*.

The third chapter examines the position of the Tamil women in select Tamil sources from the *Caṅkam*-Period to modern times. These include an analysis of the works such as *Tolkāppiyam*, examples of *akam*-Literature, didactic works, *bhakti* literature and Siddha writings. This chapter also highlights the contributions of few reformers such as Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927), Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973) to gender justice.

The fourth chapter explores gender injustice in British India. It examines the contributions of few British civil servants to combat the practice of female infanticide, *sati* and female illiteracy. It discusses the impacts of Anglican clergymen, *Wood's Educational Despatch* (1854), the *Sepoy Mutiny* (1857), *Queen Victoria's Proclamation* (1858) and British laws (e.g., the *Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act*, 1856 and the like) on Indian women and gender relationships. This chapter concludes with a brief analysis of reform works undertaken by leaders such as Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), her husband Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–1890), Krupabai Sattianadhan (1862–1894) and Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922).

The fifth chapter explores the major turning points in addressing gender issues in Independent India from 1947 to June 2018. The focus of this chapter lies on the major laws that were implemented to safeguard women from various evils such as female feticide and infanticide, child marriages, trafficking of girls, dowry deaths, domestic violence, and the like. Another aspect of this chapter examines the research works that have studied the portrayals of gender issues in women magazines and novels in Tamil, the impact of self-help groups, and

the like. Finally, this chapter highlights the mindset of Indians, which defies every effort for change. The unspoken reason for this rigid mindset remains theological.

The sixth chapter suggests theological reasons that are based on a fresh study of the image of God in Genesis 1:26–2:3 and 2:4–24. Accordingly, women created in God's image are equal to men; they carry dignity and sanctity of life. Besides, this chapter highlights the rich meaning of the Hebrew word *ezer* ('helper, partner' in Genesis 2:22 to 3:1–23) for gender relationships. This chapter also considers how Lord Jesus Christ responded to women in need and how he incorporated women disciples into his ministry. It studies difficult passages of Apostle Paul (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:7–16, 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, Ephesians 5:21–25) and the pastoral letter of 1 Timothy 2:11–15; these passages pose challenges for gender issues and justice. This chapter also discusses how Jewish and Greco-Roman women during the times of the Lord Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul, in Judaism and in Christianity lived. The biblical narrative of women created in God's image and Christ's offer of salvation to all women and men, who choose to receive it in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, provides a viable theological response to the theological problem of gender injustice in India.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on women-related issues in India abounds. It is nearly impossible to catalogue and analyse them for this thesis. For example, there exists a list of 1,462 books, journal essays and newspaper articles just on *The Girl Child in India* from 1990 to 2006.[61] Countless works on women and gender in India appeared before 1990; even after 2006, numerous works on gender issues in India continue to appear in print and digital forms and in different languages in and outside of India. Besides, databases such as *Shodhganga* (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/) contain numerous doctoral dissertations that were completed in Indian universities. Most of them are historical and ethnographical studies and span across several academic disciplines including gender studies, economics, management studies, social sciences, languages, economics and psychology. Additionally, multitudes of gender-specific studies are available in unpublished form in various archives, colleges, universities and other academic institutions in and outside of India. The vastness of these materials defies every attempt to classify them in simplistic categories. For the sake of practicality, this review focuses on historical and ethnographic examples of gender injustice in India as manifested by three select issues, namely 1) female infanticide and son preference, 2) the abuse of women through the *Devadāsī*-System and prostitution and 3) dowry and violence against women. In addition to these three clusters of gender issues, Section 5.7 examines other pressing gender issues such as missing women, child marriages and increasing number of rape. The main purpose of this review is to assess whether and how far existing works on gender issues engage with the theological causes for gender injustice.

1.1 Female infanticide and son preference

British colonialism, Christian missionary activities, English-medium education and rising nationalism in 19th century India served as mirrors, in which Indians first saw the reflection of themselves, their religious beliefs and socio-cultural situations. One of these reflections showed how Indians treated their female infants, mothers with or without sons, daughters-in-

[61] *The Girl Child in India*, available online at http://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/balika.pdf (accessed on 21 February 2018).

law and widows in and outside of their homes. Existing works treat the low status of women in India as a social, economic and political issue and fail to address it as a theological problem. The following representative examples illustrate this observation in a convincing manner.

In Kanti Pakrasi published a historical case study of the practice of Female Infanticide by the *Ijareja Rajput* in *Kathiawar*, modern Gujarat from 1805 to 1855. British administrators of this region, which then belonged to the Presidency of Bombay, addressed this problem by penalising the local Rajput chiefs and required them to increase the number of girl babies, but could not succeed. For example, a survey of 20 administrative units (*taluk*s) in 1836 showed 409 females for 1422 males. Of these females 73 were below one year of age[62]. Yet, Pakrasi claimed that the British administrators "came out victorious" in eradicating the "malicious custom and the perpetrators of the 'crime' of child murder in the Rajpoot society of Gujarat (1800–1855)"[63].

Yet, female infanticide and other crimes against women continued due to low esteem accorded to the women in India. Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar, Renu Dube and Reena Dube[64] studied the prevalence of female infanticide and femicide from 19th century colonial India to 2005. Their research confirmed that landed families and financially wealthy families, who were aware of existing legal prohibitions, also practiced female infanticide and femicide[65]. It showed how some women opposed these inhuman practices[66] and concluded that their persistence and reoccurrences illustrated "an index of the totality of women's condition, status, and value in family and society", which are marked by "inequality between the sexes and woman devaluation"[67]. Their research also pointed out the adverse effects of the family planning and developmental programs, which were "anti-poor, anti-woman, and anti-

[62] Kanti B. Pakrasi, *Female Infanticide in India*, Calcutta: Editions Indian, 1970, p. 155.

[63] Pakrasi, *Female Infanticide in India*, p. 275.

[64] Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar, Renu Dube and Reena Dube, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.

[65] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, p. ix.

[66] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, pp. xi–xii.

[67] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, p. 5.

environment"[68]. These programs had their origin in the West European and North American countries, benefited a small minority of already well-to-do persons, but excluded the poor from obtaining material benefits from the State, displaced them within their own country and destroyed natural contexts of life and its environment.[69] Another important aspect of the book by Bhatnagar and her team lies in their review of female infanticide from 1870, when the administrators of British India abolished it in their territories, to 1970, when the Indians could use technologies to scientifically identify and kill female foetuses[70]. Earlier, female infanticide was common among the landowning families in North-western parts of India and certain other places like Bengal. After 1970, expectant mothers in all regions of India could easily abort their female foetuses; as a result, the number of female infants, girls and women declined in India; proportionally, their devaluation increased.

In 1997, R. Muthulakshmi offered the result of her ethnographic study of female infanticide among the *Piramalaik Kaḷḷar* in *Usilampatti,* an administrative township belonging to Madurai District, Tamil Nadu[71]. This township area was (and still is) known for female infanticide. Muthulakshmi undertook her field research in the assumption that the people of *Usilampatti* were poor and not formally educated. Education would eventually eradicate female infanticide[72]. She asserted how the *Piramalaik Kaḷḷar* viewed the boys as their economic asset and the girls as an economic burden (incurred by costly ceremonies associated with a girl's birth, ear-boring, puberty, engagement, dowry, marriage, announcement of pregnancy, *Vaḷaikkāppu*, 'pre-delivery rituals', the birth of her first child, *Maṟuvīṭu*, 'returning to her husband's house' and the like). She also pointed out another socio-cultural practice that

[68] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, p. 9.

[69] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, p. 9: "Modern femicide is inserted into the global frame of reference thought he international discourses of development and the official version of ecological conservation operating as population control."

[70] Bhatnagar, *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist Cultural History*, p. 11.

[71] R. Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: its Causes and Solutions*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1997.

[72] Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: its Causes and Solutions*, p. 10: "Modernisation is possible through education. In a society where economic condition is poor, education is the primary means of social change. Improvement of society and liberation of women are possible only if the people are properly educated."

was unique to the *Piramalaik Kaḷḷar*: maternal uncles and cross-cousins could marry and 'own' the girls. Parents, who do not want to entertain their relationship, killed their female infants[73]. Their preference for sons does not allow them to accept a mother, who gives birth to girl babies. Her husband, parent-in-law and their family would be ready to 'give her a straw', i.e., to divorce the mother of girl babies[74]. Pride of their *Jāti* depends on their sons; most of them are economically poor[75].

Krishnaswamy is the only social scientist to realise the religious importance of funeral ceremonies for dead fathers, which their sons alone could perform[76]. He also refers to the *Cittirait Tirunāḷ*, which the *Kallar*s celebrate with gaiety in honour of their *Jāti*-God *Kaḷḷaḻkar* ('the handsome Male of *Kaḷḷar*s'). This is "same gaiety which attends the arrival of a male child in the family"[77]. These socio-economic and religious reasons undergird the practice of female infanticide among the *Kaḷḷar*s, which adult education through "short stories, role play, dialogue, and conversation and lecture series"[78] and developmental works by different agencies could not change conclusively[79].

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[73] Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: its Causes and Solutions*, p. 11. The *Piramalaik Kaḷḷar* belong to the groups of Tamil people, who are known as *Mukkulattōr* ('people of three clans', namely *Tēvar, Maṟavar* and *Akamuṭaiyār*). They claim semi-divine origin and royal lineages of the ancient Tamil dynasties of the *Cōḻar*, *Pāṇṭiyar* and *Cērar*.

[74] S. Krishnaswamy, "Female Infanticide in Contemporary India: A Case-Study of Kallars of Tamilnadu", *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*, ed. Rehana Ghadially, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988, pp. 186–195:189.

[75] Krishnaswamy, "Female Infanticide in Contemporary India: A Case-Study of Kallars of Tamilnadu", p. 191.

[76] Krishnaswamy, "Female Infanticide in Contemporary India: A Case-Study of Kallars of Tamilnadu", pp. 193–193: The "emphasis on the religious superiority of sons is more among the Kallars than in any other non-Brahmanic caste groups of southern India. Hindu scriptures put premium on sons. According to Hindu ritual *pind daan*, performed after death, ensures to reach *moksha* (heaven). However, these rites can be performed only by the dead person's son. Absence of a son means no place in heaven, and the soul wanders without any abode. During most of the ceremonies in the household it is the son who stands next to his father or performs himself if the father id deceased. The importance of a son assumes greater significance at the time of father's death, since only the son can light the funeral pyre, and the role of daughter is non-existent."

[77] Krishnaswamy, "Female Infanticide in Contemporary India: A Case-Study of Kallars of Tamilnadu", p. 194.

[78] Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: its Causes and Solutions*, p. 17.

[79] Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: its Causes and Solutions*, pp. 35 and 111: "The solution for female infanticide is to be seen in the society itself. Education should be provided to the women and employment should be generated to eradicate poverty which in turn would give better status to the women."

Like Krishnaswamy, in 2007, V. Thirukkani studied what the *Piramalaik Kaḷḷar*s, the *Maṟavar*s, the *Vaṉṉiyar*s, the *Pallar*s and the *Paṟaiyar*s in Dharmapuri and Theni regions of Tamil Nadu thought about their women and how they treated their female infants[80]; she confirmed the existence of severe forms of male supremacy and female inferiority[81]. She also noticed not only the religious importance of sons for the funeral rites of their dead fathers[82], but also how sons could support their aged fathers. Overall, Thirukkani's interviewees felt that a girl child was a social, moral, and economic liability; her research revealed that the son will return the expenses incurred in his upbringing and education. By contrast, expenses related to a girl's "safety, security and chastity and care"[83] would not returned. She recommends the Tamil people should end discrimination create gender equality and change their attitude "life cycle ceremonies"[84].

Increased levels of education corresponded to the increased level of sex determinations and abortions of female foetuses. In the 1980s, expectant mothers in the metropolitan cities such as Mumbai and Delhi resorted to new techniques such as "sonography, fetoscopy, needling, chorion biopsy"[85] to determine the sex of their foetuses. At the same time, the sex determination test known as amniocentesis, originally meant to identity genetic deformities, was available in most parts of urban and rural India. The parents, mostly businessmen, male employees with permanent jobs and their 'housewives' aborted the female foetuses. In 1982, "78,000 female foetuses were aborted" in India and this figure shocked social scientists[86].

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[80] V. Thirukkani, *Social Structure and Female Infanticide: A Study in Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Gandhigram Rural University/ Tamil Nadu, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10603/111650 (accessed on 19 May 2018).

[81] Thirukkani, *Social Structure and Female Infanticide: A Study in Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu*, p.140.

[82] Thirukkani, *Social Structure and Female Infanticide: A Study in Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu*, p.140: "The Hindu religious sentiments promote son preference as only sons are meant to perform the last rites and rituals to the parents. People have developed that their soul will rest in peace only when a son lights the funeral pyre."

[83] Thirukkani, *Social Structure and Female Infanticide: A Study in Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu*, p.142.

[84] Thirukkani, *Social Structure and Female Infanticide: A Study in Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu*, p.148.

[85] Vibhuti Patel, "Sex Determination and Sex Preselection Tests: Abuse of Advanced Technologies", *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*, ed. Rehana Ghadially, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988, pp. 178–185:178.

[86] Patel, "Sex Determination and Sex Preselection Tests: Abuse of Advanced Technologies", p. 191.

The Census report of 2011 is the most recent and the largest demographic study of India. It reported in 1901, 972 women were there for 1000 men. In 1971, the number of women declined so drastically that there were only 930 women for 1000 men. It continued to decrease so that by 1991, there were merely 927 women existed among 1000 men. After focused works countless non-governmental agencies and governmental interventions, the number of women increased slightly. In 2011, there were 940 women for every 1000 men[87]. While the southern states did better in increasing the number of women (e.g., 1084 women for 1000 men in Kerala, 995 women for 1000 men in Tamil Nadu), Daman and Diu recorded the lowest sex ratio (618 women for 1000 men), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (775 women for 1000 men), Chandigarh (818 women for 1000 men), Haryana (877 women for 1000 men)[88]. Alarmingly, there were only 914 girls below the age of six for every 1000 boys below the same age. When the girls crossed this age limit, their number slightly increased, namely 944 girls above the age of 7 were there for every 1000 boys of that age[89]. This declining number has to do with the low esteem of parents for their second or third or fourth daughter. They do not wish to have more than one daughter; therefore, them neglect other girl babies and do not give them necessary medical treatment; they do not even touch them. These are the main reasons for female deficit in Dharmapuri, Salem, Usilampatty, Dindigul, Theni and other places of Tamil Nadu[90].

It is obvious that son preference continues among the adherents of all religions; people of all socio-economic and educational backgrounds enjoy at the birth of boys; if the first child is a girl, her survival might be guaranteed. Likewise, if the first child is male and the subsequent

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[87] "Gender Composition of Population", *Census of India 2011: Provisional Result*, pp. 77–96:81 available at http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/Final_PPT_2011_chapter5.pdf (accessed on 19 May 2018).

[88] "Gender Composition of Population", p. 84.

[89] "Gender Composition of Population", pp. 77 and 88: Without explaining the reasons for son preference, the authors of this article quote the following humanitarian and rationalist statement from the *UN Fourth Conference on Women* in Beijing, China: "Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace".

[90] For a discussion on the status of women after the Census 1991 of India as well as on female infanticide in Tamil Nadu, see Chunkath, Sheela Rani and V.B. Athreya: "Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu – Some Evidence", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 17, 1997, pp. 21–28.

children are girls, the chance of the girls' survival is better. At the same time, if a family does not have a boy child, but only girls, it is likely that one of the younger girls would not survive. In this context, Venkatesh Athreya does not blame any religion for gender injustice and invites his readers to consider other contributing factors such as "improvement in infant and child survival, education and empowerment of women, overcoming of patriarchal structures and values, improvements in health care, and livelihood security in old age"[91]. The more these factors are emphasised and made available to women, the higher is the chance for gender justice. This humanist and rational approach is useful indeed; however, it does not examine the deep-rooted theological causes for the persistence of low status of women in India and why Indian men – despite several measures to alter their mindset – continue to be patriarchal.

1.2 *Devadāsī*-System and prostitution

The system of *Devadāsī*s ('god's female servants') in India is ancient and remained inseparably linked to the performing arts in a temple; kings, landed gentry, aristocrats and landless men (ab)used them as courtesans, go-betweens and sexual objects. Since they were married to a male deity, they would never become widows; hence they remained *Nittiyacumaṅkali* ('eternally auspicious'); they could impart their accumulated blessings to the guests of a marriage party or a temple festival or to a freshly married bride or a new born baby. Male *Naṭṭuvaṉār*s ('dance masters') and *Mēḷakkārar* ('musicians', who could play the four instruments, *Nākacuram*, *Ottu*, *Taval* and *Tāḷam*) trained these female dancers, some of whom are hereditarily linked to the community of *Icai Vēḷāḷar* in the district of Tanjore. This system become more prominent from the start of the Tamil *bhakti* traditions emphasising total surrender to a deity or a holy person[92]. It attained its prominence and marked decay during the

[91] Venkatesh Athreya, "Uneven progress," *Frontline*, 2 October 2015, available at http://www.frontline.in/cover-story/uneven-progress/article7655056.ece (accessed on 19 May 2018).

[92] S. Bose, *Abolition of Devadasi System in the Madras Presidency: Its Impact on Tamil Society and Culture (1927–1998)*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University/ Tirunelveli, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/131100 (accessed on 21 May 2018). Page 30: "The **devadasi** system emerged in recognizable form during the Chola Empire, circa 850-1300 A.D., when the Saivite and Vaishnavite hymnists challenged the primacy of the Jain and Buddhist [puritanical] faiths. Under the influence of the new **bhakti**, with its 'total surrender to God', as taught by hymnists, the institution became entrenched and persisted. The system received official priestly sanction and the 'sanctity of nobility'". During the subsequent centuries, especially in the 19th century, this system became ignoble.

times of the *Vijayanagar Empire* (1336–1646)[93]. Soon, the *Devadāsī*-system degenerated; the Tamil nouns *Tēvaṭiyāḷ* ('god's slave), *Tāci* (Skt. *dāsī*, 'slave, servant'), *Kaṇikai* ('a woman, who dances according to time measure' for money'), *Kūtti* (a 'concubine'), *Taṭṭuvāṇi* ('the woman dancing on a *Taṭṭu*/plate'), *Parattai* ('consort', who sells her body to various men for money), *Vēci* ('courtesan'), *Vilaimakaḷ* (a 'daughter/woman for a price') or *Potumakaḷ* ('common woman') have become synonyms for prostitutes. These terms indicate how the system of *Devadāsī*s degraded women and made them objects for male subordination and exploitation.

There is no shortage of books and essays on the prevalence of *Devadāsī*s in Indian societies and the attempts by Christian missionaries from Europe and Indian reformers of diverse religious persuasions. This thesis, however, examines the two representative, unpublished doctoral dissertations. Kalpana Kannabiran[94] studied the role of religious beliefs and patrons, kinship patterns of certain communities in Ramnad District of Tamil Nadu. Her dissertation devotes four of the five chapters to trace the presence of the *Devadāsī*s in Tamil regions of India during the Middle Age and the British Colonial Period; when the British administrators understood the system of *Devadāsī*s as immoral and inhuman, they introduced several measures to rehabilitate the *Devadāsī*s; these reform attempts adversely affected their *Iṉām*s[95], the pieces of lands, which were either freely given or leased to them by wealthy landlords or temples. When the temples were forced to give up their patronage for the

[93] Kalpana Kannbiran, *Temple Women in South India: A Study in Political Economy and Social History*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University/ New Delhi, 1992, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/14972 (accessed on 21 May 2018); a remark on page 275 reads as follows: in the middle ages, "temple service changed and shifted constantly between classes, castes and state structures. Gradually, towards the end of the Vijayanagar period, the devadasi institution seems to have crystallised into two distinct classes/ castes – the 'clan' castes and the 'unclean' castes – each with its own separate spaces in the Sanskritic tradition and the village goddess tradition."

[94] Kalpana Kannabiran, *Temple Women in South India: A Study in Political Economy and Social History*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University/ New Delhi, 1992, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/14972 (accessed on 21 May 2018).

[95] Kannabiran, *Temple Women in South India: A Study in Political Economy and Social History*, pp. 242 and 246: "The nature of inams given to devadasis differed. Some were given sarva manyams, others were given inams that consisted of land revenue only, some had rights only to the kudiwaram while yet others enjoyed both shares. The nature of endowment was probably linked to the nature of service. […] Devadasis of Sri Mangaibageswarer temple at Piranmalai were supported with grants of land in the villages of Melapatti, Chelliampatti, Oduvanpatti and Sirumaradur".

*Devadāsī*s, material assistance that was available earlier to them, also stopped. Poor *Devadāsī*s, who were numerous, resorted to prostitution. For them, the British reform had a negative consequence. Kannabiran's description does not critique the men of that time, who exploited these women without the safety network of either families or institutions or the state.

S. Bose's dissertation contains insightful information about the consequences of abolishing the system from 1927 to 1998[96]. A statistical account of 1925 showed that about 200,000 *Devadāsī*s were operating in the Presidency of Madras. The men of that time made these women responsible for moral degeneration and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases[97]; British administrators and social reformers treated this problem as a humanitarian issue and failed to see its theological roots that elevated men and degraded women at home and in the public spheres. Men like E. Krishna Aiyar tried to save the arts and skills associated with the dance and songs of the *Devadāsī*s and 'created' the much acclaimed *Paratanāṭṭiyam*[98].

Even after Independent India intensified its campaign against the practice of *Devadāsīs* in 1956, it continued in several temples in Tamil regions of India; some of them married their patrons; some of them dedicated their lives to promote dance and dance-related skills. Christian missionaries reached out to those women, who languished in brothels of

[96] S. Bose, *Abolition of Devadasi System in the Madras Presidency: Its Impact on Tamil Society and Culture (1927–1998)*, pp. 11–12: 1927 was important for several reasons: Ramdas Pantulu of the Imperial Legislative Council, Delhi, proposed the abolishing the system of *Devadāsī*s. In the same year, the *Justice Party* resolved at their *Saṉmārkkam Conference* in *Māyāvaram* to free the 'fallen sisters'. The Donahvur Fellowship in Tirunelveli District was registered in that year and its only purpose was to 'save' girls and women from the system of *Devadāsī*s. The year 1998 was important because M. S. Subbulakshmi, "who, in fact, rose from the **devadasi Isai Velala** community of Madurai, was awarded the covetous award **Bharat Rathna**, for her excellence in Carnatic music."

[97] S. Bose, *Abolition of Devadasi System in the Madras Presidency: Its Impact on Tamil Society and Culture (1927–1998)*, p. 224: Besides these recorded women, there must have been more unrecorded *Devadāsī*s. Their 'sacred prostitution' became a medium for the spread of "incurable diseases, such as Syphilis, Gonorrhoea and nervous weakness, which severely affected their progeny. Devadasi dedications became a social problem demanding care and caution of physicians, social thinkers, workers and reformers."

[98] S. Bose, *Abolition of Devadasi System in the Madras Presidency: Its Impact on Tamil Society and Culture (1927–1998)*, p. 225.

"Jambuliputhur or Koothiyarkundu in Madurai District, and Viralimalai in Trichy"[99] and offered them alternative methods of earning a dignified livelihood.

Despite countless attempts by governmental and non-governmental agencies to abolish the inhuman practice of the *Devadāsīs*-system and prostitution, they continue to flourish. The *Yellamma Cult* of Karnataka[100] thrives due to the active role of *Devadāsī*s and their male patrons. According to a report of 8 June 2007, the *Devadāsī*s attached to the temple of Yellama in Saundatti, Karnataka, rejoice over the birth a daughter, who would carry on their profession. Their life epitomises nothing but the sexual slavery and the *Devadāsī*s remain the "sanctified prostitutes"[101]. Others may perceive them as prostitutes; but their self-understanding is different: they are properly married; their husband is indeed Yellamma. As Yellamma's wives, "they embody her presence in the towns and villages where they live and are entitled to bestow blessings and ask for fruits of the harvest in her name"[102]. This theological conviction might appear to free the (Dalit) women from the patriarchal control and the derision of the upper-*jāti* women. However, the rejection that they experience in the society and the mistreatment which they endure at home drives them to take refuse in a goddess, who in turn enslaves them and makes them available for men to satisfy their sexual lusts mostly beside their marital relationships. It is indeed a form of prostitution.

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[99] S. Bose, *Abolition of Devadasi System in the Madras Presidency: Its Impact on Tamil Society and Culture (1927–1998),* p. 228. For more information on this change from the system of *Devadāsī*s to prostitution, see Kay K. Jordan, *From Sacred Servant to Profane Prostitute: A History of the Changing Legal Status of the Devadasis in India, 1857–1947*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2003.

[100] For information on this cult, see Nicholas J. Bradford: "Transgenderism and the Cult of Yellamma: Heat, Sex, and Sickness in South Indian Ritual", *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1983, pp. 307–322.

[101] Damian Grammaticas, "Slaves to the goddess of fertility", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 8 June 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6729927.stm (accessed on 21 May 2018): "'Being devadasis means we are slaves of the goddess. We have to visit this temple. We wear necklaces of pearls to show we are bound to Yellama. We give blessings and perform her rituals,' says Imla, a devadasi in her 40s who is swathed in a pink and yellow sari. When girls dedicated to Yellama reach puberty they are forced to sacrifice their virginity to an older man. What follows is a life of sexual slavery, they become sanctified prostitutes […]. The practice of dedicating young girls as devadasis has been outlawed for over 50 years, but still it happens. Anti-slavery campaigners estimate that there are at least 25,000 devadasis in the state of Karnataka alone."

[102] Lucinda Ramberg, "When the Devi Is Your Husband: Sacred Marriage and Sexual Economy in South India," *Feminist Studies,* Vol. 37, No. 1, 2011, pp. 28–60:28.

Other forms of prostitution remain a huge social problem in the metropolitan and rural areas of India. For example, according to an estimate of 29 March 2018, three million women etch their living through prostitution. The same estimate names *Sonagachi*, the red-light district in central Kolkata, as the biggest brothel area of Asia with "at least 11,000 sex workers", who toil in dilapidated brothels, which "sometimes co-exist cheek-by-jowl with residential homes"[103]. The existence of Yellamma Cult and the brothels in India bears witness to the low views of men about women; their theological roots lie buried beneath the socio-cultural, economic and political factors. Thus, no effort has been successful in effectively dealing with these tenacious gender problems; a deeper understanding of the theological reasons for gender balance might help us to tackle these problems more successfully.

1.3 Dowry and violence against women

The most common form of dowry is *Varadakṣiṇā* ('bridegroom-fee'), which is a 'gift' paid by the parents or kinsfolk of the bride to the bridegroom either before or during or immediately after the wedding. In any case, it is a non-recoverable and non-refundable fee! Though the bride may bring it, customarily it belongs to her bridegroom. The second Sanskrit-noun for dowry is *Kanyādhana* ('virgin's property'). This property can come from any source including the bride's parents, kinsfolk or even her own husband. It belongs to her. However, in popular usage, this noun is interchangeably used as *Kanyādāna* ('giving a virgin-daughter in marriage'); she is given to her groom and she belongs to him (often times as his property). The material possessions that she brings with her to her husband's house become the *Śulkatva*. This noun connotes many things including dowry as a tax or a price or a wage or a gift.[104] The elasticity of this concept blurs the boundaries of what the husband can and cannot do with the dowry. The Tamil people have many such elastic words: *Cītaṉam* is not the Tamilised form of the Sanskrit noun *Strīdhana* ('woman's property')[105], which the bride brings to her husband's

[103] "Asia's 'biggest' red light district gets makeover", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 29 March 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43581120 (accessed on 21 May 2018).

[104] *Tamil Lexicon*, p. 1549. The Tamils call this gift as Cu̲rkam.

[105] Meera Mohanty, "Dowry and the Indian Woman: The need for a two pronged attack", *Kali's Yug*, March 2001, available at http://feministlawarchives.pldindia.org/wp-content/uploads/DowryIndianProblem_ByMeera Mohanty2001-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf? (accessed on 22 May 2018): "Shreedhan refers to the gifts given to a woman by her natal kin or by her husband at, or after,

home as her *Cīrvaricai* ('wealth-things in a series of life-stage rituals'). Instead, the word *Cītaṉam* is the wealth of the *Cīr*, which in turn is associated with *Śrī*, the Goddess *Lakṣmī* and auspiciousness. Hence, the presents, which the bridge brings to her husband's house, are also special and auspicious. The Tamil people often measure the dowry in terms of *Pavuṉ*s; each *Pavuṉ* contains eight grams of 22-carat gold. The more *Pavuṉ*s, which a wife brings in the forms of jewels and ornaments, to her husband's home, the better is her dowry and her position in her husband's home, at least temporarily[106].

Often, the groom's family do not regard the health, moral character, educational attainments and professional skills of the bride and measure dowry in the form of movable (e.g., cash, gold jewels, insurances, household materials) and immovable assets (e.g., land, house). *The Law of Manu* (3:51) prohibits the father of the bride to accept bride price from his son-in-law. It (9:164–165) stipulates six types of properties of the woman, namely 1) what she receives, while entering marriage at the place of fire-sacrifice, 2) what her husband would give her, when he took her away from her parental home, 3) what he gives her as his token of love, 4) what her parents and siblings give her at her marriage, 5) what she receives from other family members in the course of time, and 6) what her husband would give her as a mark of his affection towards her. This passage of the Law of Manu stipulates that these properties belong exclusively to the woman and upon her death to her children and surely not to her widowed husband. While Indian men are keen on preserving the dictates of the *Laws of Manu* in the lives of women, they chose to disregard this provision of Manu.

Adherents of all major religions and occupations give and accept dowry in one form or another. In this regard, Christians are not different. For example, Lionel Caplan studied the practice of dowry among various groups of Christians in Chennai (earlier: Madras) and

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her weddings, and the money she inherits from her parents, or earns by her personal efforts. The woman is the complete owner of her streedhan. Bride price refers to the gifts paid by the groom to the bride's family as a compensation for the loss of services of the bride to her family. While dowry is mostly practised among the upper castes, bride price is mostly a practice of the lower castes."

[106] Sharada Srinivasan, "Daughters or Dowries? The Changing Nature of Dowry Practice in South India," *World Development*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 2005, pp. 593–615:595: "Dowry is commonly referred to as *pavun* or *seeru* [*Cīr*]. The latter roughly translate into obligatory gifts that a bride's natal family (her parents, brothers, and maternal uncle) performs at various life cycle rituals including marriage."

concluded that dowry practice among Christians follows a "notional hierarchy of occupations" beginning with Doctor of Medicine at the highest followed by the officers of the Indian Administrative Service, engineers, Bachelors of Medicine and surgery with membership or fellowship at the Royal College of Physicians. The dowry for Indian Christian grooms holding United States' Green Card remained high. Besides, career prospects and earning capacity of the groom became for negotiating the amount of dowry within the same occupation. Likewise, the dowry for the fair-skinned, often termed as 'attractive', well-educated, sophisticated-looking bride would also determine the level of dowry amounts. If the Christian bride and the Christian groom belong to the same *Jāti*, dowry amount can be negotiated downwards. In every respect, the Protestant Syrian Christians living in Chennai agreed on higher amounts of dowry than any other Protestant Christian groups.[107]

Dowry has become a source of harassing and even killing wives; the more they assert themselves either through educational achievements or professional skills or awareness of the existing laws against dowry, they get into trouble with their husbands, mothers-in-law and the sisters of her husband. Meera Mohanty's essay identifies the following causes for the abuse of dowry among the residents of Delhi, with whom she had interacted in 2001[108]: a) the parents of the groom demand dowry matching financial investments in educating him, getting his occupation and living standards; b) if the groom marries a bride from a lower *Jāti*, she has to compensate him with her dowry; c) the groom's family consider increasing the prestige of their family by not allowing the educated and professionally qualified bride not to work outside of the house and earn money. Somehow, her dowry must compensate the loss of income; d) People with non-Sanskrit background seek to emulate the lifestyle and customs of the Sanskrit peoples and thus to achieve higher social recognition. The higher and more valuable the dowry, the better seems to be their perception of social status; e) some parents of the groom consider themselves as the custodians of their *Jāti*-customs on dowry; they measure their religious orthodoxy and *Jāti*-loyalty by the kind of dowry that they receive for their sons; f) sometimes, their economic greed transcends all limits to such an extent that they discard the

[107] Lionel Caplan, "Bridegroom Price in Urban India: Class, Caste and 'Dowry Evil' Among Christians in Madras", *Man: New Series*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1984, pp. 216–233:220–222.

[108] Mohanty, "Dowry and the Indian Woman: The need for a two pronged attack", pp. 30–31.

prohibitions imposed by the *Dowry Prohibition Act* of 1961, torture their daughters-in-law, do not hesitate to burn her alive or drive them to commit suicide[109].

Several ethnographic studies have demonstrated the inseparable link between dowry and inter-spousal domestic violence. The study of Sharada Srinivasan and Arjun S. Bedi can serve as a representative example. They studied how dowry-related lifestyle affected 210 families of an agrarian village in Salem District. Some of their female interviewees informed them of their preference for dowry because it afforded them safety. However, most women opposed the practice of dowry because it affirmed the male image of their husbands and made them subordinate to them. These ethnographers found out that if the income of the wives increased and the wives used it to challenge the authority of their husbands, particularly against the prevailing gender norms, violence became inevitable[110].

Firstly, violence results from stress and anger that arise over a period; unmatched socio-economic expectations, disappointments, frustrations, and misunderstandings generate and nurture them. In this context, educational attainments and levels of economic income play a role. The ascribed and perceived social status of the husbands and their wives define their relationship in public spheres and at home. The number of their children, particularly the number of their sons, could become a cause for interpersonal and emotional friction leading to physical or emotional violence. The amount of dowry could remain thorny issue of dispute accusing each other's parents. "Comments made by friends, neighbors, parents, and other relatives on these and other issues create social stress"[111]. Secondly, the ethnographers found out that husbands used violence to assert his masculinity and male authority. They did not want their wives questioning them either about their behaviour or their whereabouts. Yet, they

[109] Meera Mohanty, "Dowry and the Indian Woman: The need for a two pronged attack", p. 31: dowry deaths include both murders and suicides; most of them remain reported. The groom's family destroy the "conclusive evidence" and do not tell the truth. Sometimes, the groom settles the matter by marrying the sister of the bride and makes the bride's family to keep silence.

[110] Sharada Srinivasan and Arjun S. Bedi, "Domestic Violence and Dowry: Evidence from a South Indian Village", *World Development*, Vol. 35, No. 5, 2006, pp. 857–880:872.

[111] Srinivasan, "Domestic Violence and Dowry: Evidence from a South Indian Village", p. 860.

could find fault with their wives' ways of performing household tasks, taking care of children or speaking with the neighbours or other men[112].

Thirdly, the ethnographers recommended that governmental policies should empower the women to have equal rights to inherit, own and manage their own assets. They also cautioned the policy makers and executives to develop strategies "to enhance women's ownership and control over assets, whether through dowry, inheritance and/or employment" by confronting "existing notions of masculinities and femininities that for instance require men to be violent and women to be subservient"[113].

Strangely, these ethnographers did not say, what these strategies should be and how they should be developed. Existing works on gender injustice rightly express their anger at violence against women (e.g., foeticide, female infanticide, femicide, incest, child marriage, rape, genital mutilation, dowry murder, trafficking, prostitution, harassments in public sphere and working places, problems with inheriting, owning, maintaining properties, emotional stress, and the like). They have suggested various means to tackle them on a long term: they include formal education in schools, access to knowledge and wealth-generating jobs, legal provisions to punish those who harm women either physically or psychologically, and the like. None of these strategies have created gender equality or justice. The more they wish to curb gender injustice and injustice, the more sophisticated and elusive the problems become. The devaluation of women makes itself felt in every walk of life, in every socio-cultural background and in all institutionalised religions. This thesis understands the roots of this persisting problem not merely as social, cultural, economic, political or religious, but also theological. The following chapters approach this problem from the theological perspective of creation narratives in the representative examples of Sanskrit and Tamil sacred writings and the Holy Bible. Then, they trace how these ideas manifested themselves in the history of India from late 18th century to the present time (i.e., May 2018). Adding a theological approach to existing methods of gender improvement will be useful to create gender balance and equality.

[112] Srinivasan, "Domestic Violence and Dowry: Evidence from a South Indian Village", p. 861.

[113] Srinivasan, "Domestic Violence and Dowry: Evidence from a South Indian Village", p. 872.

CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AND GENDER IN SANSKRIT SOURCES

Sanskrit religious writings are the primary source, from which most Indians derive their understanding of gender. The corpus of these religious writings is so vast that it is impossible to discuss in a single chapter. Sanskrit narratives of what constitutes masculinity and femininity are not uniform; they change according to the teachings and practices of religious groups in their living contexts. Therefore, this chapter concentrates its focus on the most fundamental writings in Sanskrit, namely *Ṛgveda*, the *Law of Manu* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Portrayals of women as divine beings and as humans have their consequences for gender justice and injustice. Amid the world of men, women theologians such as Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī offer a glimpse into the world of women of their times. This chapter concludes with a brief examination of *Stridharmapaddhati* ('The Perfect Wife'), a Sanskrit work composed probably by Tryambakarāyamakhin (1665–1750), also known as *Tryambaka* or *Tryambakayajan*.

2.1 Theological assumption: 'man containing the woman'

Theology attempts to speak about God and God's relationship with living and non-living things. It uses human language and symbols to clarify metaphysical or theological issues. How humans understand the nature and attributes of God impacts how they view and treat not only God, but also fellow human beings. This chapter examines those theological assumptions in Sanskrit sources that shape gender relationships in India.

Creation narratives, for example, are also theological assumptions[114]. They possess enduring powers lie beneath the socio-cultural and religious systems that have grown over the centuries and have now become traditions; they influence the values and attitudes, by which people determine what is right or wrong and what one can tolerate in a given situation.

[114] Charles H Long, "Cosmogony", *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Lindsay Jones, Vol. 3, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 2005, pp. 1985–1991:1986: Long describes types of creation stories such as "(1) creation from nothing; (2) from chaos; (3) from a cosmic egg; (4) from world parents; (5) through the process of emergence; and (6) through the agency of an earth diver"; these different motifs can interact with each other.

Identifying these deeply hidden values is a difficult task. However, as far as the Sanskrit sources on gender injustice are concerned, these values shine through recorded documents such as *Ṛgveda* and the *Law of Manu*.

2.1.1 The Primal Man and the accidental woman

The *Ṛgveda*, the oldest (c. 1500 BCE) and most authoritative Sanskrit religious text, does not say anything significant about the creation of the woman as a human person. It talks about the famine principle, which is creative. This principle emanates from a primal being, who is often conceived as a male. The below-mentioned references to creation in the *Ṛgveda* are emanations. They evolve from an already existing being at different levels and descending hierarchical order. They came either from nothing or from a cosmic egg or a universal *Pursue* (a kind of man-parent). This uncertainty is clear, if one considers that "Hinduism as a whole" does not have "a single theory of creation" that is well argued and canonical.[115].

The *Hymn on Gods* in *Ṛgveda* 10:72 mentions creation out of nothing. *Brahmaṇaspati* ('Lord Brahman') was the Existence. It originated "in an earlier age of Gods" from the "Non-existence". As an ironsmith, he produced "with a blast and smelting" gods and other things; the earth sprang from his "Productive Power"; the male person *Dakṣa* was born and had his daughter *Aditi* ('the Unlimited, Infinite'); then he birthed gods as the "sharers of immoral life."[116] Doniger interprets the circular relationship between *Dakṣa* and *Aditi* as a "paradoxical/tautological structure"[117].

The *Surya's Bridal* in *Ṛgveda* 10:85 contains the oldest marriage hymn. Its 45 verses locate the marriage within the creation narrative. In verse 36, the husband says: "I take thy

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[115] Wendy Doniger, *On Hinduism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 158–159.

[116] Ralph Thomas Hotchkin Griffith, (translator and editor): *The Hymns of Rigveda*, 2nd ed., published in Kotagiri/ Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu in 1896 and scanned version by Ulrich Stiehl 2005, p. 458: the "[10:072] HYMN LXXII. The Gods". This document is available online at http://www.sanskritweb.net/rigveda/ griffith.pdf (accessed on 13 April 2018).

[117] Doniger, *On Hinduism*, p. 165: The circular thinking of "chicken-and-egg paradox" manifests itself in the circular thinking of "'From Aditi, Daksha was born, and from Dhaksa Aditi was born'. The Creator in many of these texts has the tautological name of Svayambhu, 'self-existing', often translated as 'self-created': he creates himself."

hand in mine for happy fortune that thou mayest reach old age with me they husband". Deities such as Agni, Prajāpati, Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitar, Purandhi, and the Gandharvas watch and witness this marriage; they say that the wife should embrace the husband with love. The 41st verse acknowledges that Agni has already bestowed on the bridegroom riches, sons and a spouse. In verse 42, the witnessing gods ask the married couple to say together, live a long life, bear sons and grandsons, play and rejoice with them. At that time, the husband responds in verses 43 and 44: the wife must enter his house as a symbol of auspiciousness and bear children. She should not be evil-eyed; she should not "slay" (i.e., trouble) her husband. She should be "radiant, gentlehearted, loving the Gods, delightful, bearing heroes, bring[ing] blessing to our quadrupeds and bipeds." In the next 45th verse, the husband prays to Indra to make his wife blessed "in her sons" and promise that his wife bears him "ten sons, and make her husband the eleventh man"[118]. It is obvious that this hymn praises the woman as a married wife and expects her to bear ten sons; these sons are the evidence that she has given birth to her husband as "the eleventh man". The son has re-born his father. The mother was only the medium for this re-birth[119]. This privilege is unavailable to a daughter. She is not the extension of her father. Thus, this marriage song itself is gender-biased is noteworthy.

The *Puruṣa Sūkta* ('the Lord's Hymn') in *Ṛgveda* 10:90 narrates the creation of the universe and the male persons into four unchangeable and impenetrable *Varṇas*, namely socio-religious categories[120]: The 12th verse of this hymn states the "Brahman [i.e., Brahmins as custodians of all knowledge] was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya [i.e., *Kṣatriya*, the rulers, authorities] made. His thighs became the *Vaiśya* [i.e., the bankers, wealth makers, owners of lands and cattle]. His feet became the the *Śūdra* [i.e., the servants of these above three *Varṇas*]. The next verse speaks about the creation of the moon from *Puruṣa*'s mind, the sun from his eye, India and Agni from his mouth, and air (*vāyu*) from his breath. Verse 14 states that the sky came forth from his navel and the earth from his feet. Verse 16 says that other regions came from his ears. When the gods wanted to make an offering to the Lord, they

[118] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda,* p. 463–465: the "[10:085] HYMN LXXXV. Surya's Bridal".

[119] When a Tamil father sees his new-born infant son, he fondly carries him by saying "என்னைப் பெற்ற இராசாவே!" (enn̲aip perr̲a irācāvē! = 'My king, who has birthed me').

[120] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda,* p. 469: The "[10:90] HYMN XC. Purusa".

offered the *Puruṣa* to the same *Puruṣa*; thus, the *Puruṣa* was the "subject and object of the sacrifice"[121].

The *Urvaśī–Purūravas Sūkta* in *Ṛgveda* 10:95 describes the female celestial *Urvaśī* and her association with the mythical king *Purūravas*. According to verses 4 and 5, *Pururavas* embraced her three times in the day and she received his caresses "coldly". Verses 14 and 15 predict that *Urvaśī* would have to return, from where she came. Thus, she would become his "Destruction's bosom" and one of the "fierce rapacious wolves" that devoured him. He should not allow himself to be tormented by her because with "women there can be no lasting friendship; hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women"[122]. This hymn portrays a woman not only as a cause for man's sorrow, but also as fierce wolves and hyenas, who for their own survival kill other animals and can injure humans as well. This equation of women with animals is deeply problematic and troublesome.

The *Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta* ('Golden Womb Hymn') in *Ṛgveda* 10:121 tells how this breathing and living Golden Seed kept all living and non-living things in itself and how it became the source for all beings including the deities, natural forces such as fire, light, heaven, discernment and *Prajāpati* ('the Lord of the Universe')[123]. The *Vāk Sūkta* ('the speaking, word') in *Ṛgveda* 10:125. Its 3rd verse calls the *Vāk* "the Queen, the gatherer-up of treasures, most thoughtful, first of those who merit worship. Thus, Gods have established me in many places with many homes to enter and abide in"[124]. The perception of *Vāk* as the queen, from whom all creative energies flow, may refer to a goddess,[125] but not to an ordinary woman.

These references in the foundational book of Sanskrit teaching on human relationships are thoroughly male-centred and theological. They do not seem to differentiate between celestial and earthly beings. The *Ṛgveda* presents the male person *Dakṣa* also named *Puruṣa* as the

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[121] Doniger, *On Hinduism*, p. 164.

[122] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda,* p. 473: the "[10-095] HYMN XCV. Urvasi. Pururavas".

[123] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda,* p. 487: the "[10-121] HYMN CXXI. Ka".

[124] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda,* p. 489: the "[10-125] HYMN CXXV Vak".

[125] Valerie J. Roebuch, (translator and editor), *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 2000, p. 480: in the Vedas, *Vāc* is considered *Sarasvatī*, a river goddess and later as the goddess of wisdom.

Cosmic Person or the *Universal Soul*. He had no matching female counterpart. The *Prakṛti* ('nature, matter, earth'), which is the woman, emanated from him; however, she is his equal, but remains inferior to him; like *Vāk*, *Prakṛti* can be a sublime power. At the same time, but as *Urvaśī*, she can torment the man. This theological attitude, anchored in *Ṛgveda*, the most fundamental Sanskrit text, has not promoted gender balance in India.

2.1.2 The woman as a 'thought' of the Primal Man

The basic assumption that originally and really the Supreme Being exists as *Puruṣa*, the male principle and includes itself the female principle, which can manifest as thought, speech or seducing love. Doniger has explained how male deities such as *Viṣṇu* could think in a focused manner and transform themselves into enchanting women such as *Mohinī*[126]. These temporary figures were bisexual males and therefore, they were also transsexual[127]. For the purpose of gender relations and the understanding of the concepts *Pati* ('Lord, husband') and *Patnī* (the 'wife, whose *Pati* is alive' and mistress of a house), the portrayal of the first woman in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I.4) is important. This *Upaniṣad* is a part of the *White Yajurveda*, which the Sun-God is said to have revealed to Yājñavalkya (8th century BCE)[128], an influential Philosopher of the *Advaita* ('no-two-ness'). This *Upaniṣad* also belongs to the category of literature known as *Āraṇyaka* ('forest teaching'). It has the status of the foundational religious writing known as *Śruti* ('that which is heard, revealed'). It guides a *Vanaprastha*, who is normally a male 'forest dweller,' who belongs to one of the three upper *Varṇa*s, to meditate and discover deeper meanings of life and Vedic rituals. At this stage, he would have experienced life not only as an unmarried student (*Brahmachārin*), but also as a married householder (*Gṛhastha*). His children would have grown up and he would have

[126] Doniger, *On Hinduism*, pp. 332–333: Doniger quotes these stories from *Mahābhārata* 1.16–17 and *Brahmānda Purāṇa* 4.10.41–77.

[127] Doniger, *On Hinduism*, pp. 331: "The Hindu gods are more often serially than simultaneously bisexual, more previously transsexual, transformed physically into the other sex. The Vedic Indira on occasion changes both gender and species. Each of these two great male gods, Vishnu and Shiva, is transformed into a female in a famous cycle of myths, and both goddesses and supernatural women become male in certain texts." These texts reveal the ambiguity of between goddesses and gods.

[128] Swāmi Mādhavānanda (translator): *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 3rd ed., Mayavati/Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1950, p. vii: "The Yajur-Veda, which has two forms, Dark and White, has the Taittirīya and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas respectively. The White Yajur Veda was revealed to Yājñavalkya through the grace of the Sun, who appeared to him in an equine form."

completed all worldly duties. Soon he would leave the stage of *Vanaprastha* and become a *Sannyāsin* ('renouncer') and "seek for the supreme reality through the Upaniṣad"[129]. The section I.3 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* ends with the famous purification prayer addressed to the *Brahman*: "From the unreal lead me to the real. From darkness lead me to light. From death lead me to immortality"[130].

Section I.4 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.4[131] narrates the creation of the female person. It represents the general preconception of the authors of the *Upaniṣads*, namely "every being contained both male and female aspects"[132] and the human being, portrayed as either *Puruṣa* or *Ātman*[133] or *Virāj* as the Self or *Prajāpati* as the Universal Lord[134] was not an exception. This creation narrative can be summarised as follows: in the beginning, the evil-less *Puruṣa* existed in the form of a *Ātman* and had self-realisation: "'I am!' So the name 'I' [*aham*]". This realisation made him afraid because he knew that "There is nothing else but me, so why am I afraid?" This knowledge removed his fear, but he was sad without any pleasure. Therefore,

> [he] desired a second [person, companion]. He became as large as a woman and a man embracing. He made that self split (*pat-*) into two: from that husband (*pati*) and wife (*patnī*) came to be. Therefore Yājñavalkya used to say, 'In this respect we too are each like a half portion.' So this space is filled by a wife. He coupled with her, and from that human beings were born.[135]

Mādhavānanda, one of the commentators of this *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, stated that the *Virāj* as 'self' had attained the status of *Hiraṇyagarbha* (the 'Golden Womb') or the expounder of the Vedas. His karmic rewards and the power of his meditations and rituals promoted him to this status. *Virāj* was not only the all-encompassing 'Self', but also a *Manu*

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[129] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. xi–xii and 8.

[130] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 18.

[131] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 19–25.

[132] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. xvii.

[133] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. xvii: "In the early Upaniṣads, the inner part of a human being is often called *puruṣa*, 'man' or 'person', rather than *ātman*." In this instance, the *ātman* consisted of the male and the female principles.

[134] Mādhavānanda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, pp. 92–93.

[135] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 19–20.

('humanity'). The woman, who emerged through his thought and who became his wife, was actually "his daughter called Satarūpa"[136]. Without obtaining her consent and cooperation the man coupled with her committed incest. Though she rebelled in the following manner, he did not leave her:

> She realized: 'How can he couple with me when he begot me from himself? Ah, I must hide!' She became a cow, the other a bull, and so he coupled with her. From that, cattle were born. She became a mare, the other a stallion; she became a she-donkey, the other he-donkey; and so he coupled with her. From that, solid-hoofed animals were born. The one became a nanny-goat, the other a billy-goat; the one became a ewe, the other a ram; and so he coupled with her. From that, goats and sheep were born. In that way he created every pair, right down to the ants. He knows: 'I am creation, for I created all this,' so he became creation. Whoever knows this, comes to be in this, his creation.[137]

This narrative presents the woman as an afterthought. She had no place in the creation plan. The man's thoughts manifested her. Her main function was to please him and meet his needs. She became his complementary half in creation of humankind and other living species. However, the man did not realise this complementarity. Ultimately, the man was the Self, the Supreme Reality and the woman had to be part of this reality; this creation narrative does not recognise her individuality, independence and worth as a person. He was the *Aham* ('I am') and the woman was real if she was content to remain within him as his thought and for his pleasures. These theological attempts to explain the origin of human race would have practical gender issues. Probably, they reflected the patriarchal and hierarchal social conditions of the time, when the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* was composed[138]. In any case, the concept of the wife being a *Patnī* became important[139]: she was not merely the other half of the husband. She

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[136] Mādhavānanda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, p. 101.

[137] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 20. Mādhavānanda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, p. 100: Mādhavānanda's translation of this passage is clearer and reads as follows: "He was not at all happy [i.e., "was stricken with dissatisfaction"]. Therefore people (still) are not happy when alone. He desired a mate. He became as big as man and wife embracing each other. He parted this very body into two. From that came husband and wife. Therefore, said Yājñavalkya, this (body) is one-half of oneself, like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore, this space is indeed filled by the wife. He was united with her. From that men were born.

[138] Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. xiii: The *Āraṇyaka*s may have been written around 1000 BCE. The Upaniṣads could be dated to about 700 BCE. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is a pre-Buddhist work because its author Yājñavalkya presents the concept of reincarnation as unfamiliar, "whereas in the earliest Buddhist texts that we have it is already fully developed."

[139] The *Patnī*-concept (on page 957) has these and other implications: Vaman Shivaram Apte (Compiler): *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Revised and Enlarged*, 3 Vols., Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957–1959, available online at (accessed on 14 April 2018).

should regard him as a deity and serve him. She should be devoted, loyal, and chaste to him only. It is ironic that the husband as *Pati* has no such demands. These paradoxical values, which were originally theological, would have social consequences that were unhelpful to women.

2.1.3 The Supreme Being as a man and a woman

The Supreme Being has various names. Some of them are *Puruṣa*, *Brahman*, *Ātman*, *Virāj* or *Prajāpati*. *Śiva* (in Tamil: *Civam*) is the Supreme Being for the *Śaivites*. At the same time, the *Vaiṣṇavites* worship *Viṣṇu* as their Supreme Being. In all instances, the Supreme Being is bi-gender, namely male and female at the same time. Only human beings, limited by space, time, partial experiences, perceptions and their expression in languages and arts, face difficulties in understanding the bi-gender reality of the Supreme Being.

The following example illustrates how the *Śaivites* seek to solve this theological riddle: how can the Supreme Being be bi-gender or bisexual? The *Śivapurāṇa* (the 'ancient story of Śiva') answers this question in the following manner. The second chapter of the *Śatarudrasaṃhitā* section of the *Śivapurāṇa* describes *Śiva*'s eight forms, namely earth, water, fire, wind, ether, soul (*Paśupati*, 'cow/soul-lord'), sun (*Īśāna*, 'East-knowledge') and moon (*Mahādeva*, 'Great-Deity'). Thus, Śiva is believed to unite the entire universe in himself. He is the universe; he constitutes and governs all parts of the universe. His *Ātman* supposedly pervades and connects all parts of the universe[140]. The second chapter of the *Śatarudrasaṃhitā* section presents a scene, in which an inferior petitioner approached his master, requested him to solve an unsolvable problem and obtained a satisfying solution. *Nandīśvara*, the bull-shaped servant of Śiva, narrated the scene as follows: at that time, "no generation of women had formerly come out of Īśāna, the lotus-born deity (Brahmā) was unable to produce the creation by means of copulation"[141].

[140] J.L. Shastri: *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology: The Śiva - Purāṇa*, translated by a Board of Scholars, Vol. 3, Part 3, (1969), 4th rpt., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988, pp. 1074–75.

[141] Shastri, *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology*, p. 1076.

Brahmā recreated the male elements and this job tired him out. He keenly observed how *Śiva* and *Śakti* were always united and wanted to have a woman. To obtain her, he meditated on *Śiva* and *Śakti* and undertook severe austerities in their honour. *Śiva* and *Śakti* were so pleased with him that they appeared to him together. Knowing *Brahmā*'s desire, *Śiva* separated his *Śakti* from himself. Immediately, *Brahmā* requested *Śiva* and *Śakti* to grant him the power to create a woman. To achieve this purpose, he then requested *Śakti* to be born as the daughter of *Dakṣa*. *Śiva* indicated his acceptance and *Śakti* became the daughter of Dakṣa and manifested herself as a human woman. *Brahmā* copulated with her. "Ever since then, the section of women was created in the world, *Brahmā* attained bliss. Creation became copulatory[142].

Thus, *Śivapurāṇa* presents the bisexuality of *Śiva*: he, as *Śiva*, represents the male principle and he, as *Śivā*, stands for the female principle. The daughter of *Dakṣa* was indeed the *Śivā*, who was none other than *Śivā*. Śiva, in the form of *Ardhanārīśvara* ('the lord, whose half is a woman')[143], combines the complementary and mutuality of the male and female principle as a singular reality. The reality is only one, namely *Śiva*; the appearances of male and female entities are the same in the core; their material appearances are unreal. In this unitary understanding of reality, a woman is needed just for procreation. Even this solution has a gender bias: the main role of the woman was procreation.

2.1.4 The birth of a son as a sign of his father's 'salvation'

The *Law of Manu* 9:137–138 clearly states that the son as a *Putra* saves the soul of his father from the *Put*-hell:

> A man wins worlds through a son, and he gains eternity through a grandson, but he reaches the summit of the chestnut horse [i.e., the highest world of the sun *bradhnasya viṣṭapa*] through the

[142] Shastri, *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology*, pp. 1077–1078: *Śatarudrasaṃhitā* Section of *Śivapurāṇa*, Chapter 3, Verses 17–22 and 27–29.

[143] Shastri, *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology*, p. 1075: "The half-male and half-female (ardhanārīśvara) form of Śiva is symbolical of the process of creation by copulation. This concept is comparable to the Sāṁkya doctrine of Puruṣa (cosmic soul) and Prakṛti (cosmic nature) whose union produces the different units of the universe."

> grandson of his son. Because the male child saves (*trāyate*) his father from the hell call *put*, therefore he was a son (*putra*) by the Self-existent one [i.e., *Svayambhu*] himself.[144]

Śankarācārya, who lived in the 9th century CE, shared the view that a son was indeed necessary to pull the soul (*Ātman*) of his father from the *Put*-hell. In a commentary, he expressed this view in the following manner:

> *Therefore*, because he saves his fathers by fulfilling his duties, *he is called a son*. This is the derivative meaning of the word 'Putra' – one who 'saves' the father by 'completing' his omissions. *The father*, although dead, is immortal and *lives in this world through* such a *son*. Thus, he wins this world of men through his son. (Italics in the original).[145]

This meaning shaped the public opinion, which the lexicographer Monier Monier-William (1819–1899) captured as follows: the *put* is "a particular hell to which the childless are condemned, a division of the infernal regions considered to be the abode of those who die childless [i.e., without sons]".[146] Likewise, Vaman Shivaram Apte (1852–1892) defined *put* as a "particular division of a Hell or the infernal regions to which childless persons are said to be condemned"[147]. The power of this belief lies in *Svayambhu* ('the Self-Existing One') itself.

The *Law of Inheritance* in *Brihaspati* (XXV.36–37) reiterates this belief as follows: the birth of a son is the ideal merit of the father. A father without his own son, can consider the son of his daughter as his own son-saviour, who would complete his funeral rites and continue his legacy on this world:

> Because a son (Putra) saves his father from the hell called Put by the very sight of his face, therefore should a man be anxious to beget a son. Both a son's son and the son of an appointed daughter cause a man to attain heaven. Both are pronounced to be equal as regards their right of inheritance and the duty of offering funeral balls of meals (*Pindas*).[148]

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[144] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, p. 214.

[145] Mādhavānanda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, p. 234.

[146] Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1851, p. 580. Monier-Williams adds a caution: the author of the *Law of Manu* (IX: 138) may have invented this theological reason to explain the meaning of the word *Putra*.

[147] Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 129.

[148] Julius Jolly (translator): *Minor Law Books – Part 1 – Nârada. Brihaspati*, in 33rd Volume of *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. F. Max Müller, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1889, p. 375.

The *Law of Manu* 3:37 speaks about a son of a woman, who has had a 'Brahmā marriage'[149]. The meritorious act of this son "frees from guilt ten of the ancestors who came before him, ten later descendants, and himself as the twenty-first." When Georg Bühler (1837–1898) published his English translation of the *Law of Manu* in 1886, he rendered that the meritorious son "liberates from sin ten ancestors, ten descendants and himself as the twenty-first"[150]. The noun "sin" connotes graver offences than the noun "guilt". Both nouns imply the evil *karma* of the ancestors.

It is noteworthy that a single son is enough to save the father's soul. More sons are a symbol of the father's lustfulness. For example, the *Law of Manu* 9:106 reads "As soon as his eldest son is born a man becomes a man with a son, and no longer owes a debt to his ancestors" and adds another important theological reason attached to the birth of an eldest son. The birth of the eldest cancels the debt that the father as a householder owes to his paternal ancestors. Once he gets a son, the father should not aspire for other sons or daughters. The next verse in *The Law of Manu*, namely 9:107, stipulates that the "son to whom he [the father] transfers his debt and by whom he wins eternity is the one born out of duty; people know that the others are born out of desire." To make sure that a son is there at hand for a father to undertake the prescribed rituals, Sanskrit sources have named twelve types of sons, which the Tamil Lexicon has collected. They range from biological sons to adopted sons[151].

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[149] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, pp. 45–46: the *Law of Manu* 3:27 defines the 'Brahmā marriage': "It is said to be the law of Brahmā when a man dresses his daughter and adorns her and he himself gives her as a gift to a man he has summoned, one who knows the revealed canon and is of good character."

[150] Georg Bühler (translator & editor), *The Laws of Manu–Translated with Extracts from Seven Commentaries, Oxford*: The Clarendon Press, 1886, p. 82.

[151] *Tamil Lexicon*, p. 2762: the Tamil names of these sons are the following: 1) *Auracaṉ*, 2) *Tattakaṉ*, 3) *Kiruttirimaṉ*, 4) *Kirītaṉ*, 5) *Kāṉīṉaṉ*, 6) *Kūṭacaṉ*, 7) *Cauttiraṉ*, 8) *Apavittaṉ*, 9) *Kṣēttirajaṉ*, 10) *Pauṉarppavaṉ*, 11) *Cakōṭacaṉ* and 12) *Cuvayantattaṉ*. Their Sanskrit views can be summarised as follows: 1) *Aurasaputra*, who is a son who is born by same *jāti*-parents whose marriage followed the established rules. 2) *Dattkaputra* is an adopted son. His natural parents willingly and legally gave him to another parent. 3) *Kṛtrimaputra* is a grown-up son, whom another parent adopts without the consent of his natural parent. 4) *Krītaputra* is a son, whom someone else purchased from his natural parents. 5) *Kānīnaputra* is a son born to an unmarried young woman.6) *Gūḍhajaputra* is a 'secret' son, who does not know his father. He was born, when the husband of his mother was away. 7) *Śaudraputra* is a son born to a Sudra mother; his father belonged to one of the three upper *varṇa*s. 8) *Apaviddhaputra* is an adopted son by a stranger. His father or mother or both had abandoned him. 9) *Kṣētraputra* is a son fathered by a kinsman, whom the husband of his natural mother had appointed to continue his family line. 10)

The *Law of Manu* 9:127 assumed that the desire and efforts of a father to beget at least one son would practically result in the birth of more daughters. Therefore, a father without his own son, can even nominate the daughter of his daughter be act like his son: "A man with no son may make his female child an appointed daughter by means of this formula: Whatever children are born in her will offer the refreshment for the dead for me"[152]. This theological view remains a powerful agent for son-preference and gender injustice.

The salvation, which the son makes possible, does not free his father from the purification cycle of *Karmasaṃskāra* and land him in the *Mokṣa* and end their births and deaths. The salvation can be better understood as a promotion into a higher or superior status within the cycle of *Karmasaṃskāra*. According to the *Law of Manu* 3:37, the birth of a son astonishingly fulfils two functions: it is the proof that the ten past generations of male ancestors have their share of 'salvation'. It is also the surety for the ten future generations of males that their 'salvation' will hasten their *Karmasaṃskāra*. The urge to attain *Mokṣa* is real, powerful and theological. It serves as a hidden undying spring, from which the male desire and determination to beget a son swells up and invariably causes gender injustice.

The primary purpose of a wife is not merely to bear and raise sons, but also to gratify the egoistic longing of their husbands. The *Law of Manu* 9:7–9 asks the husbands to 'guard' their wives to attain welfare, name and fame. These male-centred demands do not consider the wife's physical, emotional and practical conditions or needs. Ultimately, the wife is the medium, by 'which' the husband replicates himself; his self-interest manifests as follows:

> For by zealously guarding his wife he [the husband] guards his own descendants, practices, family, and himself, as well as his own duty. The husband enters the wife, becomes an embryo, and is born here on earth. That is why a wife is called a wife (*jāyā*), because he is born (*jāyate*) again in her.

Paunarbhavaputra is a son born to a woman, whose husband has either died or divorced her. 11) *Sahaputra* is son born to a mother, who was already pregnant at the time of her marriage. 12) *Swayamdattaputra* is a son, whom his parents have abandoned; but he willingly goes to another couple and grows up with them as their son. Of these sons, the *Aurasaputra* occupies the preeminent place.

[152] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, pp. 212–213. On page 214, the verse 9:139 is also instruction: "There is no distinction between a son's son and a daughter's son in worldly matters, for a daughter's son also saves him in the world beyond, just like a son's son."

> The wife brings forth a son, who is just like the man she makes love with; that is why he should guard his wife zealously, in order to keep his progeny clean[153].

The assumption that the wife conceives and bears her own husband may be half-true biologically. The full truth is that her own genes join that of her husband and the child exhibits the genetic make of both parents. By contrast, the theological views of the *Law of Manu* do not want to acknowledge the contributions of the wife. The wife is the tool; the father is the actor; the wife receives his seed and reproduces it as his son. In this context, the husband is the 'son of his wife'[154]. And the son 'saves' his father here and now on this earth and then in eternity[155].

2.1.5 The son as the 'promoter' of his father via funeral ceremonies

Funeral rites are cultural, religious and theological symbols. They are sacred, repeatable, replicable and formal. They are human: the living emotionally and consciously bid farewell from the deceased; they keep the memories of the dead and remind themselves of their limited existence here on earth. Sanskrit sources embody rich traditions of funeral rites; this section, however, highlights the necessity and role of a son, who completes the funeral rituals known as *anteyeṣṭi* (the 'last sacrifice') and the commemorative events called *śrāddha*. Klaus Klostermeier underlines the importance of these two aspects as follows:

> According to the Ṛgveda the goal of marriage is to enable a man to sacrifice to the *devas* and beget a son who will ensure the continuity of the sacrifice. Woman was called half of man and the domestic sacrifice could not be performed only by husband and wife jointly. The son, *putra*, is so called, the scriptures say, because he pulls his parents out (*tra*) from hell (*pu*). He is necessary not only for the pride of the family to continue its line but also for its spiritual welfare in the next world.

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[153] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, pp. 197–198.

[154] Donald A. Mackenzie, *India: Myths and Legends*, London: The Mystic Press, 1985, p. 13: "In the famous story of Shakuntălā, the husband is similarly referred to as the son of his wife, the son being the reincarnation of the father." Mackenizie refers to the 74th Section of Ādi Parva of Mahābhārata in Roy's translation.

[155] The fact that the mother recreates her husband into his son earned her occasional respect and recognition as in the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* I.11:2, which reads as follows: Roebuch, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 246: "You must not neglect your duty to gods and ancestors. Hold your mother as a god. Hold your father as a god. Hold your teacher as a god. Hold your guest as a god."

> *Śrāddha*, the last rites, could be properly performed only by a male descendent. Without *śrāddha* the deceased remains forever a *preta*, a ghost[156].

It is a known fact that the son continues and extends the father in this world. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I.5.16–17) attested that only a son alone can hope to live in this world after the death of his father. When a father is about to die, he should call his son and entrust to him what is dear to him:

> 'You are Brahman, you are the sacrifice, and you are the world.' The son replies, 'I am Brahman, I am the sacrifice, and I am the world.' […] Therefore they speak of an educated son as being conducive to the world. Hence (a father) teaches his son. When a father […] departs from this world he penetrates his son together with the organ of speech, the mind and the vital force. Should anything be left undone by him through any slip the son exonerates him from all that. Therefore he is called a son. The father lives in this world through the son. Divine and immoral speech, mind and vial force permeate him.[157]

Likewise, according to the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* 2:14, the father on his deathbed commits his speech, breath, eye, ear, tastes of food, his actions, movements, joys and sorrows, and above all his mind and awareness to his son[158]. Thus, his son embodies him.

After the father has died, the *Anteyeṣṭi* happens on the cremation ground. The *Agni-Hymn* in *Ṛgveda* 10.16 offers the earliest evidence of cremation, in which the flames of the fire send the deceased "on his way unto the Fathers" and hand him "over to the Fathers"[159]. *Agni* ('fire') is called both the *Kravyād* (the 'flesh-eating') and the *Kravyavāhana* ('flesh-conveying')[160], because it consumes the corpse and turns it into flames, smoke and ashes. The flames and smoke symbolise the ascending of the dead to the world of the ancestors and deities. Since *Agni* transports the dead to the world of the ancestors and deities in an unrepeatable manner, its rituals must be correct and carefully performed. The son, as the chief mourner, purifies himself with a sacred bath and other rituals, walks around the funeral pyre three times, mutters the prescribed *Mantra*s, shows his grief, lights the funeral pyre and performs necessary

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[156] Klaus K. Klostermeier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, 3rd ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 152.

[157] Mādhavānanda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, p. 230.

[158] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 288–289.

[159] Griffith, *The Hymns of Rigveda*, p. 427: The "[10:016] HYMN XVI. Agni".

[160] Matthew R. Sayers, *Feeding the Dead: Ancestor Worship in Ancient India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 165.

libations. These last rites include pouring water or oil on a spot and scattering of grains for crows. The crows may represent the spirits of the dead. All these attitudes, beliefs, rituals and actions 'promote' the soul of the father to the world of his ancestors and deities[161].

The soul of the departed moves towards the world of the fathers and deities, it may not reach there automatically. It can get stuck on the way and remain as a *Preta* ('ghost, evil spirit'). Those who are particular about performing these obligatory rites correctly cite two scriptural passages: *Mahābhārata* 1.74.39 reads that the "son protects his ancestors' souls from the Hell named 'Puta'. Therefore, Lord Brahma himself has named him as 'Putra'". Similarly, *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* 1.11 warns the performer of *śrāddha* with these words: "One should not commit mistakes in any task performed towards God or ancestors' souls. One should not avoid these rituals"[162]. Additionally, *Bagavadgīta* 1:42 suggests that the souls of the departed that did not receive *śrāddha*-sacrifices consisting of rice balls and libation water remain in the hell (*Naraka*) and they cannot bless the living members of their family[163].

Most of funeral rituals follow this pattern: while pouring water, the son calls on the name of his father and ancestors and requests them to wash their hands. Then he spreads the sacrificial grass on the floor and places the rice balls on it. Then he calls on the name of the father and his ancestors and requests them to eat this food. After these *Śrāddha*-sacrifices, offered immediately after the cremation, the soul of the departed stops being a *Preta*. It is the prerogative of the son to promote the soul of his departed father in this manner. An experienced priest may guide this son to perform these sacrifices not only within a week after cremation, but also on appointed days and at least once a year. If a son is unavailable, the eldest male member of a family may perform this sacrifice. This male-centred sacrifice excludes women.

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[161] Jean Antoine Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, translated by Henry King Beauchamp, (1905), 3rd ed., Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1906, pp. 486–487.

[162] "Why should every son perform ritual of Shraddha?" *Sanatan Sanshta: Teaching Spirituality Comprehensively*, available online at https://www.sanatan.org/en/a/88.html (accessed on 16 April 2018).

[163] *Bagavadgīta* 1:42: "An increase in unwanted children results in hellish life both for the family and for those who destroy the family. Deprived of the sacrificial offerings, the ancestors of such corrupt families also fall", as expounded by Swami Mukundananda in his *Bhagavad Gita: The Song of God–Commentary*, available online at https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/1/verse/42 (accessed on 16 April 2016).

2.2 Women: adorable, ambiguous and abominable

2.2.1 Divine Women as Goddesses

As mentioned above, the Supreme Being contains both the male and the female principles; however, when it manifests itself, it appears in the forms of a male and a female. The male principle assumes several visible forms (Skt. *mūrti*, 'form, shape') such as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and the like. The female principle as *Śakti* ('energy') emanates its own feminine forms such as *Sarasvatī*, *Lakṣmī*, *Pārvatī* and the like.

These three principal goddesses are respectively associated with *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*; in this association they are perceived as consorts. As wives, they remain content and obey their husbands. As mothers of sons, they have fulfilled the wish of their husband for a male successor. None of these goddesses have daughters! When *Lakṣmī* became *Sītā* and married *Rāma*, she bore two sons, namely *Kusa* and *Lava*. These two sons were the first recipient of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* directly from its compiler *Vālmīki*. Similarly, *Pārvatī* has two sons, namely *Gaṇeśa* and *Murukaṉ*. The fact that these goddesses do not have daughters has not improved gender balance in India.

The traditions of goddesses not having daughters can be traced back to *Ṛgveda*. It praises natural powers and occurrences as female deities. David Kinsley's exposition of goddess traditions in India begins with the goddesses in *Ṛgveda*: these include *Uṣa* ('Dawn'), *Pṛthivī* ('Earth'), *Sarasvatī* (i.e., a specific river, later as the consort of *Brahmā* and 'Goddess of Learning') and *Vāc* ('Speech, creative matter'), *Nirṛti* ('Strength, Wealth, Well-Being') and *Rātrī* ('Night')[164]. His observation about the above-mentioned unmarried *Aditi* (under footnote 4) of the *Ṛgveda* is important: accordingly, *Aditi*, the Infinite Goddess, is the mother of the seven *Ādityas* ('of *Aditi*' = the 'Unlimited'), who are *Mitra*, *Aryaman*, *Bhaga*, *Varuna*, *Dakṣa*, *Aṁśa* and *Indra*. Like *Aditi*, goddesses embody natural phenomena, possess powerful energies and ensure the smooth function of the world in its rhythmic regularity. They can create and control even gods.

[164] David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, pp. 6–15.

This concept of unmarried goddesses controls the male powers revealed itself in and through goddesses like *Durgā* ('Fortress, the Inaccessible and the Formidable') and *Grāmadevatā*s ('Village Deities, Goddesses'). *Durgā* is a unique goddess with formidable power to protect her own and to annihilate her (male) opponents such as the water buffalo *Asura* (a 'non-hero, demon') known as *Mahiṣa*. Kinsley describes her dual identity as follows: as an unmarried goddess she rejects the ideals of a Sanskrit woman: she does not submit to any male authority; instead, she takes their *śakti* away from them, controls and even tramples on them. She is a woman, but she does not perform any household duties; instead, she fights like a man, wins battles and rescues male deities from their enemies[165]. Like *Viṣṇu*, she "creates, maintains and destroys the world; intervenes on a cosmic scale whenever disorder threatens to disrupt the world in the form of certain distress"[166]. She promises to deliver her devotees from evils such as "forest fires, wild animals, robbers, imprisonment, execution and battle"[167]. *Durgā*'s impact on gender balance remains to be studied[168].

Except a single male god *Aiyaṉār* (along with his countless local manifestations and names)[169], all *Grāmadevatā*s are powerful female virgins; villagers 'own' these goddesses as theirs because, in their opinion, these powerful guardians can either inflict or keep the evil spirits, diseases, distresses, and destabilizing away from their villages. Like *Māriyammaṉ* ('Mother, Goddess of Smallpox'), these goddesses can destroy and restore the welfare and

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[165] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, pp. 99–101: Kinsley often refers to the Sanskrit source book *Devī-mahātmya*. She won three battles against the enemies of male deities: 1) "the battle with Madhu and Kaitabha; [2] the battle with Mahiṣ and his army; [3] and the battle with Śumbha and Niśumbha and their generals, Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa, and Raktabīja."

[166] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 45.

[167] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 45.

[168] *Durgā* is the patron deity of Kolkata; it is a centre of education, Christian missionary activity, and Communists These and several other factors influence the issues gender balance there. "West Bengal Population Census data 2011", *Census 2011*, available online at https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/west+bengal.html (accessed on 19 April 2018): According to the 2011 Census, West Bengal had a sex ratio of 950 women for 1,000 men; Child Sex Ratio was 956 girls for 1,000 boys. 70.54% of women were literate as against 81.69% of men literates.

[169] Henry Whitehead, *The Religious Life of India: The Village Gods of South India*, 2nd rev. ed., Calcutta: Association Press, 1921, p. 121: *Aiyaṉār* has many local manifestations like *Maturai Vīraṉ* ('Hero of Madurai'). Other male guardian deities include *Muṉiyāṇṭi*, *Māṭacāmi*, and the like.

harmony of the entire village, "the physical place as well as the social and economic organism"[170].

Ellaiyamma̲n̲ ('Boundary-Goddess'), *Aṅkāḷamma̲n̲* ('the Mother, who was put together' or the Mother, who unites') and other village goddesses have their temples at the entrance and exit of the villages. Like *Ka̲n̲n̲iyākumari*, they retain their virginity, sexual energy, independence from male dominance. They can keep the villagers, their cattle and their lands either barren or fertile. They are often "wild, rambunctious, independent, demanding, and destructive in their habits."[171] They require festivals, blood sacrifices, and other appeasing ceremonies. The villagers do not want their daughters to imitate the behaviour patterns of these goddesses. However, they unconsciously compare their grown up unmarried daughters with these goddesses. Until they are married, the parents guard their daughters in every possible way and curtail their movements outside home. These attitudes and practices do not promote gender balance in villages.

Some of the village guardian goddesses have different functions as well: pre-pubescent girls, unmarried women, wives abused or abandoned by their husbands, widows without any social protection can 'marry' the village goddess *Yellammā* (in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka). After the goddess and the women exchange their *Tāli*s (i.e., the marriage badge), the women become *Māttammā*s ('those who have exchanged' their husbands or men with the goddess). They would never be widowed and will live as *Nittiya Cumaṅkaḷi* (the 'eternally auspicious woman')[172]. The *Māttammā*s are free from male authority; yet, several of them end

[170] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 199.

[171] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 200: Superficially, the relationship between these village goddesses and the villagers seem simple and straightforward: "In return for the worship of the villagers the goddess ensures good crops, timely rain, fertility, and protection from demons, diseases, and untimely death. This arrangement is a local one with little or no room for outsiders. The power of the goddess does not extend beyond the village, so villagers leave her jurisdiction and protection when they venture beyond it. The relationship is localized and aims not so much at individual welfare as the welfare of the whole. In fact, relations between village goddess and their villages are more complicated. This is made clear by the association of these goddesses with disease and disruption, an identification that gives them an ambivalent character."

[172] Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger, "Wandering from 'Hills to Valleys' with the Goddess: Protection and Freedom in the *Matamma* Tradition of Andhra", *Women's Lives, Women's Rituals in the Hindu Tradition*, ed. Tracy Pintchman, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 35–54:37.

up as *Devadāsī*s ('female servants of gods'), who as temple dancers, artisans and ritual specialists do not earn enough money to sustain themselves and their descendants. When they begin to work as sex workers, they get into a vicious cycle of exploitations by various male agents. Nowadays preventive, safeguarding and curative legal provisions are available. Social activists work hard to eradicate the *Devadāsī*-system. Yet, it survives and impairs gender equality[173].

2.2.2 Divine women as wives and mothers

Divine wives and mothers surrendered their feminine powers at their marriage to their male consorts. For example, when *Durgā* became *Pārvatī*, i.e., Śiva's consort, she took on "domestic characteristics"[174] and motherhood. Similarly, the three-breasted fish-eyed Goddess *Mīṉāṭci* of Madurai grew up like a conquering warrior. The moment she saw Śiva in Mount Kailash, one of her breasts disappeared and she was filled with "modesty, innocence, and shyness, and she began to scrape the ground shyly with her toe. And so Śiva reduced the powerful battle queen to a shy maiden and eventually subservient wife"[175] Likewise, Śiva had a dance contest with *Kālī*, who as *Durgā* was "powerful, destructive, bloodthirsty, and fearsome", and 'tamed' her. She lost her fierce feminine power, independence; she became a weak and shy woman, who "stood helplessly like a puppet, confused"[176]. These ideal divine wives and mothers have their spiritual charm. They embody innocence, weakness, shyness and submission to male domination. These images remain unhelpful examples for gender balance.

Like the divine wives and mothers, the heroine of the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* endured hardships imposed by men. For example, *Rāmāyaṇa* presents *Sītā* ('furrow', a fertility goddess 'not born from a womb') as the ideal wife. She grew up in her father's house. Her father arranged her marriage. She married a man, whom she did not know well. When he had

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[173] Nicholas J. Bradford, "Transgenderism and the Cult of Yellamma: Heat, Sex and Sickness in south Indian Ritual," *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1983, pp. 307–322; Ramberg, Lucinda: "When the Devi is Your Husband: Sacred Marriage and Sexual Economy in South India," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2011, pp. 28–60.

[174] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 95.

[175] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 203.

[176] Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 203.

to leave his kingship, and go to live in a forest, she followed him unconditionally. Sally Sutherland[177], who has examined *Rāmāyaṇa*, concluded that during the first part of their stay in the forest *Sītā*, the ideal wife, was devoted, submissive, passive, deferential and self-sacrificing. In an unbecoming manner, she demanded *Rāma* to bring a deer alive. Then she compelled *Lakṣmana*, her brother-in-law, to assist her husband in catching the deer. Thus, she remained alone, without being defended by men.

At that time, the giant *Rāvaṇa* of the Island *Laṅka*, appeared to her as a Brahmin ascetic, kidnapped her to his place and imprisoned her in the *Aśoka*-Forest. She carefully protected her chastity and remained loyal to her husband, who had her finally rescued. On seeing her, he was unhappy, felt shame, doubted her marital loyalty to him and asked her to leave him. At that time, she entered fire; celestial beings attested to her chastity. Soon her husband declared that he himself knew the loyalty of his wife towards him, but he simply wanted to convince his subjects of his wife's marital chastity. After some time, he rejected her a second time at the River Ganges. His sons *Kuśa* and *Lava* persuaded him to accept her; when he wanted to test her fidelity a second time, *Sītā* declared that she did not even think of any man other than her husband, the Goddess of Earth should open her and take her in. After all, the earth was her mother and the mother protected her at last.

The story of *Sītā* and *Rāma* captivates the minds of countless Indians because it represents the "psychological concerns of basic familial conflict and basic attitudes of a patriarchal and male dominated society towards women"[178]: *Rāma* was the ideal male devoted to his duties and the contentment of the people outside his home. *Sītā* was the ideal wife devoted and subservient to her husband; she endured mental stress, separations, rejections, doubts and ordeals. Finally, to prove her chastity and loyalty to her husband, she did not hesitate to die. This story may be psychologically satisfying. However, it hinders gender equality. Therefore,

[177] Sally J. Sutherland, "Sītā and Draupadī: Aggressive Behaviour of Female Role-Models in the Sanskrit Epics", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 109, No. 1, 1989, pp. 63–79:75.

[178] Sutherland, "Sītā and Draupadī: Aggressive Behaviour of Female Role-Models in the Sanskrit Epics", p. 63.

countless activists expressed their dissatisfaction with the portrayals of great women in epics such as *Sītā*, *Draupadī* and others[179].

2.2.3 Real women as daughters, wives and mothers

Human women as wives and mothers can be studied from ideal and practical perspectives. The *Law of Manu* prescribes the ideal status of women as wives and mothers as 'servants' of their husbands and sons. Its instruction in 2:145 references to the word 'mother'. It asks its adherents to honour their "mothers" more than their fathers and teachers. However, its preceding and succeeding instructions make this claim ambiguous. The teacher of the Vedas is presented as the mother as well. Therefore, Manu's rare stipulations to honour the mothers should be seen within their contexts and one can easily detect his male-centred focus:

> [144] (The teacher) who fills (the pupil's) two ears with the Veda not in vain is to be known as his mother and his father, and he must not act with malice against him. [145] The teacher is more important than ten instructors, and the father more than a hundred teachers, but the mother more than a thousand fathers. [146] Between the one who gives him birth and the one who gives him the Veda, one who gives the Veda is the more important father; for a priest's birth through the Veda is everlasting, both here on earth and after death. [147] That is mother and father produced him through mutual desire, and he was born in the womb, he should regard as his mere coming into existence. [148] But the birth that a teacher who has crossed to the far shore of the Veda produces for him through the verse to the sun-god, in accordance with the rules is real, free from old age and free from death[180].

Thus, these instructions do not extol the biological mothers of sons; instead, they praise male priests of the Vedic studies.

Likewise, Manu's instruction in 4:185 to consider "one's daughter as the supreme object of piety". The remaining part of this instruction asks the men not to get "heated by the fever of resentment", if the daughter has 'abused' them. The preceding verses make it clear that no one

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[179] The journal *Manushi* contains significant essays that critique male-centred portrayals of women in Sanskrit and other sources. For an example, see Ruth Vanita, "Was Sita Mrs. Ram?" *Manushi*, No. 39, 1987, pp. 11–12; Thomas B. Coburn, "Sita Fights While Ram Swoon: A Shakta Version of Ramayan", *Manushi*, No. 90, September–October 1995, pp. 5–16; Nitasha Guha, "A Sita Amidst Many Ravans," *Manushi*, No. 106, pp. 32–33. Ovidyut Aklujkar, "Sita as Rama's Advocate: Propriety in the *Ananda-Ramayana*," *Manushi*, No. 125, 2001, pp. 38–42. Several research monographs are available on these women in Sanskrit epics: for an example, see Cynthia Ann Leenerts,: *Epic Transformations: Reinscriptions of Sita and Draupadi in Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The George Washington University/Washington D.C./USA, 1997.

[180] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, p 32.

should argue with their priests. Men in an extended family live among other older and younger women, daughters, sons, servants; some of them may fall sick. Guests come and go. In this context, the daughters are important. They should be guarded as the 'supreme object of piety' because they would carry the patriarchal religious and social traditions further. Therefore, the men do not get offended, if the members of their families and guests do not sufficiently respect them.

The *Law of Manu* (9:95–96) outlines how a husband should treat his wife, its reason and the purpose of a wife: "[95] A husband takes his wife as a gift from the gods, not by his own wish; he should always support a virtuous wife, thus pleasing the gods. [96] Women were created to bear children, and men to carry on the line; that is why the revealed canon prescribes a joint duty (for a man) together with his wife"[181]. These two verses indicate that the man is the main actor: he takes his wife and continues his family line. Women can conceive, bear and raise children. This is perhaps the only reason, why the man as a husband needs a wife. She is the means to his own end.

In this process the wife must worship her husband as if he were a god (5:144). She has no independence (5:147); as a child she should be under the control of her father; as a young woman under the supervision of lord, i.e., husband, and after his death under the protection of her sons (5:148 and 9:3). She must not leave either her father or husband or sons so that no insult comes up on her family (5:149). Should her husband die before her, she can live as a chaste widow, eating vegetarian meals, not mentioning any man's name, and performing those things that would otherwise delight her dead husband (5:156–158). Astonishingly, in one instance, Manu accords more value to a wife's chastity than to the necessity of a son: if she remained chaste after the death of her husband, she could attain bliss, even if she had no son. By contrast, if chose to have children through other men, she would lose her bliss with her dead husband in the heaven (5:160–161). Thus, Manu emphasised the necessity of sexual chastity and the maintenance of pure patriarchal lineages. His perceived feminine sexuality is something valuable, mysterious, vulnerable and controllable. He did not apply the same

[181] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, pp. 208–209.

standards for the widowers. Such divergent norms for women and men do not promote gender equality.

Women as daughters, wives and mothers lead contextual lives. They embody time and space; they derive their existential skills from their histories, traditions, upbringings, access to education and other elements that make life meaningful. Women have their own values that animate their attitudes, decisions and actions. Anil Kumar Srivastava's work[182] show how the vows and the practices of women reveal their attitudes and purposes. It contends that all women have three life stages, namely the *Kaumārika*-Stage before marriage, the *Vivāha*-Stage of the married women and the *Vaidhavya*-Stage of the widows.

Girls at the *Kaumārika*-Stage wish to develop qualities such as "chastity, efficiency, fecundity, strength, tranquillity and forbearance"[183]. As they prepare themselves for marriage, some girls, mostly in West Bengal, seek to attain ten qualities that are derived from Sanskrit epics. The draw the images of ten epic personalities and say their prayers:

> These include: a wish for a husband like Rama, a father-in-law like Dasaratha, a brother-in-law like Lakshmana, a mother-in-law like Kausalya; to be chaste like Sita, an efficient cook like Draupadi, to be blessed with children like Kunti (all sons and no daughters); to achieve true womanhood like Durga, tranquillity like the river goddess Ganga, and forbearance like Mother Earth.[184]

The vows of some women include their resolve to refrain on certain days from eating certain things; they practice religious rituals both at home and in their temples; they wish to study well and progress in life.

The *Pativratā* is a married woman, who vows to be faithful to her "husband-god"[185] and to maintain her auspicious married status. During this *Vivāha*-Stage her own wellbeing depends on the welfare of her wedded husband. Her religious practices and vows should coincide with

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[182] Anil Kumar Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, New Delhi: MD Publications, 2010.

[183] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 171: "Instead of consigning their powers and efficacy to male agents as brahmanic consort goddesses do, women in devotional Hinduism exercise their powers themselves for purposes they themselves choose. The purposes in the end do reflect values of self-sacrifice, but the selflessness involved in performing rites for one's family welfare proceeds from a posture of efficacy and confidence."

[184] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 176.

[185] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 182.

the proper time and place; then only their religious vows would enhance their "well-being, happiness, and fruitfulness"[186]. Married women strongly believe that their observance of religious vows enhances their *Śakti*, the creative energy, which they can transfer to their husbands and others in their families. Srivastava articulates this transfer of merit as follows:

> [*Śakti*] is a force which women share with goddesses. The power of sakti is both transformative and transferable to another person or object. One's measure of sakti can be increased through chastity and any form of tapas (that is, through acts of austerity and self-denial, especially food), or through suffering and servitude – both associated with women's lot. Vrats that women perform for the sake of others in the family further augment their 'sakti,' which is then directed to auspicious ends.[187]

In this context, Srivastava emphasises another important factor of wives transferring the merits of their vows to their husbands; after all, the "wives are considered 'consubstantial' with their husbands (and to an extent their children)"[188]. As they share their husband's nature and being, they can transfer their merit to him, lengthen his life and thus benefit from him.

When a woman as a bride moves with her husband to her in-law's house, she is a stranger. Quickly, she should learn to follow the religious vows of this new family and be subject her mother-in-law. If she gives birth to a son, the level of her acceptance and status will grow. The pressure on her to bear sons is so much that she would likely resort to religious vows[189].

Post-menopausal women, whose husbands are living and who have more freedom and means to undertake religious activities at home, in the temples, pilgrimages, and in other religious gatherings for singing songs[190], become religiously active. As long as their husbands live, they are considered auspicious. Young women will request them to bless their religious vows, marriages, festivals and other undertakings[191].

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[186] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 182.

[187] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 174.

[188] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 174.

[189] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 184.

[190] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 171: "Instead of consigning their powers and efficacy to male agents as brahmanic consort goddesses do, women in devotional Hinduism exercise their powers themselves for purposes they themselves choose. The purposes in the end do reflect values of self-sacrifice, but the selflessness involved in performing rites for one's family welfare proceeds from a posture of efficacy and confidence."

[191] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 188.

The third and final stage of the woman is her widowhood (*Vaidhavya*): she should be simple; she should not wear any decorative dress or jewels. Without her husband, she remains always inauspicious; people believe that she has a part in the death of her husband. She is no longer active sexually; therefore, she cannot bear any sons for her husband's family. If she had not born a son earlier, she feels that she has failed in life[192]. Thus, all three life-stages of the women reflect Sanskrit religious ideologies and practices. The emphasis on sons and relative non-botheration about the daughters in Sanskrit sources hinders gender balance.

2.3 Earliest female philosophers: Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī

Normally, rules have exceptions and these exceptions clarify the rules. Thus, *Gārgī Vīcaknavī* was an exceptional female philosopher, who debated with the above-mentioned *Advaita*-Philosopher Yājñavalkya (2.1.2). *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (III.5)[193] places *Gārgī Vīcaknavī* amid other male priest-debaters[194]. They came together to participate in a sacrifice, which King Janaka of Videha had organised. At that time, the priest-debaters thought about the death and a useful way of merging into *Brahman*, the Supreme Being. Some said that good *karman* ('action, deed') done by the mind and the five sense organs, namely ears, eyes, hands, legs and breath, can be part of and experience the *Brahman*. Then, the debaters concentrated on the identity of Brahman and oneself. The *Brahman*, who sees, knows, feels, thinks and suffers, is within oneself. Therefore, one's self is everything. At this this time, a debater asked how the Self that is within oneself can long for sons as the symbol of one's wealth, thirst, grieve, grow old, and die. Yājñavalkya answered this query by stating that a person is how that a person is. In this context, the female philosopher *Gārgī Vīcaknavī* asked Yājñavalkya to tell her, if the Supreme Being lives within oneself, what holds together the waters, air, the sun, the moon, the star constellations, and deities. Immediately, Yājñavalkya disapproved her inquisitive mind and asked her to spot asking questions "about a deity concerning whom too

[192] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 189.

[193] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 55–57.

[194] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 49–62: the male debaters included Yājñavalkya, Aśvala the Hotṛ, Jāratkārva Ārtabhāga, Bhujyu Lāhyāyani, Uṣasta Cākrāyaṇa, Kahola Kauṣītakeya and Uddālka Āruṇi.

many questions should not be asked"; otherwise, intellectual inquiry beyond certain limit would split her apart. At this warning, "Gārgī Vīcaknavī fell silent"[195], at least temporarily.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (III.8)[196] presents *Gārgī Vīcaknavī*'s another debate, which she conducted in front of other debaters. She directed her first question to *Yājñavalkya* to identify the element that is above the sky, below the earth, between the sky and the earth, that which weaves the past, the present and the future. *Yājñavalkya* conclusively answered that that element was space. Secondly, she wanted to know, on "what is space women, as warp and weft?"[197] Immediately, he replied: it was *Brahman*[198], which no one can define or identify; yet, everyone can see, hear, know, and think about 'It'. Therefore, "if someone passes on from this world knowing the imperishable, is Brāhmaṇa. […] On the imperishable, Gārgī, space is women, as warp and weft"[199]. Wendy Doniger characterised Gārgī as the "feistiest woman in the Upanishads"[200]. She was really an exception. The fact that she is portrayed among the priests and intellectuals of her time merits recognition. She did not stop, when the greatest teacher asked her not to pose too many questions about Brahman and not to get her head shattered apart. She persisted. Unafraid of the influential men around her, she asked more questions and earned *Yājñavalkya*'s admiration[201]. Her courage, intellectual rigour and theological insight would inspire latter generations of women in India including the establishment of the well-known *Gargi College* (http://www.gargi.du.ac.in/, 1967) affiliated to the *University of Delhi*.

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[195] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 57.

[196] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp 60–62.

[197] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 60.

[198] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 61: Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, III.8.6: Yājñavalkya said,"'That, Gārgī, is what Brāhmaṇas call the imperishable, not thick, not thin, not short, not long, without blood, without oiliness, without shadow, without darkness, without small, without eye, without ear, without speech, without mind, without light, without breath, without face, without measure, without inside, without outside. It eats nothing and nobody eats it."

[199] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 62.

[200] Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: an alternative history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 187–188:

[201] Doniger, *The Hindus: an alternative history*, p. 188: Gārgī Vīcaknavī "is one tough lady, cast from the same mould as Urvashi and later, Draupadi. (A later text even suggests that in addition to his other two wives, Yajnavalkya was also married to Gargi.)

The second female intellectual mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II.4 and IV.5) is *Maitreyī*, one of the two wives of *Yājñavalkya*. He wanted to end the stage of his householder life and to begin his life as an ascetic. As he took leave, his other wife *Kātyāyanī*[202] is reported to have said nothing. She may not have liked this fatalistic move; but she could not do anything to stop her husband from deserting her. On the other hand, *Maitreyī* insisted that it was not enough that *Yājñavalkya* could attain immorality and she had to remain without it. She knew well that material wealth would not give her immortality. When she asked him to teach her what he knew about immortality, he grew dearer to her, asked her to sit beside him, and to meditate on his teachings on the impossibility of defining anyone or anything.

For an example, husbands and wives are dearer to each other not because they love each other but because the same *ātman* ('self') dwells in them both[203]. The *ātman* is present in the world, the people, and the things; for example, it is like the music that comes out, when a drum is beaten or a conch is blown or a lute is played. Then, *Yājñavalkya* urged *Maitreyī* to lose her individuality and her being as salt dissolved in water. Likewise, Brahman arises with the elements such as the salt and disappears when they disappear. *Maitreyī* requested her husband not to confuse her with unclear words and imageries, but to help her to grasp the ultimate meaning of immorality. He answered by saying that as long as she thought in dualistic term, he would not attain the highest consciousness, where nothing but the absolute Brahman remains[204]. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.5)[205] picks up the main theme of Brahman and repeats the contents of the earlier discussion in II.5. On saying that knowing the non-two-

[202] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 90: *Kātyāyanī* had "just a woman's knowledge", i.e., in Roebuck's opinion, she "knows what every priest's wife knows: what food and robes her husband will need for each ritual, etc."

[203] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 60: *Yājñavalkya* said: "'It is not for the love of a husband that a husband is dear; it is for the love of the self (*ātman*') that a husband is dear; it is not for the love of the wife that a wife is dear: it is for the love of the self that a wife is dear."

[204] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 42–43: Yājñavalkya's answer reads: "'For where there is duality, one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one knows another. But where everything in one has become self, how can one smell–and whom? How can one hear–and whom? How can one speak–and to whom? How can one think–and of whom? How can one know–and whom? How can one know that by which one knows all this? How can one know the knower?"

[205] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, pp. 90–93.

ness of the Brahman was immortality, "*Yājñavalkya* departed"[206], but his teaching was transmitted through a long of faithful followers.

Doniger designates *Maitreyī* as a "theological wife" and *Kātyāyanī* as a "worldly wife"[207]; she states that the later would have inherited the household goods and she is never mentioned afterwards. Doniger contends that these two narratives of *Gārgī Vīcaknavī* and *Maitreyī* could have originated, when religious movements such as Buddhism expanded the ultimate importance of women's role at home; at that time, the Brahmins could have codified (e.g., in *Grihya Sutras*) their household rituals and required the wife of the scarifying man to assist him in domestic religious duties. She concludes by stating that these changes in ritual requirements and the role of women in it "may explain the provocative behaviour of some of the women in the Upanishads"[208].

2.4 The Perfect Wife: Sanskrit views from Tañcāvūr

It is evident that *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* provides a rare glimpse of two women philosophers and the theme of their discussions. Their courage to dialogue with the priests and the power of their persuasive character remained enshrined in the books such as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Even those who would have otherwise known these narratives, did not seem to have propagated it to their contemporaries and successive generations. The negative portrayals of women and their capabilities remained and, as the following discussion would illustrate, obtained abnormal characteristics.

Tañcāvūr (commonly spelled as Tanjore) on the banks of *River Kāvēri* is an ancient city of Tamil culture, music, art and architecture, where people of different nationalities, political and economic background met[209]. Its *Great Temple*, also known in its Sanskrit name *Bṛihadīśvara Temple* ('the Temple of the Great Lord *Śiva*'), embodies divergent traditions of

[206] Roebuck, *The Upaniṣads: Translation and Introduction*, p. 93.

[207] Doniger, *The Hindus: an alternative history*, p. 187.

[208] Doniger, *The Hindus: an alternative history*, p. 189.

[209] Pradeep Chakravarthy, *Thanjavur: A Cultural History*, New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2010.

this region for more than 1,000 years[210]. Since eighth century CE Tamil *Bhakti* traditions of the Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites borrowed Sanskrit concepts of deities, rituals and festivals and adapted them to the needs of the people of *Kāvēri* delta. Ruling dynasties of the *Cōḻas* (from the *Caṅkam Period* to 1279 CE), the *Pāndiyās* from Madurai (1279–1532), the *Nāyakkars* (1532–1673) of the *Vijayanagar Empire* and the *Bhonsle Marāthās* (1674–1855) from the western parts of Central India were ardent patrons of Sanskrit religions and cultures. The *Nāyakkar*s invited Brahmin priests, scholars and political advisers from Telugu India, settled them in places like *Achuthamangalam* (named after Aschuthappa Nāyakkar, 1560–1614) and *Ragunathapuram* (named after Ragunātha Nāyakkar, 1600–1634), and received their advice on socio-cultural and political matters. Later, the *Marāthā* rulers followed this example.

Tryambakarāyamakhin (1665–1750) was probably a minister at the court of the *Bohnsle Marātha* rulers of *Tañcāvūr*[211], who was known as *Tryambaka* or *Tryambakayajan*, the author of the treatise *Stridharmapaddhati* ('The Perfect Wife')[212]. It codifies women's behaviour as described in Sanskrit traditions "already over a thousand years old in his day"[213]. The political context of this period remained unstable. Muslims and Europeans began to work in *Tañcāvūr* and their presence required those people, who dearly followed Sanskrit ways of life, to refine their thoughts and practices:

> The attack on Hindu 'righteousness' (*dharma*) must have seemed to come from many quarters at once: the constant threat of Muslim domination and the encroachment of Islam; the insidious influence of Christian missionaries (such as those at the Jesuit Mission at Madurai) and European traders (the Danes, the Dutch, the French and the British): the customs of the local Tamil population whose women (especially those involved in the productive sphere) enjoyed a far greater freedom than their sisters at the Maratha court; and the increasingly popular devotional religion (*bhakti*) which claimed that women and low-caste (*śūdra*) men could reach heaven directly without even attending to their traditional duties[214].

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[210] George Michell and Indira Viswanathan Peterson: *The Great Temple at Thanjavur: One Thousand Years, 1010–2010*, Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2010.

[211] He may have lived during the reign of Śāhaji (1672–1712, ruler from 1684), Serfoji I (1675–1728, ruler from 1712), Tukkoji (1677–1736, ruler from 1728 to 1738), and Pratap Singh, who ruled from 1739 to 1763.

[212] Julia Leslie (translator and editor): *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati): Translated from the Sanskrit with an Introduction by I. Julia Leslie*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989.

[213] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 4.

[214] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 4.

Tryambaka's opinion about women remained ambiguous: on the one hand, he portrayed them as sinful. Firstly, women are sinful by birth and their own nature (i.e., *Strīsvabhāva*, 'women's nature, character, impulse, existence'); due to the bad *Karma* of their past lives they are now reborn as women. Secondly, women are sinful biologically and physically: they menstruate and thus demonstrate their 'guilt'[215]; they represent sexuality; they alone can give birth. However, in their capacity as wives, their virtuous behaviour (*Strīdharma*) consists of taming their biological urges and living as obedient wives and selfless[216]. Even these controlled behaviours would not absolve them of their sinful nature. As a sinful being she is an *Amantravat*, i.e., a person, who is not accompanied by any Vedic verses[217]. In this state, "she cannot purify herself of sin; she therefore remains sinful all her life. It is quite logical, therefore, to attribute all manner of innate unpleasantness to women"[218]. In this sinful condition, she is lower than man and she can never be born as a male. *Tryambaka*'s express reference to Mahābhārata (I.59.11–12) explains women's sinfulness: they are inherently fickle, "difficult to manage, and in their very nature difficult to understand". As *Māyā* they are cunning, deceitful and tricky. They resemble the demons such as "Śambhara, Namuci, Bali and Kumbhīnasi"[219].

Tryambaka further quotes the *Law of Manu* 9:15 and 17 by stating that the women are "innately promiscuous, fickle-minded, lacking in love, and unfaithful to their husbands even when closely guarded" and at creation the original Manu "allocated to women (the habit of) lying and sitting around, (a love of) ornament, (indiscriminate) sexual desire, anger, meanness, treachery and bad conduct"[220]. Thirdly, he quotes from various passages in *Rāmāyaṇa* repeats

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[215] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, pp. 250–251: menstruation is a reminder of women's guilt caused by 'sin'; as in the *Law of Manu* 9:18, women lost their privilege for initiation and sank to the level of the Śūdras. On page 254, the opposite view is found: the menstrual blood purifies them and they remain 'pure.'

[216] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 8.

[217] "amantravat: unaccompanied by Vedic verses", *spokensanskrit.org*, available online at http://spokensanskrit.org/index.php?mode=3&script=hk&tran_input=amantravat&direct=au (accessed on 21 April 2018).

[218] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 246.

[219] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 247.

[220] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 248.

Queen *Kausalyā*'s lament to *Sītā*, which mentions that "the hearts of women do not care for (good) family, (good) deeds, wisdom, gifts, or even affection, for their hearts are inconstant"[221].

The inherently sinful woman, in her status as a wife, can seek to improve her moral behaviour. According to the *Vāmanapurāṇa* (49.1–14), Bali, the demon-king, rules virtuously in hell. The pious-demon *Prahalāda* in the *Mahābhārata* (XII.124.19–63) respects the Brahmins. The above mentioned wicked *Apsaras* Urvaśī in *Ṛgveda* (X.95) tentatively became a wife of *Purūravas*.[222] Likewise, the women can supress their *Svadharma* ('innate *dharma*') of inherent sinfulness by remaining faithful and pleasing to their husbands and get the inauspicious nature of their female birth be annulled[223]. Their first remedial step consists of avoiding six things: 1) drinking, 2) keeping bad company, 3) leaving one's husband and sleeping with the husband of another house, 4) roaming around on one's own, 5) sleeping during the day time and 6) spending long time in the house of another person[224]. Then, *Tryambaka* prohibits the virtuous wives to undertake the following religious activities: "Women who are devoted to their husbands should never engage in *Japa* recitation, austerities (*tapas*), offering into fire (*Homa*), religious donations (*Dāna*), or any other religious observance (or vow; *Vrata*) or ritual (*Makha*), as long as their husbands are alive"[225].

The foregoing analysis shows how Sanskrit sources both extol and circumscribe the role of the women as wives and mothers so that they can bear sons and strengthen the father-son relationships here on earth and then in the next word. Any person or anything that do not strengthen this father-son relationship is deemed secondary, marginal or irrelevant. Women as daughters, sisters, widows, and mothers without sons are marginal. Likewise, women as courtesans and prostitutes are viewed as ritually polluting.[226] Roy points out how women had

[221] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 249: these passages include *Rāmāyaṇa* II.39.23b, 24a, 28b; II.127.26–27; III.13.5, 6, 7a.

[222] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 266.

[223] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 272.

[224] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 275.

[225] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 275.

[226] Roy, "'Where Women are Worshipped, there the Gods Rejoice' […]", p. 23.

limited access to legal claims and justice, because their mind was fickle, they could not keep any secret and they were untrustworthy (*Ṛgveda* VIII.33.17, *Laws of Manu* VIII.77 and 150). She also mentions how the Sanskrit sources thematise women's sexuality and seek to control it for patriarchal purposes. Regarding potential sexual promiscuity of women, the *Laws of Manu* II:215 says that mothers or sisters or daughters can endanger a man[227].

Thus, the male-centred *Stridharmapaddhati* prevents gender justice. It simply demonstrates how the teachings of the Sanskrit sources of North India have influenced the women in the royal household of *Tañcāvūr*. The perfect wife should be fully devoted to her husband and meet his needs. She should restrict her movement outside her own home and her interactions with others. These prohibitions may indicate the fact that the Tamil women did not fit into the Sanskrit models of life and its socio-religious orders[228]. They adopted certain Sanskrit worldviews; yet their orientations and activities remained Tamil, some of which the next chapter explores.

[227] Roy, "'Where Women are Worshipped, there the Gods Rejoice' […]", p. 26.

[228] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife (Stridharmapaddhati)*, p. 3: "As always in *dharmaśāstra*, the result is an odd mixture of reality and utopia. It is a basic principle of *mīmāṃsā* philosophy that something can only be prohibited if its occurrence is possible. Thus the prohibitions on wearing no blouse during the day [in Section II A on pages 91–95 …] imply that women in fact might have done these things."

CHAPTER 3: WOMEN AND GENDER IN TAMIL SOURCES

This chapter examines the position of the Tamil women in select Tamil sources from the *Caṅkam*-Period to modern times. These include an analysis of the works such as *Tolkāppiyam*, examples of *Akam*-Literature, didactic works, *bhakti* literature and *Siddha* writings. This chapter also highlights the contributions of few reformers such as Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927), Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973) to gender justice.

3.1 Growing impact of Sanskrit on the Tamil people

Sanskrit in the northern and Tamil in the southern parts of India were the oldest literary languages. The Tamil people rightly considered Sanskrit a *vaṭamoḻi* ('northern language'). Merchants, religious pilgrims, family members, soldiers, migrants and others who moved from the northern regions of India to the southern regions shared the insights of their languages, religions and cultures with each other. As time went by, people adopted not only words and concepts, but also lifestyles of one another. This interaction led to mixing of worldviews, translations of salutations, personal names and literary works. For example, the poets of the *Caṅkam*-Period, to be discussed below, "were reluctant to use Sanskrit words without Tamilising them first at least partially e.g., Citrasenan became Ōviyacēṉaṉ in Maṇimēkalai"[229].

During this period "Sanskrit ideas and forms were attempting to dominate the picture but had not met with appreciable success"[230] because the secular-minded Tamil people refused to accept the "religious fanaticism" of the Sanskrit-using people. They did not allow the religious beliefs of the north Indians to disturb their socio-cultural life[231]. However, the Pallava-Kings supported Sanskrit language, literature, religions and customs and religious rituals[232]. The decline of the Buddhist and Jain influence in Tamil India coincided with the explosive growth

[229] N. Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 1, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1997, p. 227.

[230] N. Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 1, p. 440.

[231] N. Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 1, p. 440.

[232] N. Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 1, p. 440.

of Sanskrit-loving *bhakti*-movements of the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavites in capital cities and urban centres. Their adoption of Sanskrit, fuelled by their ardent devotion to Sanskrit-deities and supported by the rising importance of new groups of Brahmins, led to the intolerance and persecution of the non- Śaivites and non-Vaiṣṇavites[233]. These urban changes did not affect "the farm labourers, the untouchables–the *cēri*-dwellers, and the tribal groups […], because the Brahminical-Vedic-Agamic-Hindu vs. the Jaina and the Buddha was a cause which had no relevance to the worshippers of the village gods and those beyond the pale of classical Hinduism"[234].

As a result, Sanskrit ways of thinking and living gained prominence among the Tamil people. For example, a Tamil householder supported his dependants, fed his guests and visitors, propitiated his ancestors by offering them the *Piṇṭam* ('rice ball'), worshipped his gods daily and during periodical. When a person died, the "eldest available son or nearest relative lighted the funeral fire. At the end of the ceremony in the cremation ground the person who set the fire to the body bathed and washed his hands off with milk and water, literally to wash his hands of the departed one"[235] These funeral rituals were important for the Tamil people. This was one of the male-centred customs that would define masculinity and femininity of the Tamil people and their notions of gender justice. Gradually, the Tamil people got acquainted with the Sanskrit epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* and their heroine *Sītā* and hero *Rāma*; most of them adopted the contents of the *Law of Manu* for their living situations. Their temples, images of goddesses and gods followed Sanskrit architectural models. Many of them went on pilgrimages to places like Benaras. Thus, Sanskrit modes of life became an important aspect of Tamil life as well. To gain a fuller picture of these socio-religious changes and adaptations, we must begin with a deeper analysis of the position of women in the *Caṅkam*-Period.

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[233] N. Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 2 *(c. A.D. 600–c. A.D. 1800)*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1998, p. 4: In 7th century large communities of Brahmins enjoyed the patronage of the Pallava-Kings and attained "a new level of comfort, influence and power". Their rise led to the decline of the Buddhists and Jains. They suffered violent persecutions; their former patrons, mostly royal and aristocratic families, withdrew their support from them. In this context, the "influence, prestiege and power of the Brahmins" rose significantly.

[234] Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 2 *(c. A.D. 600–c. A.D. 1800)*, p. 4.

[235] Subramanian, *Tamil Social History*, Vol. 1, pp. 232–233.

3.2 Women in the *Caṅkam*-Period

3.2.1 Women in Tolkāppiyam

The root of contemporary socio-cultural conditions of the Tamil women reach beyond the *Caṅkam Period* (c. 500 BCE–100 CE)[236], in which famous Tamil assemblies (*Caṅkam*) were supposedly held in the city of Madurai during the rule of Pandya Kings[237]. The Tamil grammar *Tolkāppiyam* (c. 500 BCE–500 CE) remains the earliest record of the Tamil people. Its 1,610 *sutras* still regulate their language, poetry, social life and relationships.[238] Its author constantly acknowledges the authority of other scholars (e.g., *eṉpa*, *eṉmaṉār Pulavar*), who lived either before or during his/her lifetime. His section on the *kaḷaviyal* ('nature of clandestine love') portrays socio-cultural characteristics of a *kiḻavi* (a 'mature female') and a *kiḻavaṉ* (a 'mature male') and how they seek to realise the four permanent goals of life, namely virtue, wealth, pleasure and bliss[239]. When the lovers meet, the man expresses his two qualities, namely *perumai* ('greatness') and *uraṉ* ('vigour')[240]. His *perumai* represents his education, bravery, honour, generosity, research, reconciliation, equilibrium and discernment. His *uraṉ* demonstrates his fearlessness, knowledge, strength, wealth, determined perseverance, courage and his commanding influence in his *ūr* ('birth place, living space, village, local region')[241]. Likewise, the woman communicates *accam*, *nāṇam*, *maṭam* and *muntuṟutal*[242].

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[236] For the periodization of the history of Tamil literature see Antōṉi Kurucu, *Camūkaviyal Nōkkil Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāṟu* (in Tamil: 'Tamil Literary History in its Social Perspectives'), Tirucirāppaḷḷi: Tamiḻāyvuttuṟai: Tūya Vaḷaṉār Taṉṉāṭcik Kallūri (Tamil Research Department: St. Joseph Autonomous College), 2005.

[237] Kamil Veith Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, p. 107: "It seems that a historical core preserving genuine tradition got mixed with many legends and myths. However, accounts of ancient Tamil literary academies cannot be dismissed as pure fiction. Normative and critical activities in the field of early Tamil bardic and classical literature seem to correspond to real facts. In particular, the Third (Last) Academy seems to have been established in Madurai for about 250 years, comprising some 450 poets, in early historical period, i.e. during the first 2–3 centuries of Christian era."

[238] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 705.

[239] The *Nāṟporuḷ* ('four things') are *Aṟam*, *Poruḷ*, *Iṉpam* and *Vīṭu*; these correspond to the Sanskrit concept of *Puruṣārtha*, namely *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. Those who minutely understand these four things are the *Maṟaiyōr*.

[240] *Tolkāppiyam*, 95th verse of *Poruḷatikāram*, i.e., 7th verse in *Kaḷaviyal*: பெருமையும் உரனும் ஆடூஉ மேன் (perumaiyum uraṉum āṭūu mēṉ).

[241] "*Pāvalarēṟu Ca. Pālacuntaram urai*", *Tamil Virtual University*, available at http://www.tamilvu.org/slet/l0100/l0100uri.jsp?song_no=1041&book_id=1&head_id=3 (accessed on 29 March 2018): "பெருமை - உரன், என்பவை அவற்றிற்குரிய பண்புகளையும் ஆற்றல்களையும்

Her *accam* reveals her bashful dread of her lover. Her *nāṇam* (‘modesty’) requires her to maintain a sense of puddency. Her *maṭam* is neither foolishness nor stupidity; rather, it refers to a state of her mind, when she does not heed to the suggestions of her friends and advisors. Her *muntuṟutal* manifests itself through *payirppu* (‘the disgust’ based on uninformed assumptions), *pētamai* (‘childishness’) and *poṟai* (‘forbearance’)[243]. Soon, the lovers marry with the consent of their parents. At this stage, the married women maintain her *kaṟpu* (‘marital chastity, loyalty’), especially when her husband travels on business or goes on a pilgrimage. If he must stay for long period (e.g., due to military duty), he might get ‘buy’ sexual services from *parattai* (‘prostitute’) and other women[244]. As far as the wife is concerned, she remains house-bound and performs her duties. The husband is not required to keep his marital chastity. He could satisfy his carnal pleasures outside of marriage. Eventually, these conflicting codes of moral conduct would impair gender equality.

குறித்து நின்றன. பெருமைக்குரியவாவன: கல்வி, தறுகண், இசைமை, கொடை, ஆராய்ச்சி, ஒப்புரவு, நடுவுநிலை, கண்ணோட்டம் முதலியவாம். உரனுக்குரியவாவன: அஞ்சாமை, அறிவு, திண்மை, நிறை, கடைப்பிடி, துணிவு, ஊராண்மை முதலியவாம்.” (Perumai - uraṉ, eṉpavai avaṟṟiṟkuriya paṉpukaḷaiyum āṟṟalkaḷaiyum kuṟittu niṉṟaṉa. Perumaikkuriyavāvaṉa: kalvi, taṟukaṇ, icaimai, koṭai, ārāycci, oppuravu, naṭuvunilai, kaṇṇōṭṭam mutaliyavām. Uraṉukkuriyavāvaṉa: añcāmai, aṟivu, tiṇmai, niṟai, kaṭaippiṭi, tuṇivu, ūrāṇmai mutaliyavām).

[242] *Tolkāppiyam*, 96th verse of *Poruḷatikāram*, i.e., 8th verse in *Kaḷaviyal*: அச்சமும் நாணும் மடனும் முந்துறுதல் நிச்சமும் பெண்பாற்கு உரிய என்ப (accamum nāṇum maṭaṉum muntuṟutal niccamum peṇpāṟku uriya eṉpa)

[243] Pāvalarēṟu, 2018: “அச்சமும், நாணமும், மடனும் முதன்மைபெற்று நிகழ்தல் எஞ்ஞான்றும் தலைமகளுக்குரிய இயல்புகளாம் எனக் கூறுவர் புலவர். இவை முந்துறுதல். எனவே அவற்றைச் சார்ந்து நிற்பன பிறவும் உள. அவையும் தலைமகளுக்குரிய என்பது பெறப்படும். அவையாவன: பயிர்ப்பும், பேதைமையும், பொறையும் பிறவுமாம். அச்சமாவது: அன்புகாரணமாகத் தோன்றும் உட்கு. நாணமாவது: பெண்மைக்குப் பொலிவுதரும் உள்ளப்பாங்கு, மடனாவது: செவிலி முதலானோர் உணர்த்துவனவற்றை ஆராயாது மேற்கொள்ளுதலும் அங்ஙனம் கொண்டவற்றை இறுகப்பற்றி யொழுகுதலுமாம். பயிர்ப்பாவது: பயிலாதவற்றின் மேற்கொள்ளும் அருவருப்பு, பேதைமையாவது; பிள்ளைத்தன்மை, பொறையாவது: வறுமை முதலாயவற்றைப் பொறுத்தொழுகுதல்.” (accamum, nāṇamum, maṭaṉum mutaṉmaiperṟu nikaḻtal eññāṉṟum talaimakaḷukkuriya iyalpukaḷām eṉak kūṟuvar pulavar. Ivai muntuṟutal. Eṉavē avaṟṟaic cārntu niṟpaṉa piṟavum uḷa. Avaiyum talaimakaḷukkuriya eṉpatu peṟappaṭum. Avaiyāvaṉa: payirppum, pētaimaiyum, poṟaiyum piṟavumām. Accamāvatu: aṉpukāraṇamākat tōṉṟum uṭku. Nāṇamāvatu: peṇmaikkup polivutarum uḷḷappāṅku, maṭaṉāvatu: cevili mutalāṉōr uṇarttuvaṉavaṟṟai ārāyātu mēṟkoḷḷutalum aṅṅaṉam koṇṭavaṟṟai iṟukapparri yoḻukutalumām. Payirppāvatu: payilātavaṟṟiṉ mēṟkoḷḷum aruvaruppu, pētaimaiyāvatu; piḷḷaittaṉmai, poṟaiyāvatu: vaṟumai mutalāyavaṟṟaip poṟuttoḻukutal.)

[244] *Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram*, 145th verse, i.e., 6th verse in *Kaṟpiyal*.

3.2.2 Chaste women in *Akam*-Literature

Besides *Tolkāppiyam*, *Caṅkam* literature consists of two collections: 1) the *Eṭṭuttokai* ('Eight Anthologies'), of which six are *Akam*-books[245] and two are *Puṟam*-books[246]; 2) the *Pattuppāṭṭu* ('Ten Songs')[247] consists of ten separate works with themes on *Akam* and *Puṟam*. These eighteen works are divided into two major groups. This thesis is concerned mostly with the first group of books, namely the *Akam*-literature. These describe the life that was personal (e.g., feelings, thoughts, reflections, inner private life), interpersonal (e.g., well-matched or ill-matched love affairs between a woman and a man, marriage, intimacy), domestic (e.g., parents, relatives, friends, and intermediaries), and social (e.g., bards, sages, events in agricultural tracts). The second group of books deal with *Puṟam*, which stands for public life, politics, heroism, warfare and religion of the ancient Tamil people.

A poem of *Kuṟuntokai* names the separate spheres of activities for wives and husbands: a girlfriend comforted the wife, whose husband had gone to work with these words: work is the life of the husbands. By contrast, living at home and considering their husbands as their life are the duties of the wives. Therefore, the wife, whose husband has gone to work, should not cry[248].

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[245] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 9: These include the five books *Kuṟuntokai*, *Naṟṟiṇai*, *Akanānūṟu*, *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu*, *Kalittokai* and *Kuṟiñipāṭṭu*.

[246] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 580: These include *Puṟanānūṟu* and *Patiṟṟuppattu*.

[247] The ten works are the following: *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, *Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai*, *Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*, *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*, *Mullaippāṭṭu*, *Maturaikkāñci*, *Neṭunalvāṭai*, *Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu*, *Paṭṭiṇappālai* and *Malaipaṭukaṭām*.

[248] The 135th poem of *Kuṟuntokai*:

"வினையே ஆடவர்க்கு உயிரே வாண் நுதல்
மனை உறை மகளிர்க்கு ஆடவர் உயிரென
நமக்கு உரைத்தோரும் தாமே
அழாஅல் தோழி அழுங்குவர் செலவே".
(iṉaiyē āṭavarkku uyirē vāṇ nutal
maṉai uṟai makaḷirkku āṭavar uyireṉa
namakku uraittōrum tāmē
aḻā'al tōḻi aḻuṅkuvar celavē)

A poem of *Ainkurunūṟu* records a complaint by a legal wife to her husband, who had his concubine living in his house. The wife tried to control her, but failed[249]. By contrast, the wife in *Ainkurunūṟu* must have suffered not only in the hand of her husband, but also of his concubine. *Ainkurunūṟu* also contains many examples of married men going to prostitutes, which caused unending problems at home, where their wedded wives have been maintaining their chastity (*Kaṟpu*): its 40th song narrates how a female friend asked the erring husband to return to his wife. Its 50th song reminds a husband, who had gone astray, to return to his wife immediately, because she was keeping him in her heart.

The 53rd song tells, how quickly the husband forgot his promises of loyalty to his wedded wife and played in the same place with concubines, where he had originally met his wife. All these stories are male-centred. They portray women as unable beings, who could not oppose the immoral life of their husbands. Their unspeakable suffering expressed itself in silent cry. There were expected to adjust to him, even after he had wasted his wealth and become a pauper. In this aspect, the male-dominated society of the *Caṅkam Period* was neither gender-neutral nor women-friendly.

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[249] Part of the 68th poem of *Ainkurunūṟu* and its English translation come from Vaidehi Herbert (translator): "Ainkurununu-Marutham-Orampoyiyar 1–100", *Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*, available at http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/ainkurununu-marutham-orampokiyar-1-100/ (accessed on 31 March 2018) and it reads as follows:

"பேணாளோ நின் பெண்டே
யான் தன் அடங்கவும் தான் அடங்கலளே.
[pēṇāḷō niṉ peṇṭē
yāṉ taṉ aṭaṅkavum tāṉ aṭaṅkalaḷē]
Your woman does not care."
I've tried to control her, but she will not be controlled."

Note: This narrative resembles the story of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible, who had fathered Ishmael through Hagar, the maidservant of his legal wife Sarah. He listened to Sarah's complaint and drove Hagar away (Genesis 21:8–21). This narrative has other parallels as well. For a Greek example, see Catherine C. Kroeger: "Women in Greco-Roman World and Judaism", *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A; Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000, pp. 1276–1280:1278: "Marriageable citizen-class women were often in short supply due to the high maternal death rate and the practice of exposing baby girls. In some of the extant literature Greek women were classified by their sexual function: courtesans for companionship, concubines for the daily pleasure of the master of the house and wives to bear legitimate children and keep the house. Wives were neglected both socially and sexually, though Solon the Law giver had decreed that a husband should visit his wife's couch at least three times a month."

The Tamil people of the *Caṅkam* aspired for happy families as the core of their societies. They understood happiness not in terms of mutuality between wives and husbands. The poems of these periods have more guidelines for the wife than for the husband. The wife was expected to keep her marital chastity blamelessly. Such a requirement was absent for the husband. He is seldom enjoined to take care of his wife. One of these rare instructions come in the tenth poem of *Naṟṟiṇai*: a girlfriend advised her married male friend and asked him not to abandon his wife, even if she had lost her natural attraction and her golden body became old[250]. He should remain faithful to her. Otherwise, the wife was expected to serve her husband unselfishly during his life by negating herself and at his death by self-immolation.

3.2.3 Self-negating women in *Akam*-Literature

K. Gandhi, who has studied the beliefs and practices of the ancient Tamil, summarises the customs of the Tamil people before a woman was married, during her life with her husband, and after the death of her husband. Ancient Tamils treated the mothers (*puṉiṟṟu makaḷir*), who have given birth to children, also as untouchables. If someone touch these mothers, it would not rain; wild animals would harm them. After taking a purificatory bath, these mothers could gain ritual cleanliness (*tūymai*) and interact with others[251]. Additionally, the Tamil people treated their menstruating women as if they were untouchables. The called the menstruating women as those who should remain away from home (*vīṭṭiṟkkut tūramāṉavarkaḷ*) and those

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[250] The 10th song of *Naṟṟiṇai* reads as follows. Its Tamil text and English translation come from Vaidehi Herbert (translator): "*Ettuthokai–Natrinai 1–200*", *Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*, available at https://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/ettuthokai-natrinai-1-200/ (accessed on 31 March 2018):
"அண்ணாந்து ஏந்திய வன முலை தளரினும்
பொன் நேர் மேனி மணியின் தாழ்ந்த
நல் நெடுங் கூந்தல் நரையொடு முடிப்பினும்
நீத்தல் ஓம்புமதி பூக்கேழ் ஊர"
(aṇṇāntu ēntiya vaṉa mulai taḷariṉum
poṉ nēr mēṉi maṇiyiṉ tāḻnta
nal neṭuṅ kūntal naraiyoṭu muṭippiṉum
nīttal ōmpumati pūkkēḻ ūra)
"Lord of the town laden with flowers!
Even if her lifted, beautiful breasts sag
and even if her sapphire-colored hair
draping on the back of her golden body
turns white, please do not abandon her!"

[251] K. Gandhi, *Tamiḻar Paḻakka Vaḻakkaṅkaḷum Nampikkaikaḷum* (in Tami: *The Customs and Beliefs of the Tamil People*), 1980, rpt., Chennai: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 2003, pp. 92–93.

who do not touch the vessels (*kalantoṭā makaḷir*) and prepare meals for men. A poem in *Puṟanānūṟu* refers to the garlanded horses of the wealthy people; these stood there as the shy *kalantoṭā makaḷir*, who hesitated to touch the vessels (or the jewels) in the temple of *Murukaṉ*.[252]

To keep the reputation of their husband in public places, the women endured many hardships. Even when a husband became immoral, economically poor and incapable of taking care of his family by providing necessities such as water, food and dress, his wife was expected to stand with him and accept him unconditionally. She should proudly think or speak about her comfortable life in her parent's home. After all, her husband was her life (*uyir*)[253]. With him and without her direct association with him, she had no independent identity and social recognition.

Another socio-religious assumption of the Tamil people engages with their understanding of an *aṇaṅku* ('pain, suffering, fear, beauty, lust, divine woman, beautiful girl'). They believed that this *aṇaṅku* as a supernatural power could take hold of chaste women, kings, and war drums, specific places (e.g., water falls, deep pits, and certain trees), precious stones, the corpse, widows and the girls who have just had their first period. If a chaste wife did not channel the force of an *aṇaṅku* in her, she might harm her husband, her family and relatives. In this case, she would not only resemble, but also take the place of the *pēy* ('devil, goblin, evil, madness'). Supposedly, male priests of certain temples (of guardian deities) had the power to control the *aṇaṅku* residing in virtuous wives, young girls who have had their periods and widows. They should not keep their hair unkempt. Particularly, widows must be careful to maintain their strict ascetic status and practice. Otherwise, *aṇaṅku* might possess and mislead them. Gandhi cites several poems from the *Caṅkam* and post-*Caṅkam* literature and explains

[252] The 299th poem of *Puṟanānūṟu* reads as follows:

"தண்ணடை மன்னர் தாருடைப் புரவி
அணங்குடை முருகன் கோட்டத்துக்
கலம் தொடா மகளிரின் இகழ்ந்து நின்றவ்வே."
(Taṇṇaṭai maṉṉar tāruṭaip puravi
aṇaṅkuṭai murukaṉ kōṭṭattuk
kalam toṭā makaḷiriṉ ikaḷntu niṉṟavvē).

[253] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, pp. 81–94.

the divine and dangerous power of the *aṇaṅku*[254]. The existence of these beliefs and practices about women and the need to control them in one way or another provides another proof of male-centred Tamil society. In this society, men considered the women as spiritually dangerous or ritually polluting.

3.2.4 Self-immolating women in *Akam*-Literature

The reason for a wife longing to join her husband in their next life is theological and metaphysical. Dhashanamurthy discusses the popular belief in the karmic effects (*ūḻiṉ valimai*, 'the power of past *karma*'). The wife and husband, who now are united in wedded life, were the same wife and husband in their previous lives. Their good karma joined them in this current life. If they would perform their duties well and thus accumulate enough karmic merit, they could share their life in their next birth. Thus, they remained a monogamous couple in their past, present and future life[255]. Herein lies the seed for a widow's self-immolation.

To justify this practice as a meritorious deed (*puṇitamāṉa ceyal*), ancient Tamil people believed that self-immolating widow would immediately enter the world of the deities (*tēvalōkam*) and absolve the sins of her parents accumulated during their three previous lives. Thus, the self-immolated widow was viewed as a true wife (*satī*)[256]. Few *Caṅkam*-poems illustrate this ultimate form of a woman's self-negation.

A poem in *Naṟṟiṇai* speaks about a wife, whose husband went on a journey long time ago and did not return and failed to inform her about his whereabouts. The wife waited patiently for his return. When one of her girlfriends visited her, she expressed her feeling that she was unafraid to die; but the thought that she might not be able to recall the name of her husband in

[254] Gandhi, *Tamiḻar Paḻakka Vaḻakkaṅkaḷum Nampikkaikaḷum*, pp. 268–272.

[255] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, p. 82: "கணவன் மனைவி என்னும் உறவு திடீரென்று ஒரு நாளில் ஏற்படுவதன்று. பல பிறவிகளிலும் தொடர்ந்து வருவது என்று கருதினர். முன்னைப் பிறவிகளில் கணவன் மனைவியராக வாழ்ந்தவர்களே ஊழின் வலிமையால் மீண்டும் கூடுகின்றனர் என்று கருதினர்." (kaṇavaṉ maṉaivi eṉṉum uṟavu tiṭīreṉṟu oru nāḷil ēṟpaṭuvataṉṟu. pala piṟavikaḷilum toṭarntu varuvatu eṉṟu karutiṉar. muṉṉaip piṟavikaḷil kaṇavaṉ maṉaiviyarāka vāḻntavarkaḷē ūḻiṉ valimaiyāl mīṇṭum kūṭukiṉṟaṉar eṉṟu karutiṉar.)

[256] Gandhi, *Tamiḻar Paḻakka Vaḻakkaṅkaḷum Nampikkaikaḷum*, pp. 94–97.

her next life terrified her[257]. Likewise, another *Caṅkam*-poem provides perhaps one of the earliest evidences of a wife, who wanted to join him in his next life and told him she would the best match for him[258]. The power of this idea that the husband and wife belong to each other in the past, present and future life would hold its sway in the minds of the Tamil people for a long time[259].

The widow whose husband died could demonstrate her chastity in three descending ways: the supreme chastity (*talaikkaṟpu*) means the immediate death of wife, who heard the news about the death of her husband. If she waited to enter the blazing fire (*tīpukutal*) or to climb the burning pyre (*uṭaṉkaṭṭai ēṟutal*) of her dead husband and killed herself (*uṭaṉmāytal*), she would demonstrate her secondary chastity (*iṭaikkaṟpu*). If she chose to live as a widow, for example, to take care of her children, maintained her widowhood (*kaimai*) and performed

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[257] 397th song of *Naṟṟiṇai* reads as follows:

"சாதல் அஞ்சேன் அஞ்சுவல் சாவின்
பிறப்புப்பிறி தாகுவது ஆயின்
மறக்குவேன் கொல்லென் காதலன்"
(Cātal añcēṉ añcuval cāviṉ
piṟappuppiṟi tākuvatu āyiṉ
maṟakkuvēṉ kolleṉ kātalaṉ)

[258] The 49th song of *Kuṟuntokai* reads as follows:

"இம்மை மாறி மறுமை ஆயினும்
நீ ஆகியர் என் கணவனை
யான் ஆகியர் நின் நெஞ்சு நேர்பவளே
(Immai māṟi maṟumai āyiṉum
nī ākiyar eṉ kaṇavaṉai
yāṉ ākiyar niṉ neñcu nērpavaḷē)

[259] The cinema *Niccaya Tāpūlam*, which was released in 1962 in Tamil Nadu, has one of Lyricist Kaṇṇatācaṉ's songs. The hero sings it during his first night with his wedded wife. He tells that if he attained old age in that single night and died instantly after he had touched her for the first time, he would be born afresh and marry her again. Thus, this popular song reflects the idea of the ancient Caṅkam Period. This song reads as follows:

"எங்கே என் காலமெல்லாம் கடந்து விட்டாலும்
ஓர் இரவினிலே முதுமையை நான் அடைந்து விட்டாலும்
மங்கை உன்னை தொட்ட உடன் மறைந்து விட்டாலும்
நான் மறுபடியும் பிறந்து வந்து மாலை சூடுவேன்."
(eṅkē eṉ kālamellām kaṭantu viṭṭālum
ōr iraviṉilē mutumaiyai nāṉ aṭaintu viṭṭālum
maṅkai uṉṉai toṭṭa uṭaṉ maṟaintu viṭṭālum
nāṉ maṟupaṭiyum piṟantu vantu mālai cūṭuvēṉ).

necessary rituals, she exhibited her (third and lowest level of) chastity (*kaṭaikkaṟpu*) and would join her husband in his next birth and enjoy happiness (*iṉpam*)[260].

A poem of *Puṟanānūṟu* praises the widowed *Queen Peruṅkōppeṇṭu*, who wanted to jump into the funeral pyre of her dead husband *King Pūtapāṇṭiyaṉ*: she urged the assembled noble men not to devise plans to prevent her from self-immolation. She confessed that she did not want to eat anything. They might be afraid of the funeral pyre built with black wood. Having lost her husband with broad shoulders, she was not afraid of the fire. It would be for her like a pond filled with lotus flower[261]. This ancient example would be repeated many times in the lives of countless Tamil widows[262]. The society that condoned the self-negation women and the self-immolation of widows did not have gender justice and equality.

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[260] Gandhi, *Tamiḻar Paḻakka Vaḻakkaṅkaḷum Nampikkaikaḷum*, pp. 94–97.

[261] The 246th poem of *Puṟanānūṟu* reads as follows:

"பல் சான்றீரே பல் சான்றீரே
செல்கெனச் சொல்லாது ஒழிகென விலக்கும்
பொல்லாச் சூழ்ச்சிப் பல் சான்றீரே
[……..]
பெருங்காட்டுப் பண்ணிய கருங்கோட்டு ஈமம்
நுமக்கு அரிது ஆகுக தில்ல எமக்கு எம்
பெருந்தோள் கணவன் மாய்ந்தென அரும்பு அற
வள் இதழ் அவிழ்ந்த தாமரை
நள் இரும் பொய்கையும் தீயும் ஓரற்றே."
(pal cāṉṟīrē pal cāṉṟīrē
celleṉac collātu oḻikeṉa vilaṅkum
pollāc cūḻccip pal cāṉṟīrē
[……..]
Peruṅkāṭṭup paṇṇiya karuṅkōṭṭu īmam
nulai aritu ākuka tilla umakku em
peruntōḷ kaṇavaṉ māyteṉa arumpara
vaḷi itaḻ aviḻnta tāmarai
nal irum poykaiyum tīyum ōraṟṟē)

[262] Gandhi, *Tamiḻar Paḻakka Vaḻakkaṅkaḷum Nampikkaikaḷum*, p. 97 and A. Muniyandi, *Social Condition in Tamilnadu with Special Reference to Women (16th to 18th Century A.D.)*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Madurai Kamaraj University/Madurai, 2015, p. 129, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in: 8080/jspui/handle/10603/135469 (accessed on 7 April 2018): the view that the self-immolation of widows was not present in the lives of the Tamil people during the *Caṅkam Period* can hardly be trusted. Later, in the eleventh century, Queen *Vāṉaṉ Mātēvi*, the mother of King *Rājarāja Cōḻaṉ*, committed *satī* along with the corpse of her dead husband King *Cuntara Cōḻaṉ*. In 1689, Muttuvīrappa Nāyakkar III, a male member of the royal house of Madurai died. His pregnant widow Muttammāḷ tried to commit *satī*. Queen Maṅkammāḷ persuaded her to stay alive. However, after giving birth, Muttammāḷ consumed poison and died. Later, when King *Kiḻavaṉ Cētupati* of *Īrāmanātapuram* died in 1710, his 47 wives committed *satī*.

3.3 Women during the Transitional Period (100–600 CE)

3.3.1 Impact of Jainism and Buddhism on Tamil women

Tamil literary history calls this period *Caṅkam Maruviya Kālam* ('transitional period from *Caṅkam*'). During this period, a group of people, collectively known as *Kaḷappirar*, occupied several parts of the Tamil India. At that time, the Jains (*Camaṇarkaḷ*) and the Buddhists (*Pauttarkaḷ*) established their religions among the Tamil people. To teach their religious beliefs and practices, they founded schools and academies, built temples, maintained travelling nuns and monks, compiled grammars and lexicons (e.g., *Tivākaram*, *Nikaṇṭu*) and composed high-quality literary works. Of these literary compositions, the *Eighteen Shorter Texts*[263] and the two epics *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai* re well known. One should not forget the arrival of Christianity in Mylāppūr near modern Ceṉṉai (earlier: Madras) around the middle of the first century CE. It is noteworthy that Mylāppūr was the place, where the author of the famous Tirukkuṟaḷ lived. The stories related to the life, work and martyrdom of St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ go back to this place. Thus, this transitional period from *Caṅkam* witnessed the interreligious interactions, enmities and reconciliations among the adherents of Tamil religions, Sanskrit religions, Jainism, Buddhism, and Christianity.

As far as the status of women in the Tamil society during this period is concerned, the attitudes and actions of the Jains and the Buddhists were of great importance. Dhashanamurthy explains how the Jains spread their faith and practice among the Tamils: in 470 CE, the Jain scholar *Vaccirananti* established an academy in Madurai. Similar intellectual associations emerged in other cities of the Tamil people. The Jains used them to teach wisdom (*ñāṉam*) to attain bliss. They demonstrated compassion (*karuṇai*) towards the needy. They educated the poor and equipped them for a better life. Unlike the adherents of the Sanskrit religion, the Jains did not want to monopolise their religious faiths and practices; instead, they democratised them. They took copies of their holy religious writings and gave them to the

[263] They are collectively called *Patiṉeṇkīḻkkaṇakku Nūlkaḷ*. The following 12 works, arranged alphabetically, teach virtues: *Ācārakkōvai*, 2) *Ciṟupañcamūlam*, 3) *Ēlāti*, 4) *Iṉiyavai Nāṟpatu*, 5) *Iṉṉā Nāṟpatu*, 6) *Kainnilai*, 7) *Mutumoḻikkāñci*, 8) *Nālaṭiyār*, 9) *Nāṉmaṇikkaṭikai*, 10) *Paḻamoḻi Nāṉūṟu*, 11) *Tirikaṭukam* and 12) *Tirukkuṟaḷ*. The following five books deal with *akam*-themes: 1) *Aintiṇai Aimpatu*, 2) *Aintiṇai Eḻupatu*, 3) *Kār Nāṟpatu*, 4) *Tiṇaimālai Nūṟṟaimpatu* and 5) *Tiṇaimoḻi Aimpatu*. A single work, namely the *Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu*, is dedicated to *Puṟam*-literature.

people for reading and interpretation. Their ethics of non-killing (*kollāmai*) impressed many Tamil people. Soon, some of their kings accepted Jainism and supported it[264].

One of the Jain characteristics was their strong emphasis on asceticism (*tu̲ravaṟam*, 'the virtue of giving up' desires, attachments, pleasures, relationships). Due to their disregard for married life, they urged their young men to embrace asceticism. Their scheme of attaining bliss had no place for women. They should be born as men and then seek bliss. Dhashanamurthy further explains that the Jain men viewed their women as an "embodiment of sin" (*pāvappiṟavi*, 'sin-birth'); they assumed that their women prevented them from attaining bliss[265]. The denigration of women expressed itself in many forms and did not contribute to either gender balance or gender justice.

The Buddhists too had their academies and monasteries; their nuns and monks served the needy people with education and skills for rational discourses. They developed the Tamil language in several ways. They insisted that virtuous behaviour (*nallo̲lukam*, 'good disciplined life') would help the Tamil people to improve their lot. Buddhists rejected the authority of the Sanskrit Vedas, priests, temples and *varṇa*-system. Some Tamil people became Buddhists. However, most Tamil people did not accept Buddhist atheism, their internal divisions and competitions[266]. Many of those princes, merchants and wealthy people who had been sponsoring the maintenance and spread of Buddhism and Jainism in capital cities and sea ports stopped their support; instead, they opted for Tamil *bhakti* religions. Gradually, Buddhism and Jainism lost their prominent place and yielded the influence of the emerging Tamil *bhakti*

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[264] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, pp. 424–425.

[265] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, p. 544: "சங்க காலத்திற்குப் பிறகு சமணரும் பௌத்தரும் செல்வாக்குற்றனர். சமணம் பெண்ணை இழித்தது. இல்லறத்தைவிடத் துறவறத்தைப் போற்றிய இச் சமயம் பெண்ணுக்கு வீடு பேறில்லை என்றதோடு, ஆடவர் வீடுபேறடைய இவர்கள் தடையாவர் என்றது. பெண்ணைப் பாவப்பிறவி" என்றது. (caṅka kālattiṟkup piṟaku camaṇarum pauttarum celvākkurraṉar. Camaṇam peṇṇai iḻittatu. Illaṟattaiviṭat tuṟavaṟattaip pōrriya ic camayam eṇṇukku vīṭu pēṟillai eṉṟatōṭu, āṭavar vīṭupēṟaṭaiya ivarkaḷ taṭaiyāvar eṉṟatu. Peṇṇaip pāvappiṟavi" eṉṟatu).

[266] Dhashanamurthy, *Tamiḻar Nākarīkamum Paṇpāṭum*, p. 536–538: "சங்க காலத்திற்குப் பிறகு சமணரும் பௌத்தரும் செல்வாக்குற்றனர். சமணம் பெண்ணை இழித்தது. இல்லறத்தைவிடத் துறவறத்தைப் போற்றிய இச் சமயம் பெண்ணுக்கு வீடு பேறில்லை என்றதோடு, ஆடவர் வீடுபேறடைய இவர்கள் தடையாவர் என்றது. பெண்ணைப் பாவப்பிறவி" என்றது. (caṅka kālattiṟkup piṟaku camaṇarum pauttarum celvākkurraṉar. Camaṇam peṇṇai iḻittatu. Illaṟattaiviṭat tuṟavaṟattaip pōrriya ic camayam eṇṇukku vīṭu pēṟillai eṉṟatōṭu, āṭavar vīṭupēṟaṭaiya ivarkaḷ taṭaiyāvar eṉṟatu. Peṇṇaip pāvappiṟavi" eṉṟatu).

movements. However, their most influential works, for example *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and *Cilappatikākaram*, remain and their portrayal of women failed to improve gender equality in Tamil India.

3.3.2 Women in Tirukkuṟaḷ

All Tamil people accept and respect *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and fondly call it *Tamilmaṟai* ('the scripture of the Tamil'). Its universal appeal in terms of civil life, ethics and governance has earned it a distinct recognition as the *ulakappotumaṟai* ('the scripture of the world'). By birth, *Tiruvaḷḷuvar* may have belonged to either a *paṟaiyar* ('drummer') community or a weaving *Vaḷḷuvar* community and lived in Mylapore around 450–550 CE[267]. His gender perspectives were ambiguous. The male nouns and verb endings indicate that his virtues were primarily meant for men. Nevertheless, his opposition to prostitution and his teaching on the dignity of another man's wife sowed the seeds for gender reform. The following examples help us to understand his position on these gender issues.

Firstly, it is astonishing that the male-centred *Tirukkuṟaḷ* advises men not to seek sexual satisfaction from the *varaiviṉmakaḷir* (i.e., the women, who, devoid of genuine love, sold themselves and their services to men for material benefits, Kuṟaḷ 911–920). This countercultural teaching opposed the prevailing social norms of the *Caṅkam* Period, in which men had access to *parattai* ('courtesan, prostitute'), *vilaimakaḷ* ('woman for sale'), *potumakaḷ* ('common woman') and *kaṇikaiyar* (i.e., a female dancer, who offered her sexual services for money or other favours). The chapter on *varaiviṉmakaḷir* advises men to use their rational mind (*mati*); they should not trust the sweet, but deceptive words of the prostitutes. Those men who embraced the prostitutes, who merely wanted money, resembled those who embraced a

[267] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 669: This Sacred Kuṟaḷ offers a "comprehensive manual of ethics, polity and love in 1330 distichs divided into 133 sections of 10 distichs each: first 38 on cosmic and moral order, next 70 on political skill and social life, the rest on pleasure, in *kuṟaḷ veṇpā* metre. Author was probably Jaina with eclectiv leanings, intimate knowledge of early works in Tamil classical age as well as with good knowledge of Sanskrit legal and didactic texts."

corpse in a dark room[268]. They should keep themselves away from them, as if they would refrain from strong alcoholic beverages and gambling (*Kuṟaḷ* 920).

Secondly, the chapter on *Piṟaṉil Viḻaiyāmai* ('not entering the house of another man', *Kuṟaḷ* 141–150) prohibits adultery. One should not steal the possession of another man. Likewise, a sensible person should not desire the *piṟaṉporuḷāḷ* ('the woman, whom another man owns', *Kuṟaḷ* 141). The men, who seek the wife of another man, remain fools and lose dignity. An honourable man does not look at the wife of another person and he does not even think of her in his mind.[269]

Thirdly, the chapter on *Makkaṭpēṟu* ('blessings of children') understands the gender roles of mothers. Children are the karmic result of parents in their previous lives[270]. The parents should raise their children in such a way that they become virtuous and blameless. The father should enable his son to have a seat in the front row of an academy of learned men[271].

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[268] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 187: *Kuṟaḷ* 913 reads as follows:
"பொருட்பெண்டிர் பொய்ம்மை முயக்கம் இருட்டறையில்
ஏதில் பிணந்தழீஇ அற்று."
(poruṭpeṇṭir poymmai muyakkam iruṭṭaṟaiyil
ētil piṇantaḻīi aṟṟu).

[269] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 31: *Kuṟaḷ* 148 reads as follows:
"பிறன்மனை நோக்காத பேராண்மை சான்றோர்க்கு
அறனொன்றோ ஆன்ற வொழுக்கு."
(piṟaṉmaṉai nōkkāta pērāṇmai cāṉṟōrkku
aṟaṉoṉṟō āṉṟa voḻukku).

[270] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 15: *Kuṟaḷ* 63 reads as follows:
"தம்பொருள் என்பதம் மக்கள் அவர்பொருள்
தம்தம் வினையான் வரும்".
(tamporuḷ eṉpatam makkaḷ avarporuḷ
tamtam viṉaiyāṉ varum

[271] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 15: *Kuṟaḷ* 67 reads as follows:
"தந்தை மகற்குஆற்றும் நன்றி அவையத்து
முந்தி யிருப்பச் செயல்".
Tantai makaṟkuāṟṟum naṉṟi avaiyattu
munti yiruppac ceyal.

Likewise, the son should lead a lifestyle that makes people wonder about the *nōṉpu* (‘religious austerities’) of his father resulting in his birth[272].

With reference to the importance of sons in *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, the learned commentator P. Marudanayagam points out the following: sometimes the chapter *Makkaṭpēṟu* is also known as *Putalvaraip Peṟutal* (‘begetting sons’). The plural noun *putalvar* can also mean children. Its singular form *putalvaṉ*, which uninformed readers associate with the Sanskrit noun *putra*, does not carry any trace of the Sanskrit meaning. Marudanayagam contends that the noun *putra* is “derived from ‘*put*’ because a son was believed to redeem his father from this purgatory. But neither *Tirukkuṟaḷ* nor any of the ancient Sangam texts gives expression to this foolish belief”[273]. Hence, according to Marudanayagam, one should not read too much into the word *putalvaṉ* and take it at its face value either as a son or as a child (without highlighting its gender).

This chapter on *Makkaṭpēṟu* contains a rare reference to a mother and her son. When she hears that her son has become a *cāṉṟōṉ* (‘the noble man’) she rejoices more than his birth[274]. Tirukkuṟaḷ itself defines the meaning of *Cāṉṟāṉmai* (‘nobility’, Kuṟaḷ 981–990): accordingly, a *cāṉṟōṉ* builds his life on these firm five pillars, namely *aṉpu* (‘love’), *nāṇam* (‘shying evil things’), *oppuravu* (‘reconciliatory attitude’), *kaṇṇōṭṭam* (‘discernment’) and *vāymai* (‘truthfulness’ in speech)[275]. Likewise, a man may see his own mother suffer hunger, yet he

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[272] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 15: Kuṟaḷ 70 reads as follows:
“மகன்தந்தைக்கு ஆற்றும் உதவி இவன்தந்தை
என்நோற்றான் கொல்எனும் சொல்”.
(makaṉtantaikku āṟṟum utavi ivaṉtantai
eṉṉōṟṟāṉ koleṉum col).

[273] P. Marudanayagam, “Endnotes”, *Rev. Dr G.U. Pope: Thirukkural in English (with the Tamil text, transliteration, introduction, notes and glossary), edited with a non-metrical verse translation by Dr V. Murugan and Endnotes by Prof. P. Marudanayagam*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2018, pp. 539–608:551.

[274] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 15: Kuṟaḷ 69 reads as follows:
“ஈன்ற பொழுதின் பெரிதுவக்கும் தன்மகனைச்
சான்றோன் எனக்கேட்ட தாய்”.
(īṉṟa poḻutiṉ perituvakkum taṉmakaṉaic
cāṉṟōṉ eṉakkēṭṭa tāy.)

[275] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 201: Kuṟaḷ 983 reads as follows:
“அன்புநாண் ஒப்புரவு கண்ணோட்டம் வாய்மையொடு

would not do anything which the noble *cāṉṟōr* might despise[276]. Without the active moral and intellectual support of a mother, a son could not easily attain these qualities. While this chapter speaks about the mother, father and son, it says nothing about the daughter and her education. As we will see, *Tirukkuṟaḷ* defines her position as being a formally wedded chaste wife to another man.

Fourthly, *Tirukkuṟaḷ* contains several chapters on the role of wives in their relationship to their wedded husbands. The chapters on *Ilvāḻkkai* ('family life', *Kuṟaḷ* 41–50), *Vāḻkkait Tuṇainalam* ('the greatness of life-helper', *Kuṟaḷ* 51–60) and *Peṇvaḻic Cēṟal* (a husband 'heading to woman's way', *Kuṟaḷ* 901–910) clearly articulate the male-centeredness of *Tirukkuṟaḷ*. Family life is the greatest virtue. It is more virtuous, if no one could blame it (*Kuṟaḷ* 49); a family that is filled with love and virtue between a wife and her husband, will maintain its fame and purpose (*Kuṟaḷ* 45). The life of a wife and her husband who lead their family life in a virtuous will resemble the life of deities in heaven (*Kuṟaḷ* 50).

A virtuous wife defends her chastity, protects her husband, maintains their joint reputation and remains industrious[277]. A chaste wife, who worships her husband, can command rain down (*Kuṟaḷ* 55). A man with a chaste wife lacks nothing (*Kuṟaḷ* 53). The auspicious lifestyle of a chaste wife is the honour of a family and begetting and raising virtuous children proves this honour (*Kuṟaḷ* 60). At the same time, *Tirukkuṟaḷ* prohibits a wife advising her husband on any matter. Accordingly, a husband, who listens to the advice of his wife, would not perform his duties (*Kuṟaḷ* 901), end up in shame (*Kuṟaḷ* 901), avoid the company of noble men (*Kuṟaḷ*

ஐந்துசால் ஊன்றிய தூண்".
(aṉpunāṇ oppuravu kaṇṇōṭṭam vāymaiyoṭu
aintucāl ūṉṟiya tūṇ.)

[276] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 135: Kuṟaḷ 656 reads as follows:
"ஈன்றாள் பசிகாண்பான் ஆயினுஞ் செய்யற்க
சான்றோர் பழிக்கும் வினை".
(īṉṟāḷ pacikāṇpāṉ āyiṉuñ ceyyaṟka
cāṉṟōr paḻikkum viṉai).

[277] Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 13: Kuṟaḷ 56 reads as follows:
"தற்காத்துத் தற்கொண்டான் பேணித் தகைசான்ற
சொற்காத்துச் சோர்விலாள் பெண்".
(taṟkāttut taṟkoṇṭāṉ pēṇit takaicāṉṟa
coṟkāttuc cōrvilāḷ peṇ

902), and remain without virtue, wealth and any other good deed (*Kuṟaḷ* 909)[278]. Thus, the greatness of *Tirukkuṟaḷ* lies in its emphatic requirement of the men not to violate the dignity and femininity of women. At the same time, it expected the wife to serve her husband and not to assert herself in his presence. This subservient role of women probably reflected the Jain view on women at that time and it was not favourable for gender equality among the Tamil people[279].

3.3.3 Women in Cilappatikāram

Cilappatikāram (i.e., Composition on Anklet') is a religious composition about Jainism that portrays the Tamil women in a particular way. When the *Eighth International Tamil Conference* was held in *Tañcāvūr* in 1995, a paper presenter quoted Vi. Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār's poetical summary of Jainism. This poem claimed that Jainism was not a religion consisting of ritual only. Instead, it helped its adherents to to conquer their five senses and to develop a disciplined lifestyle. It probited killing of anything that was alive; with the same force it rejected the social and moral evils such as drinking alcohol, telling lies, entertaining sexual lust and strong passions and eating meat. It assisted its adherents to lead a peaceful life by thinking good thoughts and practicing virtues not only for the health of oneself, but also for the welfare of others.[280]

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[278] For a sample of these poems, see Varatarācaṉār, *Tirukkuṟaḷ Teḷivurai*, p. 185: Kuṟaḷ 909 reads as follows:

"அறவினையும் ஆன்ற பொருளும் பிறவினையும்
பெண்ணேவல் செய்வார்கண் இல்".
(aṟaviṉaiyum āṉṟa poruḷum piṟaviṉaiyum
peṇṇēval ceyvārkaṇ il).

[279] Another work of this Transitional Period that ranks next only to *Tirukkuṟaḷ* is *Nālaṭiyār* ('quatrains'); Jain poets composed its 400 four-line poems divided into 40 chapters. Like *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, it groups these poems under virtue, wealth and pleasure. Its 39th chapter describes *Kaṟpuṭai makaḷir* ('wife of wedded chastity') and reflects the lesser role of women in domestic and public life. For an English translation of this 39th chapter, see George U. Pope (translator): *The Nāladiyār or Four Hundred Quatrains in Tamil*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893, pp. 247–252.

[280] The author of this thesis could not get a copy of the original proceeding of this conference. Hence, she refers to this poem in "Camaṇar Toṇṭu", *Eṭṭāvatu Ulaka Tamiḻ Mānāṭṭu Malar*, 1995, p. 183 as quoted by Pa. Sulochana, *Tamiḻ Ilakkiyaṅkaḷil Ūḻviṉai Kōṭpāṭu* (in Tamil: *Teaching of Karma in Tamil Literature*), Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University/ Tirunelveli, 1999, pp. 90–91, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/10603/77846 (accessed on 7 April 2018).

It is true that Jainism incorporates these ethical values; however, its teachings on women do not recognise equality. *Cilappatikāram* exemplifies this principle. Its author was *Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ* (the 'Young-King Monk'), a Cerā-Prince, who had become an ascetic, composed it between 2nd century and 450 CE; he may have used local and traditional stories and created this Jain masterpiece, which connected the three large areas of the Tamil India with one another, namely *Pukār* in *Cōḻa* Kingdom, *Madurai* in *Pāṇṭiya* Kingdom and *Vāñci* in *Cēra* Kingdom. Zvelebil has summarized the core of this epic as follows[281]: *Kōvalaṉ*, a 16-year old son of merchant, married *Kaṇṇaki*, the 12-year old daughter of a ship merchant in *Pukār*. After some time *Kōvalaṉ* fell in love with a local dancer *Mātavi*, got a daughter named Maṇmēkalai, lost his wealth, and returned as a pauper to his wife *Kaṇṇaki*, who then accepted him unconditionally; together they moved to Madurai to start a new life. She asked *Kōvalaṉ* to sell one of her anklets and to start a new business. The royal jeweller, who checked this anklet, accused him of stealing the anklet of the queen. Without any formal inquiry, the king executed *Kōvalaṉ*; *Kaṇṇaki* hurried to the palace and threw her second anklet in front of the king. It fell on the floor and burst open. Pearls rolled on the floor. The king realised his unjust action and died on the spot. His wife fell and gave up her life. *Kaṇṇaki* went into the city of Madurai, plucked one of her breasts, threw it at the city; Madurai burned; she broke her bangles and proceeded to *Vāñci*. 14 days later, a chariot appeared in the heaven, descended with *Kōvalaṉ*, picked her up and returned to heaven. Later the Cerā-King Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ had *Kaṇṇaki*'s image carved in a stone, which he had brought to *Vāñci* and installed it there.

The introduction (*Patikam*) of *Cilappatikāram* outlines the three-fold purpose of this epic: 1) when rulers do injustice, their own virtue (*aṟam*) will become their god of death (*Kūṟṟu*). 2) It is a custom (*iyalpu*) that not only ordinary people, but also the *uyarntōr* ('the noble ones' like the deities and sages) praise the *pattiṉi* ('the woman, who has been faithful to her husband'). 3) The result of a person's past *karma* (*ūḻviṉai*) will surely manifest itself in his/her current life. In this epic, the *cilampu* (anklet) fixed the contexts of deeds (*Cūḻviṉai*); hence,

[281] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, pp. 144–145.

this epic is entitled *Cilappatikāram*, i.e., literary work on the anklet[282]. It is interesting how this epic defends the validity of fate, which Balasubramanian summarises as follows:

> The guardian deity of Madurai at this time presented herself before *Kaṇṇaki* and narrated to her how in his previous birth *Kōvalaṉ* was *Parataṉ*, in the service of Vacu, King of *Ciṅkapuram*, who had killed an innocent merchant, Caṅkamaṉ suspecting him to be a spy, and that was why he now had this fate. Asked as to *Kaṇṇaki*'s future, the deity replied that on the fourteenth day from that hour she would go to Heaven invited by her husband in a celestial car.[283]

This epic has impacted the Tamil women greatly: according to oral traditions, which the author of this thesis knows by experience, Tamil women normally do not wear golden anklet; to avert the injustice that fell on *Kaṇṇaki* they wear plain silver anklet. Most Tamil women consider Friday as a holy day because *Kaṇṇaki* burned Madurai on a Friday. Above all, her legacy strengthened goddess worship.

Despite these great attainments, this story does not seem to have helped the Tamil people to improve their gender balance. When her husband *Kovalaṉ* went to a concubine, lived with her and begot a daughter, *Kaṇṇaki* remained helpless. She accepted him after his return. She did not ask any question about his disloyalty towards her, why he sqander their wealth and damaged the reputation of their family. People in the city of *Pūmpukār* came to know of *Kovalaṉ*'s scandalous life. Therefore, *Kaṇṇaki* and *Kovalaṉ* had to leave their home and go to Madurai. *Kaṇṇaki* as a faithful wife of the faithless *Kovalaṉ* had no independent life. After he was unjustly killed, she became furious and took revenge on the city of Madurai. At this

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[282] "Cilappathikaaram–Pukaark KaaNtam of ilankO aTikaL", *Tamil Nation*, available at http://tamilnation.co/literature/cilapathikaram/puhar.htm (accessed 2 April 2018): The introductory lines 55 to 60 in Patikam reads as follows:
"அரைசியல் பிழைத்தோர்க்கு அறம்கூற்று ஆவதூஉம் (55)
உரைசால் பத்தினிக்கு உயர்ந்தோர் ஏத்தலும்
ஊழ்வினை உருத்துவந்து ஊட்டும் என்பதூஉம்
சூழ்வினைச் சிலம்பு காரண மாகச்
சிலப்பதி காரம் என்னும் பெயரால்
நாட்டுதும் யாம்ஓர் பாட்டுடைச் செய்யுள்என," (60)
(Araiciyal piḻaittōrkku aṟamkūṟṟu āvatū'um (55)
uraicāl pattiṉikku uyarntōr ēttalum
ūḻviṉai uruttuvantu ūṭṭum eṉpatū'um
cūḻviṉaic cilampu kāraṇa mākac
cilappati kāram eṉṉum peyarāl
nāṭṭutum yāmōr pāṭṭuṭaic ceyyuḷeṉa, (60)

[283] C. Balasubramanian, *Papers in Tamil Literature*, Madras, Narumalarp Pathippakam, 1981, p. 30.

crucial stage, the story lets her down: he was killed in this manner, because in his past life he is said to have done hurt someone else. It was karmic tit-for-tat event. The fear of this *ūḻviṉai* (‘old deed, i.e., the *karmic* actions, their merits and demerits accumulated in one’s past lives) became a convienent means to explain any injustice done in this life. Particularly, it affected the women. Thus, *Kaṇṇaki*, on the one hand, evoked admiration for her marital fidelity and courage. On the otherhand, she became a helpless victim of a disloyal husband and an unjust king. Just by praising her, people try to forget the harsh realities of a patriarchal society. This ambiguous outlook and treatments harmed gender justice more than it helped.

3.4 Women in Tamil Bhakti Movements (600–900 CE)

This period marked the growth and consolidation of Tamil bhakti movements; they adopted the missionary methods of the Jains and the Buddhists and propagated their ideals of theism; their *bhakti* movements had some place for women and other excluded people groups. Hillary Rodrigues mentions that *bhakti* enabled the excluded women and ordinary people to “envision the divine as they desired, and worship the divine in their own way.”[284]

Normally, Tamil scholars fail to bring out the possible impact of Christianity on the emergence and consolidation of Tamil *bhakti* movements[285]. John G. Samuel, a renowned Tamil scholar, points out the meaning of love (*kātal*) in *Akam*-Literature of the *Caṅkam*-

[284] Hillary P. Rodrigues, *Introducing Hinduism*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 274. She also names few adaptations and adjustments such as the following: Tamil *bhakti* adherents listened to the critiques of the Jains and Buddhists about Brahminical clericalism based on Sanskrit religious literature and redefined themselves, their religious rites, meanings and institutions. They established monasteries and academies. They sent out itinerary preachers and singers. They converted Jain rulers and wealthy merchants to support them. They founded charitable work agencies (e.g., providing water, food and shelter to pilgrims). Knowing the aversion of the Tamil people of the Vedic religious writings, Tamil bhakti adherents created their own religious writings such as the *Śaiva Tirumaṟai* and indigenous philosophies such as the *Śaiva Siddhanta*. Their anthropomorphic stories about goddesses and gods make divine and demonic beings as part of their everyday life. They claim to experience them through *bhakti* songs and stories. Their temples and pilgrimage sites satisfy their emotional and aesthetic needs. They developed festivals and symbols that resembled the festivals and symbols of the Buddhists and the Jains (e.g., the festival of *Civarātri*, the use of bull symbols by the Jains and the *Śaivites*). Like the Jains, many adherents of Tamil *bhakti* refrained from killing animals for meat and spread non-violence. They relaxed the rules for asceticism: a householder can be an ascetic for a specific period (e.g., during a pilgrimage or a festival).

[285] For further information on early Christianity in Tamil India see, John G. Samuel (ed.), *First International conference on the History of Early Church in India*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2006; John G. Samuel, et al. (eds.): *Early Christianity in India with Parallel Developments in other Parts of Asia*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2008.

Period: *kātal* refers to the love between a consenting woman and a consenting man. By contrast, Christianity portrays the love between Jesus Christ, the bridegroom and the church, his bridge. This divine-human aspect of love manifests itself in the Tamil *bhakti* literature after 6th century CE. Samuel cites Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvempāvai* and *Āṇṭāḷ*'s works as examples of possible Christian influence on Tamil *bhakti* thought[286].

Thus, the adherents of *Śaivabhakti* ('*Śiva*-devotion') and *Vaiṣṇavabhakti* ('*Viṣṇu*-devotion') derived insights from various sources and shaped their religious beliefs and practices. Their *bhakti* writings contain numerous references to female devotees, who in earlier times would not have merited any mention. This thesis briefly considers the contributions of three representative female devotees, who promoted bhakti among the Tamil people, namely *Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār* ('the mother of *Kāraikkāl*'), *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* ('the queen of women'), and *Āṇṭāḷ* (the 'mistress').

The 24th section of the *Periyapurāṇam* (the great old story') is entitled *Kāraikkālammaiyār Purāṇam* ('ancient story about the venerable Mother of *Kāraikkāl*). Her original name was *Puṉitavati*. Her husband deserted her and married another woman. *Kāraikkālammaiyār* devoted herself to serve *Śiva*. The 60th poem of her *Purāṇam* expresses her prayer for enjoying *Śiva*'s undying love and bliss. She did not want to be born again in this world. If she had to be reborn, she requested *Śiva* not to forget him and grant her the privilege of being in his presence, when he danced[287]. She is accredited with four minor works, which

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[286] John G. Samuel, *Kiṟittava Tamiḻakkiyam* (in Tamil: *Christian Tamil Literature*), Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2005, pp. 22–24.

[287] The 1781st poem of *Periyapurāṇam*, i.e., the 60th song of this *Kāraikkālammaiyār Purāṇam* reads as follows:

"இறவாத இன்ப அன்பு
வேண்டிப்பின் வேண்டு கின்றார்
பிறவாமை வேண்டும் மீண்டும்
பிறப்புண்டேல் உன்னை என்றும்
மறவாமை வேண்டும் இன்னும்
வேண்டும்நான் மகிழ்ந்து பாடி
அறவாநீ ஆடும் போதுன்
அடியின்கீழ் இருக்க என்றார்"
(iṟavāta iṉpa aṉpu
vēṇṭippiṉ vēṇṭu kiṉṟār
piṟavāmai vēṇṭum mīṇṭum
piṟappuṇṭēl uṉṉai eṉṟum

speak about her *bhakti* to *Śiva*[288], which may have given rise to *Pirapantam*-Literature in Tamil[289]. Impressed by her devotion, *Śiva* reportedly called her *ammai* (‘mother’). Her *bhakti* animates the *Śaivites*. The fact that she became the 24th *Nāyaṇār* (‘leader’); thus, her status is secured among the 63 normative *Nāyaṇār*-saints of the *Śaivites*.

The 66th section of the *Periyapurāṇam* is entitled *Maṅkaiyarkkaracīyammaiyār Purāṇam* (‘ancient story about Mother *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci*, ‘the Queen of Women’). Its first poem presents her as an incomparable queen of women (*maṅkaiyarkkut taṉiyaraci*) and as our goddess (*eṅkaḷ teivam*, ‘our deity’)[290]. She was a *Cōḻa*-princess and an ardent devotee of Śiva. When her father married her to King *Niṉṟacīr Neṭumāṟaṉ* of Madurai, she was unhappy. With the help of the Śaiva-Poet *Campantar* she converted her husband from Jainism to Śaivism, which then led to the disappearance of the Jains in Madurai; many of them on the gallows (*Koḻuvēṟṟutal*) erected by the *bhakti* adherents. Consequently, *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* served in the temple of *Ālavāy*. Her contributions to revival of *Śaivism* in Madurai earned her fame.

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maṟavāmai vēṇṭum iṉṉum
vēṇṭumnāṉ makiḻntu pāṭi
aṟavānī āṭum pōtuṉ
aṭiyiṉkīḻ irukka eṉṟār)

[288] These are her four writings: *Tiruvālaṅkāṭṭu Mūtta Tiruppatikam*, *Mūtta Tiruppatikam*, *Tiruviraṭṭai Maṇimālai* and *Aṟputat Tiruvantāti*.

[289] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, pp. 334–335: Zvelebil thinks that she may have lived between 550 and 600 CE in *Ālaṅkāṭu*, about 47 miles away from Tanjore.

[290] The 4189th poem of *Periyapurāṇam* or the 1st song of *Maṅkaiyarkkaraciyammaiyār Purāṇam*:
“மங்கையர்க்குத் தனியரசி எங்கள் தெய்வம்
வளவர்திருக் குலக்கொழுந்து வளைக்கை மானி
செங்கமலத் திருமடந்தை கன்னி நாடாள்
தென்னர்குலப் பழிதீர்த்த தெய்வப் பாவை
எங்கள்பிரான் சண்பையர்கோன் அருளி னாலே
இருந்தமிழ்நாடு உற்றஇடர் நீக்கித் தங்கள்
பொங்கொளிவெண் திருநீறு பரப்பி னாரைப்
போற்றுவார் கழலெம்மாற் போற்ற லாமே”
(maṅkaiyarkkut taṉiyaraci eṅkaḷ teyvam
vaḷavartiruk kulakkoḻuntu vaḷaikkai māṉi
ceṅkamalat tirumaṭantai kaṉṉi nāṭāḷ
teṉṉarkulap paḻitīrtta teyvap pāvai
eṅkaḷpirāṉ caṇpaiyarkōṉ aruḷi ṉālē
iruntamiḻnāṭu uṟṟa'iṭar nīkkit taṅkaḷ
poṅkoḷiveṇ tirunīṟu parappi ṉāraip
pōṟṟuvār kaḻalem'māṟ pōṟṟa lāmē)

Madurai remains this this day an acknowledged centre *Śaivism*. Unlike *Kāraikkālammaiyār*, *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* did not become one of the 63 *Nāyaṇār*-saints; her name occurs as the 66th *Nāyaṇār*; therefore, she belongs to the nine *Tokaiyaṭiyār* ('additional saints')[291].

Āṇṭāḷ (the 'mistress') was a devotee of *Viṣṇu* of *Śrivilliputtūr*, Virutunakar District, Tamil Nadu. This temple is one of the 108 holy sanctuaries of the *Vaiṣṇavites*. According to popular traditions, *Periyāḻvār* found an abandoned female infant under a basil-plant and raised as *kōtai* ('garland'). After she had grown up, she loved *Viṣṇu* and composed two poetical works in his praise, namely *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*. She teaches that just reciting the names of *Viṣṇu* was enough to burn to ashes all known and unknown misdeeds of the past and present lives of devotees[292]. The *Vaiṣṇavites* venerate *Āṇṭāḷ* and oppose anyone, who in their opinion, does not honour her as they supposedly do.[293] Yet, according to an ethnographical research undertaken by M. Lakshmanakumar, many women in *Śrivilliputtūr* have not chosen to imitate *Āṇṭāḷ*'s lifestyle[294]. Her story has not yet transformed their life. These Dalit women of *Śrivilliputtūr* still strive to attain recognition, justice and equality that are due to their gender. Lakshmanakumar states that during the second half of the 20th century, the life of these women changed dramatically for the better, not with reference to any *bhakti* religious teaching. Instead, secular and humanitarian values and possibilities have enabled them to attain this level of change[295].

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[291] Kurucu, *Camūkaviyal Nōkkil Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāṟu*, p. 158.

[292] The last two lines of her poem, i.e., 478th poem of the *Nālāyirativviya Pirapantam* reads as follows:
"போய பிழையும் புகுதருவான் நின்றனவும்
தீயினில் தூசாகும் செப்பேலோர் எம்பாவாய்"
(pōya piḻaiyum pukutaruvāṉ niṉṟaṉavum
tīyiṉil tūcākum ceppēlōr empāvāy).

[293] Ilangovan Rajasekaran, "In the name of Andal", *The Frontline* (16 February 2018), available at http://www.frontline.in/the-nation/in-the-name-of-andal/article10055463.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 2 April 2018).

[294] M. Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups: A Study with Reference to Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation (2011), V.H.N. Senthikumara Nadar College, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/ 10603/125294 (accessed on 7 April 2018).

[295] Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups*, pp. 295–296: access to Indian Constitution, poverty alleviation efforts of the government, education, self-help initiatives are some of the factors that helped these women to change their social and economic conditions for the better.

S. Lalitha, who has examined the status of women during this period of Tamil *bhakti*, concluded that the male proponents of the *bhakti* movements gave importance to women's role in religion and religious institutions. Some women were determined to covert others to their own *bhakti* movements. They bridged several differences among *bhakti* movements. They joined their husbands in celebrating religious festivals. Usually, Tamil bhakti promoters, both women and men, neglected other areas of female life including family, raising children, productive engagements in public spheres. Great importance was attached to wife's marriage loyalty to her husband[296].

3.5 Women in Tamil writings from (900–1800 CE)

3.5.1 Women in Tamil Epic Literature

Epic literature exemplifies the four-fold goals of human existence,[297] namely *aṟam*, *poruḷ*, *iṉpam* and *vīṭu* (respectively, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, i.e., virtue, wealth, pleasure and bliss).[298] They shine through *Peruṅkatai*, *Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi*, *Vaḷaiyāpati* and *Kuṇṭalakēci*. *Peruṅkatai* ('Great Story'), for example, uses Jain teachings to best illustrate these goals. At home, women take care of their men; a loving wife should patiently look after her husband; her patience (*poṟai*) is her honour (*perumai*)[299]. When they are in public sphere, they may engage in other activities such as politics, education, and composition of literary works, leisure

[296] S. Lalitha, *Tamiḻ Pakti Ilakkiyaṅkaḷil Makaḷir Nilai–Ōr Āyvu* (in Tamil: *Status of Women in Tamil Bhakti Religions*: *An Analysis*), 2005, pp. 315–324, unpublished PhD Dissertation, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University/ Tirunelveli, 2005, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/77874 (accessed on 2 April 2018).

[297] Kurucu, *Camūkaviyal Nōkkil Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāṟu*, pp. 126–137.

[298] During this time, three Major Epics (i.e., 1. *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*, 2. *Vaḷaiyāpati* and 3. *Kuṇṭalakēci*) and five Minor Epics (i.e., *Nākakumāra Kāviyam*, 2. *Utaya Kumāra Kāviyam*, 3. *Yacōtā Kāviyam*, 4. *Nīlakēci* and 5. *Cūḷāmaṇi*) as came into existence. The author of this thesis did not examine these works because she could not identity in them new thoughts that have not been discussed earlier.

[299] *Peruṅkatai*, 4. *Vattava Kāṇṭam*, 14. *Maṇam Paṭu Kātai*, lines 98 and 99 read as follows:

அன்புடைக் கணவ ரழிதகச் செயினும்
பெண்பிறந் தோர்க்குப் பொறையே பெருமை
(aṉpuṭaik kaṇava raḻitakac ceyiṉum
peṇpiṟan tōrkkup poṟaiyē perumai)

activities, fine arts, and marriage preparations.[300] As far as gender role is concerned, these literary compositions do not reveal any significant change.

The most important epic of this period is *Kamparāmāyaṇam*, which, according to experts, is an indigenised Tamil version of Vālmīkī's *Rāmāyaṇa*. It reiterates monogamous relationships, which the Tamil people of that time needed. In this context, it provides an extended commentary on *Tiruvaḷḷuvar*'s teaching about *Piṟaṉil Viḻaiyāmai* (*Kuṟaḷ* 141–150). It was a disgrace for a man to even to look at the wife of another man[301]. The Vaiṣṇavites revere this book for its contents; all other Tamil people admire the power of its language in describing landscapes, personalities, conflicts, emotions, victories and defeats. As far as the gender issue is concerned, the story of Sitā remains contentious: on the one hand, the way she defended her chastity demands admiration; however, whether she should have endured all these hardships begs answers. The fact that *Kamparāmāyaṇam* does not require her to undergo the fire-trial is laudable[302].

In 1985, S. Natarajan studied the 12 main women characters mentioned in Tamil epics and concluded his observations as follows[303]: these epics use these women, namely *Kaṇṇaki*, *Cilappatikāra Mātavi*, *Maṇimēkalai Mātavi*, *Maṇimēkalai*, *Vācavattai* (Skt. *vāsavadattā*) *vicayai* (Skt. *Vijayā*, 'victorious woman') *Kōcalai* (Skt. *Kausalyā*, i.e., the mother of Rāma), *Cītai* (Skt. Sītā, 'furrow', Rāma), *Tārai* (Skt. *Tārā*, 'apple of the eye', the wife of Vāli) *Maṇṭōtari* (Skt. *Mandōdarī*, wife of Rāvaṇa), *Kunti* (Skt. Kuntī, a wife of Pāṇḍu) and *Tiraupati* (Skt. *Draupatī*, who was the wife of the five Pāṇḍavas) to communicate the emotions of joy (*uvakai*), weeping (*aḻukai*) and dignity (*perumitam*). All these women suffer pain due to the death or separation of their husbands. They derive their identity and joy either from their husbands or sons. *Maṇṭōtari*, *Kunti* and *Tiraupati* had hard time after the death of

[300] Lalitha, *Tamiḻ Pakti Ilakkiyaṅkaḷil Makaḷir Nilai*, p. 324.

[301] Kurucu, *Camūkaviyal Nōkkil Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāṟu*, p. 139.

[302] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 269: "Kampaṉ has not included the *Uttarakāṇḍa* (a later appendix to Vālmīkī's poem) in which Rāma sends Sitā to permanent exile because people of his kingdom murmur that by having lived in the house of another man she has become unfit to be Rāma's wife."

[303] S. Natarajan, *Tragic Women Characters in Tamil Epics*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Kerala/ Thiruvananthapuram, 1985, pp. 734–757, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/ 10603/174782 (accessed on 7 April 2018).

their children. *Mātavi* suffered, when her daughter *Maṇimēkalai* separated from her and when her lover *Kōvalaṉ* deserted her. As a summary, all men who had any kind of relationship with these twelve women, also suffered. Thus, these epics portray women as the main cause of suffering. Obviously, their contribution to gender justice remains partial.

3.5.2 Women in Didactic Literature

Auvaiyār ('Old Lady'), who lived during the *Cōḻar*-Period (10 of 12 century CE)[304], composed four didactic works, namely *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ*, *Mūturai* and *Nalvaḻi*. *Āṭṭiccūṭi* and *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ* contain gender-specific information on women and men. *Mūturai* has a poem that talks about good-mannered and ill-mannered wives.

Nalvaḻi does not address any gender issue. The insights found in these four books have lasting impact on gender relationships. They are from the perspectives of a woman poet. Therefore, they become even more significant for the study of this thesis.

Āṭṭiccūṭi ('the One, who wears the *Āṭṭi*-flower', i.e., Śiva) contains 109 alphabetically arranged short sayings that are easy to understand and remember. They are addressed to both girls and boys. Its 20th saying underlines the importance of taking care of one's 'father and mother'[305]. For a man, his mother is indispensable and he should listen to her. He should also live happily with his wife endowed 'with soft shoulders'[306]. By contrast, he should not listen to the advice given by either his wife or an unmarried woman[307]. He should definitely keep himself away from those women (i.e., prostitutes), who have applied black magic pigment (*mai*) to their eyes[308] and she should give up sexual passion (*mōkam*, 'delusion, passion')[309].

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[304] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, pp. 84–86: Tamil literature knows at least four and perhaps more *Auvaiyār*s. The *Auvaiyār* of the *Caṅkam*-Period (c. 150–220 CE), the *Auvaiyār* of 9th or 10th century. The third *Auvaiyār* composed *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ*, *Mūturai* and *Nalvaḻi*. The fourth *Auvaiyār* (14th century CE) authored *Auvai Kuṟaḷ*.

[305] Auvaiyār: *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, Yāḻpāṇam: Srī Cuppiramaṇiya Puttakacālai, 1991, p. 5: *Āṭṭiccūṭi*'s 20th saying reads: "தந்தை தாய்ப் பேண்", (tantai tāy-p pēṇ).

[306] Auvaiyār, *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, p. 17: *Āṭṭiccūṭi*'s 93th saying reads: "மெல்லி நல்லாள் தோள்சேர்" (melli nallāḷ tōḷcēr).

[307] Auvaiyār, *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, p. 12: *Āṭṭiccūṭi*'s 62nd saying reads: "தையல் சொல் கேளேல்" (taiyal col kēḷēl).

[308] Auvaiyār, *Āṭṭiccūṭi*, p. 18: *Āṭṭiccūṭi*'s 95th saying reads: "மை விழியார் மனை அகல்" (mai viḻiyār maṉai akal).

Similarly, *Konrai Vēntan* (‘the One, who wears the *Konrai*-flowers’) begins with the honour due to both mother and father, who are the deities, whom a child first gets to know.[310] There is no better source of instruction for a child than the father. His advice is the best *mantra*[311]. Similarly, there is no better temple than the mother[312]. A husband should not seduce the wife of another man because not entering another man’s house counts as the (best) virtue (*aram*)[313]. He should not even go near the house of the prostitutes, who have applied black magic pigment (*mai*) to their eyes[314]. Both the wife and husband should take note of *Auvaiyār*’s new meaning for *karpu* (‘marital loyalty’): until that time, it meant the marital loyalty of the wife and not of her husband. Now, both wife and husband should honour their promise to each other because *karpu* means keeping the word[315].

Yet, this new understanding should not mislead a woman. She should not only protect herself against any evil that may befall her, but she should also not cause anyone to stumble. Therefore, safety alone is her real beauty[316]. Paradoxically, she should pretend to be ignorant in the presence of men, and yet remain alert. This behaviour is her ‘decoration’[317]. In the same

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[309] Auvaiyār, *Ātticcūṭi*, p. 18: *Ātticcūṭi*’s 97th saying reads: “மோகத்தை முனி” (mōkattai muṉi).

[310] Auvaiyār: Konrai Vēntaṉ: Uraiyuṭaṉ (in Tamil: ‘*Konrai Vēntaṉ with Commentary*’), Vavuṉayā (Yāḻpāṇam): Cutaṉ Accakam, 1996, p. 1: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 1st saying reads: “அன்னையும் பிதாவும் முன்னறி தெய்வம்” (aṉṉaiyum pitāvum muṉṉaṟi teyvam).

[311] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 18: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 37th saying reads: “தந்தை சொல் மிக்க மந்திரம் இல்லை” (tantai col mikka mantiram illai).

[312] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 18: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 38th saying reads: “தாயிற் சிறந்தொரு கோயிலும் இல்லை” (tāyiṟ ciṟantoru kōyilum illai).

[313] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 28: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 61st saying reads: “பிறன் மனை புகாமை அறம் எனத் தகும்” (piṟaṉ maṉai pukāmai aṟam eṉat takum).

[314] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 35: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 78th saying reads: “மை விழியார் தம் மனை அகன்று ஒழுகு” (mai viḻiyār tam maṉai akaṉṟu oḻuku).

[315] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 8: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 14th saying reads: “கற்பு எனப் படுவது சொல்திறம்பாமை” (karpu eṉap paṭuvatu coltiṟampāmai).

[316] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 9: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 15th saying reads: “காவல் தானே பாவையர்க்கு அழகு” (kāval tāṉē pāvaiyarkku aḻaku).

[317] Auvaiyār, Konrai Vēntaṉ, p. 30: *Konrai Vēntaṉ*’s 66th saying reads: “பேதைமை என்பது மாதர்க்கு அணிகலம்” (ētaimai eṉpatu mātarkku aṇikalam).

manner, women should control her their eating habits and keep their bodies slim (and fit)[318]. She should obey her husband; otherwise, she is like a fire that the husband carries in his bosom[319]. If she goes on slandering her husband, she will be considered the goddess of death (*kūṟṟu*)[320].

Auvaiyār's *Mūturai* gives another simile that highlights the importance of a good-mannered wife. If this wife remains at home, the husband will lack nothing. By contrast, if she habitually opposes him and contradicts his words, the same home will become a den of a tigress[321]. *Auvaiyār*'s *Nalvaḻi* ('Good Way') consists of 41 poems. Few of them stress the importance of virtuous wives at home and other women, who may sell their bodies (at least temporarily) to men for a price or favour. Its 24th poem mentions that a well-structured young wife is the beauty of a home. If she is not there, the house will not be lovely; it will resemble the forehead that does not have the sign of *Tirunīṟu* ('holy ash'). It will be like the tasteless food, to which melted butter (*Ney*) is not added. Besides, it will resemble a man, who does not have cooperating siblings[322].

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[318] Auvaiyār, Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ, p. 3: *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ*'s 5th saying reads: "உண்டி சுருங்குதல் பெண்டிர்க்கு அழகு" (uṇṭi curuṅkutal peṇṭirkku aḻaku).

[319] Auvaiyār, Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ, p. 19: *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ*'s 41th saying reads: "துடியாப் பெண்டிர் மடியில் நெருப்பு" (tuṭiyāp peṇṭir maṭiyil neruppu).

[320] Auvaiyār, Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ, p. 20: *Koṉṟai Vēntaṉ*'s 42nd saying reads: "தூற்றும் பெண்டிர் கூற்று எனத் தகும்" (tūṟṟum peṇṭir kūṟṟu eṉat takum).

[321] Auvaiyār: *Mūturai–Nalvaḻi: Poḻippuraiyuṭaṉ* (in Tamil: '*Mūturai–Nalvaḻi with Commentary*'): Tellippaḻai: Pālar Ñāṉōtaya Capai, 1997, p. 7: *Mūturai*'s 21st poem reads as follows:
"இல்லாள் அகத்திருக்க இல்லாதது ஒன்றில்லை
இல்லாளும் இல்லாளே ஆமாயின் – இல்லாள்
வலிகிடந்த மாற்றம் உரைக்குமேல் அவ்வில்
புலிகிடந்த தூறாய் விடும்"
(illāḷ akattirukka illātatu oṉṟillai
illāḷum illāḷē āmāyiṉ - illāḷ
valikiṭanta māṟṟam uraikkumēl avvil
pulikiṭanta tūṟāy viṭum)

[322] Auvaiyār, *Mūturai–Nalvaḻi*, p. 18: *Nalvaḻi*'s 24th poem reads as follows:
"நீறில்லா நெற்றிபாழ் நெய்யில்லா உண்டிபாழ்
ஆறில்லாஊருக்கு (அழகுபாழ் – மாறில்
உடன்பிறப்(பு) இல்லா உடம்புபாழ் பாழே
மடக்கொடி இல்லாமனை".
(nīṟillā neṟṟipāḻ neyyillā uṇṭipāḻ

This wife needs to protect her marital loyalty (*kaṟpu*) of a wife. The 16th poem, for example, considers it a miracle, if a woman could keep her *kaṟpu* intact. It is one of the four miracles of the world surrounded by sea. The rain water that falls on the ground should not get contaminated. Good people should not refrain from sharing their wealth with the needy. Compassionate people should look at other mercifully. A virtuous wife should keep her *kaṟpu* and she should not even allow her looks at other men defile it[323]. Its 20th poem advises the men not to approach the prostitutes, who sell their large breasts for money and promise pleasures. If they do, they will resemble the millstone, with which they seek to cross a flooded river. The fleeting pleasure, which the prostitutes promise, may seem like a strong support; but it will be the seed that sprouts, ruins the men destroys their wealth. Therefore, they should not seek the pleasures of a prostitute[324].

Considered together, *Auvaiyār*'s poems respect the woman, who has become a mother. Secondly, she appreciates the wife, who keep her marital loyalty and lives in harmony with her husband. Thirdly, she rejects adultery and advices men not to approach the prostitutes. These attitudes have important lessons for gender issues, namely the woman is responsible for the welfare of the house, her husband and the society. They do not require them explicitly

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āṟillā'ūruk(ku) aḻakupāḻ – māṟil
uṭaṉpiṟap(pu) illā uṭampupāḻ pāḻē
maṭakkoṭi illāmaṉai).

[323] Auvaiyār, *Mūturai–Nalvaḻi*, p. 16: Nalvaḻi's 16th poem reads as follows:
"தண்ணீர் நிலநலத்தால் தக்கோர் குணங்கொடையால்
கண்ணீர்மை மாறாக் கருணையால் - பெண்ணீர்மை
கற்பழியா ஆற்றால் கடல்சூழ்ந்த வையகத்துள்
அற்புதமாம் என்றே அறி."
(taṇṇīr nilanalattāl takkōr kuṇaṅkoṭaiyāl
kaṇṇīrmai māṟāk karuṇaiyāl - peṇṇīrmai
kaṟpaḻiyā āṟṟāl kaṭalcūḻnta vaiyakattuḷ
aṟputamām eṉṟē aṟi)

[324] Auvaiyār, *Mūturai–Nalvaḻi*, p. 17: *Nalvaḻi*'s 20th poem reads as follows:
"அம்மி துணையாக ஆறிழிந்த ஆறொக்குங்
கொம்மை முலைபகர்வார்க் கொண்டாட்டம் - இம்மை
மறுமைக்கும் நன்றன்று மாநிதியம் போக்கி
வெறுமைக்கு வித்தாய் விடும்".
(ammi tuṇaiyāka āṟiḻinta āṟokkuṅ
kom'mai mulaipakarvārk koṇṭāṭṭam - im'mai
maṟumaikkum naṉṟaṉṟu mānitiyam pōkki
veṟumaikku vittāy viṭum).

from men. Thus, women become easy targets for anything, which may go wrong in gender relationships. Thus, *Auvaiyār*'s poems remain gender-biased and male-centred.

3.5.3 Women in Siddha Literature

The Tamilised Sanskrit word *cittar* (Skt. *siddha*) refers to three groups of people, who believed in miraculous and supernatural powers of their mind: authors of the *siddha* medicine, Tantric-yogis, and philosophical-religious poets. Of the 18 Tamil *siddha*s, this section engages with the opinions of two *siddha*s on women, namely *Civavākkiyar* and *Pāmpāṭṭi Cittar*.

Civavākkiyar (c. 1350 CE) is named after his composition entitled *Civavākkiyam* ('Śiva's sayings')[325]. They reject external religious rituals (e.g., temple worship, ritual baths, festivals, recitation of Vedas) and social inequalities (e.g., observance of *Jāti* differences). Instead, they urge their readers to internalise spirituality: one should seek to find *Śiva* within oneself because he does not live in material things such as temples; instead, the interior of human mind is his dwelling place. One can use *ñāṉam* ('wisdom') and the five-syllable prayer *Na-Ma-Ci-Vā-Ya* ('Praise to *Śiva*') to experience *Śiva* and attain *mutti* (i.e., Skt. *mokṣa*, 'bliss' as a release from the cycle of births and deaths). The 7th poem, for example, expresses the joy of discovering the divine in oneself: I did not know that the divine was within me. Since I know it now, who can find it within me? I shall continue to cherish the divine within me[326].

Civavākkiyar holds the view that in the creation both men and women were equals. They existed in *Śiva*; when he began to think, they emanated from his thoughts. This idea resembles

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[325] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, pp. 179–180: *Civavākkiyar* may have lived in mid-fourteenth century or earlier. He was "the greatest Siddha poet". He was a "rebel against Hindu estabnlishment and Brahmanic supremacy, condemning idol worship, authority of Vedas and *Āgamas*, all forms of orthodoxy, and caste system." The number of poems in his work varies between 520 and 545.

[326] "*Civavākkiyam*," *Tamil Kaṟpōm*, available at http://www.ytamizh.com/siddhar/sivavaakiyar/?page=1 (accessed on 3 April 2018), Poem 7 reads as follows:
"என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யான் அறிந்ததில்லையே
என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யான் அறிந்து கொண்டபின்
என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யாவர் காண வல்லரோ
என்னிலே இருந்திருந்து யான்உ ணர்ந்து கொண்டெனே"
(eṉṉilē iruntaoṉṟai yāṉ aṟintatillaiyē
eṉṉilē iruntaoṉṟai yāṉ aṟintu koṇṭapiṉ
eṉṉilē iruntaoṉṟai yāvar kāṇa vallarō
eṉṉilē iruntiruntu yāṉu ṇarntu koṇṭeṉē)

that of the creation story in the first chapter. There, the first man thought and his thought became a woman. Here, *Śiva* thought, man and woman came into being, so did the celestial beings. The 28th poem of *Civavākkiyam* states that in the beginning Śiva as the Noble One (*Aṇṇal*) existed; he was the beginning and the end. Male and female beings existed in him. As he began to think, his sperm (*cukkilam*, 'semen') entered his embryo (*karu*, a 'foetus'). This union became the source of not only divine beings, but also men and women on this earth[327].

Despite these lofty opinions of men and women originating in *Śiva* and *Śiva* residing in the bodies of women and men, *Civavākkiyar* uses feminine imageries to indicate the impermanence and low value of the material body. For example, his 6th poem tells that a man would not permit another man to touch his beautiful wife; if the other man touched, he would want to cut him apart. However, when the God of Death takes her away, he must touch her. Likewise, a menial scavenger (*tōṭṭi*) should touch and cremate her. At that time, the widower cannot do anything to either the God of Death or *tōṭṭi*. Therefore, too strong an attachment based on external beauty is unhealthy[328]. This practical insight aids gender considerations and keeps them in balance.

At the same time, *Civavākkiyar* seems to have thought about women as temptresses, who hindered the spiritual progress of men. His 63rd poem tells that the women, who have applied

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[327] "*Civavākkiyam*," *Tamil Kaṟpōm*, Poem 28 reads as follows:

"அண்ணலே அனாதியே அனாதிமுன் அனாதியே
பெண்ணும்ஆணும் ஒன்றலோ பிறப்பதற்கு முன்னெலாம்
கண்ணில் ஆணின் சுக்கிலம் கருவில் ஓங்கும் நாளிலே
மண்ணுளோரும் விண்ணுளோரும் வந்தவாறு எங்ஙனே"
(aṇṇalē aṉātiyē aṉātimuṉ aṉātiyē
peṇṇumāṇum oṉṟalō piṟappataṟku muṉṉelām
kaṇṇil āṇiṉ cukkilam karuvil ōṅkum nāḷilē
maṇṇuḷōrum viṇṇuḷōrum vantavāṟu eṅṅaṉē

[328] "*Civavākkiyam*," *Tamil Kaṟpōm*, Poem 6 reads as follows:

"வடிவுகண்டு கொண்டபெண்ணை மற்றொருவன் நத்தினால்
விடுவனோ அவனை முன்னர் வெட்டவேணும் என்பனே
நடுவன்வந்து அழைத்தபோது நாறுமிந்த நல்லுடல்
சுடலைமட்டும் கொண்டுபோய்த் தோட்டி கைக் கொடுப்பரே"
(vaṭivukaṇṭu koṇṭapeṇṇai maṟṟoruvaṉ nattiṉāl
viṭuvaṉō avaṉai muṉṉar veṭṭavēṇum eṉpaṉē
naṭuvaṉvantu aḻaittapōtu nāṟuminta nalluṭal
cuṭalaimaṭṭum koṇṭupōyt tōṭṭi kaik koṭupparē)

black magic pigment (*mai*) to their eyes, delude the young men and cause them suffering. If the men can discern the Wise One, who truly dwells in their body, and meditate on It in their mind, they will receive bliss and live eternally[329]. Ultimately, the Siddha's views on women have not promoted gender equality. They challenged religious ideas tangible rituals, religious habits. However, their notion about women as hinderers of male spirituality has not promoted gender equality outside of homes and temples.

Pāmpāṭṭi Cittar ('The Siddha with the Dancing Snake, c. 1400–1450')[330] composed a song with 129 poems. Each poem ends with a reference to the snake symbolising the *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti*. These poems speak about the impermanence of human body, material wealth and anything that binds human beings to time and space. An unexpressed conviction lie beneath this entire composition: human sexuality, men's desire for sexual union with a woman, human birth and existence are evil because they hinder men's spiritual liberation. For example, poems 50 to 59 teach, why a man should give up any desire for a woman (*Peṇṇācai Vilakkam*, 'rejecting desire for a woman'); they warn him not to fall into the stinking holes found in the body of woman. As a sensible man, he should not seek a woman; her saliva stinks; the mucus from her nostrils stinks. He should not be like the *kūkai māntar* ('fools, scoffers'), who desire her[331]. Her secret parts are a stinking well (poem 53); the beauty of her

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[329] "*Civavākkiyam*," *Tamil Kaṟpōm*, Poem 63 reads as follows:
"மையடர்ந்த கண்ணினார் மயங்கிடும் மயக்கிலே
ஐயிறந்து கொண்டுநீங்கள் அல்லல்உற் றிருப்பிர்காள்
மெய்யடர்ந்த சிந்தையால் விளங்குஞான மெய்தினால்
உய்யடர்ந்து கொண்டுநீங்கள் ஊழிகாலம் வாழ்விரே."
(maiyaṭarnta kaṇṇiṉār mayaṅkiṭum mayakkilē
aiyiṟantu koṇṭunīṅkaḷ allaluṟ ṟiruppirkāḷ
meyyārnta cintāl viḷaṅkuñāṉa meytiṉāl
uyyaṭarntu koṇṭunīṅkaḷ ūḻikkalam vāḻkē).

[330] Zvelebil, *Lexicon of Tamil Literature*, p. 513.

[331] "Pāmpāṭṭi Cittar Pāṭal", *Cittarkaḷ Ulakam*, available at https://siththarkalulagam.wordpress.com/ பாம்பாட்டி-சித்தர்-பாடல்/ (accessed on 2 April 2018): Poem 55 reads as follows:
"நாறிவரும் எச்சில்தனை நல்லமு தென்றும்
நண்ணுஞ்சளி நாசிதனை நற்கு மிழ்என்றும்
கூறுவார்கள் புத்தியில்லாக் கூகை மாந்தர்கள்:
கோன் நிலையை அறியார் என்று ஆடுபாம்பே"
(ārṟivarum ecciltaṉai nallamu teṉṟum
naṇṇuñcaḷi nācitaṉai naṟku miḻeṉṟum

body parts is deceptive. After all, her intestines are filled with faeces; her body is a muddy pit covered with a colourful skin. A thinking man should keep himself away from any woman[332]. These poems breathe venomous opinion about women and do not support women's rights or gender justice.

3.6 Gender contexts of 19th and 20th century Tamil India

3.6.1 Christian missionaries in Tamil India and their contributions

By the middle of 16th century, Jesuit missionaries from Europe worked in the Tamil India. For example, Henrique Henriques served the people of *Puṉṉaikkāyal*, near the harbour city of *Tūttukuṭi* (Tuticorin). In 1578, he printed his book entitled *Tampirāṉ Vaṇakkam* ('Doctrines on God') in Kollam. This is the first printed book in Tamil. A year later, in 1579, he published his second Tamil book entitled *Kirīcittiyāṉi Vaṇakkam* ('Christian Doctrine'). This book was also printed in Kollam. In 1586, his third book, larger than the first two, entitled *Aṭiyār Varalāṟu* ('History of Saints' or *Flos Sanctorum*) appeared in *Puṉṉaikkāyal*[333]. One of Henrique's more successful missionaries in the Tamil India was Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656). His association with the Brahmins and the Sanskrit language earned him mixed reception. However, legacy[334] and his method of adaptation[335] left behind a legacy. His colleagues and successors worked in many parts of the Tamil India and spread the message of the Roman

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kūṟuvārkaḷ puttiyillāk kūkai māntarkaḷ:
Kōṉ nilaiyai aṟiyār eṉṟu āṭupāmpē)

[332] "Pāmpāṭṭi Cittar Pāṭal", Poem 59 reads as follows:
"மலக்குடம் மீதினிலே மஞ்சள் பூச்சென்றும்
மல்கும்புழுக் கூட்டின் மேல் வண்ணத் தோல் என்றும்
சலக்குழிக் குள்ளே நாற்றஞ் சார்ந்த சேறென்றும்
தான் அறிந்து தள்ளினோம் என்று ஆடு பாம்பே"
Malakkuṭam mītiṉilē mañcaḷ pūcceṉṟum
malkumpuḻuk kūṭṭiṉ mēl vaṇṇat tōl eṉṟum
calakkuḻik kuḷḷē nāṟṟañ cārnta cēṟeṉṟum
tāṉ aṟintu taḷḷiṉōm eṉṟu āṭu pāmpē

[333] Jeanne H. Hein, "Father Henriques' Grammer of Spoken Tamil 1548," *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1977, pp. 127–157.

[334] S. Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar: Robert de Nobili alias Tattuva Podagar–The Father of Tamil Prose*, Tirunelveli: De Nobili Research Institute, St. Xavier College, 1972.

[335] Roberto de Nobili, *Preaching Wisdom to the Wise: Three Treatises by Roberto de Nobili, S.J., Missionary and Scholar of 17th Century India*, translated and introduced by Anand Amaldass, S.J., and Francis X. Looney, S.J., St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.

Catholic Church. Another celebrated Jesuit missionary in the Tamil India was Constanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680–1747). In 1726, he composed the first Tamil Christian epic entitled *Tēmpāvaṇi* (the 'Jewel of Fragrant Beauty' or the 'Unfading Garland'), which was published only 1853[336]. It tells the story of Joseph, the adopted father of Jesus Christ. Roman Catholic theology, worship services, and iconography gave importance to Mother Mary. She became an important alternative heroine, whom Tamil Christian women began to admire and venerate.

As far as the Protestants were concerned, the German Lutheran missionaries in *Taraṅkampāṭi* (commonly known in English as *Tranquebar*) left behind an important legacy. Tranquebar, a fishing village on the Coast of Coromandel, was a Danish colony from 1620 to 1845. In 1706, two young German Lutherans, namely Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau, started to work among the Tamils. In 1707, they started the first girls' school for the Tamil girls in Tranquebar.[337] In September 1709, both boys and girls learned the same subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, catechism and biblical subjects. The children observed stars from the open terrace of their hostels and schools and learned astronomy. Another description of these activities from the April 1713 indicates how both boys and girls learned the same subjects. The Lutherans in Tranquebar opened a public school for non-Christian children (in 1715). These schools provided safe space for intercultural learning of ideas from Germany and India and meeting peoples from various socio-cultural backgrounds[338]. Gradually, they, their successors and their Tamil followers spread Lutheranism in different parts of Tamil India. Soon, Tamil Lutherans went from Tranquebar and settled in major places such as *Mayilāṭuturai*, *Tañcāvūr*, *Kaṭalūr*, *Tiruccirāppaḷḷi*, *Pāḷaiyamkōṭṭai* and *Ceṉṉai*.[339]

[336] Kamil Veith Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrossowitz, 1974, pp. 159–161.

[337] Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg: The Father of Modern Protestant Mission—An Indian Assessment*, New Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Published for Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, 2006.

[338] For details on these schools, their activities and their impacts, see Jeyaraj, 2006, pp. 168–176.

[339] Heike Liebau, et. al. (eds.), *Halle and the English Halle Mission*, Vols. I–III, Halle: Franckesche Stiftungen, 2006.

After the East India Company had revised its charter in 1813, 1833 and 1853, more Protestant missionaries came to Tamil India: The *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, the *Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts* and the Church Missionary Society sent their missionaries to work in *Ceṉṉai* and *Tirunelvēli*. Missionaries of the London Missionary Society concentrated their efforts in the areas of modern *Kaṉṉiyākumari* District in south Tamil India. The *American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission* had their headquarters in Madurai[340]; the *Reformed Church of America* appointed their missionaries to work among the Tamil people in Arcot Districts. The Methodist and Wesleyan missionaries worked among the urban dwellers in *Ceṉṉai* and other cities. All these mission agencies sent unmarried women missionaries, who often in collaboration with the wives of male missionaries and local Tamil Christian women, known as the *Bible Women*, visited countless Tamil women in their homes; they offered formal school and college education and vocational training to Tamil girls[341]. As mentioned in the 5th chapter, the outstanding services of Amy Carmichael (1867–1951), who rescued countless *devadāsīs* from various temples in *Tirunelvēli* district and founded the *Dohnavur Fellowship* and Ida Scudder (1870–1960), who established the renowned *Christian Medical Hospital* in Vellore provided inspirational models for many Tamil women. Muniyandi's summary of Christian work in Tamil India appreciates their new social, intellectual, religious and vocational values and achievements:

> While Christianity was having a chequered career in the Ramnad district, it enjoyed a large measure of freedom in Madura. Mangammal showed great tolerance towards Christian preachers and their subjects. As early as 1691A.D she ordered the liberation of Father Mello, who was languishing in the Marava prison awa[i]ting death. 26 The missionaries introduced many useful industries into Tamilnadu such as paper making, book binding, typing, printing, and lace-making and embroidery work. The lace work carried on by Christian women in the south became well known in India and Europe. The chief success of the missionaries has been in educating the daughters of native converts or female orphans, saved from famine or from being victims of a human sacrifice. These missionaries rendered yeoman service in removing a few of the social evils of India. The Christian missionaries were also champions of humanitarian principles.[342]

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[340] Melissa Lewis Heim, *Making a Life in India: American Missionary Households in Nineteenth-Century Madurai*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston College, Newton, Massachusetts/USA, 1994.

[341] Eliza F. Kent, *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[342] Muniyandi, *Social Condition in Tamilnadu with Special Reference to Women (16th to 18th Century A.D.)*, p. 202.

A major event that contributed to the self-awareness of the otherwise oppressed women of the Nadar community was the *Tōḷcīlai-k Kalakam* ('Upper Cloth Controversy') of 1858/9[343]. Until that time, the women of Nadar community in the South Travancore, particularly in the areas of modern day *Kaṉṉiyākumari District* and *Tiruvaṇantapuram* were not allowed to wear a tailored blouse. Moreover, when a Nair man came near these women, they were expected to remove any piece of cloth, with which they may have covered their upper body and to defer to him. The women resisted this patriarchal humiliation, but they could not succeed on their own. The arrival of the missionaries of the *London Missionary Society* among them in 1806 changed their prospects. Their centres in *Nākarkōvil*, *Neyyūr*, *Pāracālai*, Kocci (Quilon) and other places became the power house of positive change for the Nadar women. The British male missionaries[344] and their wives[345] played a definitive role in opposing this discrimination of women in South Travancore. Scholars praise the exemplary work of Samuel Mateer (1835–1893) and his wife in helping the Nadar women to regain their dignity[346]. The women and men of the Nair Community in Travancore, including their rulers, were unhappy about this revolt for reform; they issued death threats not only to the women and men of Nadar Community, but also to few British missionaries.

Charles Trevelyan, the Governor of the Presidency of Madras (1858–1860), listened to the cry of the Nadar women and the plea of the British missionaries; he directed his representative William Cullen (1840–1860) to persuade the King of Travancore to issue an order so that the Nadar women could wear upper cloth (*ravikai*, a kind of blouse). And the order came out in July 1859. The united efforts of the Tamil Nadar Christians, the British missionaries and the British civil servants enabled the Nadar women of South Travancore to liberate themselves from social shackles and wear blouse. This change indicated their regained dignity.

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[343] For a fuller discussion of this reform effort, see R.N. Yesudas, *The History of the London Missionary Society in Travancore, 1806–1908*, Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society, 1980; Princeton Ben, *The Countercultural Mission and the Upper Cloth Revolt: A Womanist Theological Interpretation*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2012.

[344] Some of these male missionaries were James Russell, John Abb, John Cox, Ebenezer Lewig, Frederick Baylis, John Joll Dennis, Charles Mead, Charles Mault and many others.

[345] Some of the missionary wives were Johanna Celestina Host Mead, Martha Mault and many others

[346] D.H. George: *Kumari Kāvaṭṭap Peṇṇurimaip Pōrāṭṭam: A study of the women liberation movement of Kanyamulari District*, (1982), 2nd ed., Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1997.

As time passed by, the places, where Christian missionaries worked, produced innovative thinkers and activists, who challenged the gender inequalities among the Tamil people. For example, Māyūram Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai (1826–1889), who wrote the first Tamil novel entitled *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* (‘the *History of Piratāpa Mutaliyār*’, 1879) grew up in *Mayilāṭutuṟai* and worked in Tranquebar. *Ñāṉāmmāḷ* (‘mother of wisdom’, beauty and virtues’), the main character of this novel, exhibits several Roman Catholic theological convictions. Her patience built up her house. *Māyūram Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai* broke with the tradition of writing Tamil texts only in metrical poems and popularised the art of creating easily understandable Tamil prose. Likewise, in 1894, Henry Albert Kṛṣṇa Piḷḷai (1827–1900) composed the *Iraṭcaṇya Yāttirikam* (‘Salvation-Journey’), which rendered John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Before and after his conversion to Christianity, Kṛṣṇa Piḷḷai interacted with Christians in *Pāḷaiyamkōṭṭai* and *Ceṉṉai*.[347] As discussed below, *Cuppiramaṇiya Pāratiyār* (1881–1927) and *Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār* (1883–1953) interacted with Christians.

3.6.2 Social Changes in Tamil India and their impacts

The fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis discuss important pan-Indian political changes. Without repeating the details, this brief section focuses on the major political changes in Tamil India and examines their impacts on gender issues. The political history of the 16th century Tamil India was associated with the *Vijayanagara Empire* (1336–1646) and its *Nāyakkar*s (‘lords’, i.e., vassal rulers) with their headquarters in the cities of *Madurai*, *Tañcāvūr* and *Ceñci*[348]: These emperors and the *Nāyakkar*s defined their socio-religious identity against the Muslims, who they fiercely resisted. *Tirumalai Nāyakkar* of *Madurai* (1623–1659) enriched the city with different temples and his royal palace. Two of his successors were women: Queen *Maṅkammāḷ* (1689–1707), a Telugu woman, opposed the the representatives of the Mughal Rulers. Likewise, another Telugu woman, Queen *Mīṉāṭci* (‘Fish-Eyed Woman’, 1731–1736) was the last *Nāyakkar* of Madurai; she lost her rule to Chanda Sahib. The famous

[347] Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, p. 174.

[348] Muniyandi, *Social Condition in Tamilnadu with Special Reference to Women (16th to 18th Century A.D.)*, pp. 13–26.

Mīṉāṭci-Cuntarēṣvarar Temple in *Madurai* retains some aspects of matriarchy because *Śiva* as *Cuntarēṣvarar* went to reside with his consort *Mīṉāṭci* ('Fish-Eyed Goddess'). The *Nāyakkar*s of Madurai resided in their capital city and ruled their vast territory through 72 *Pāḷaiyakkārar*, who collected revenues, maintained military, and took care of the people in their region.

The *Nāyakkar*s of *Tañcāvūr* (1532–1637) patronised many temples, temple ponds, and pilgrimage sites. In 1620, *Irakunāta Nāyakkar* (1614–1633) leased the fishing town of *Taraṅkampāṭi* (Tranquebar) to the *Danish East India Company* and permitted them to practice their own religion of Lutheranism. His successors supported Sanskrit religions and became intolerant of Christians. The *Nāyakkar*s of *Ceñci* (1526–1617) clashed with the armies of the *Vijayanagara Empire* and weakened themselves.

This was the exact time, when in 1639 the English East India Company acquired a piece of land on the seashore in the place, which would evolve into Fort St. George, where the headquarters of the Government of Tamil Nadu are currently housed. Their ascendency coincided with the political and military decline of the *Vijayanagara Empire*, the *Nāyakkar*s and the Mughal representatives with their headquarters in Golconda (near modern Hyderabad). The murder of *Tippu Sultan* in *Srīraṅkapaṭṭiṇam* near Mysore (May 1799) and the hanging of *Vīrapāṇṭiya Kaṭṭapommaṉ* in *Kayattār* (in October 1799 in modern *Tūttukkuṭi* District) established the English as the administrators of south Indian regions and collectors of taxes. They easily subdued the *Vellore Mutiny* (1808) and proved their colonial skills.

As a result, the Tamil people interacted with the Telugu (e.g., administrators, large-scale merchants, intellectuals, musicians, and workers), the Muslims (e.g., merchants and administrators, who had lost their place to the English), the Roman Catholic Christians, the Lutherans, the Anglicans (mostly in Ceṉṉai and other garrison centres such as *Kaṭalūr*, *Tañcāvūr*, *Madurai*, *Pāḷaiyamkōṭṭai*, *Vantavāci* and other places), the Methodists (mostly in Ceṉṉai), and the Reformed Christians (in Madurai and North Arcot areas). Those Tamil people, who did not directly interact with these outsiders and had some standing in their societies intensified their religious and cultural identities. The Brahmins, *Kallar*, *Piramalaik Kallar*, *Maṟavar*, *Kavuṇṭar*, *Mutaliyār*, *Ceṭṭiyār* and other *jāti* groups tried to protect their women folk from outside influences; therefore, their women remained within the confines of

their homes; the *jāti* sensitivities of these people increased; their marriage ceremonies gained distinct aspects. They began measuring and demonstrating the purity of their *jāti* identities by the behaviour of their women with reference to puberty celebrations, marriage, giving birth, and funeral ceremonies.[349] Child marriages abounded. Hence, there were also many widows[350] and the life of the women was not equal to that of the men.

3.7 Reformers and gender equality in Tamil India

The earliest gender reform in Tamil India could be traced to the failed attempt of the *Veda Samaj* in 1860; their followers opposed child marriages. Nine years later, Mary Carpenter, with the help of two male followers of the Veda Samaj, opened a public school for upper jāti girls. In 1873, Shesha Iyengar of *Nākarkōvil* conducted the first remarriage of her daughter, who was a child widow. Most Tamil girls were uneducated and malnourished. If they had a chance to go to school, girls' education bound them to their homes[351]. Almost all of them were married before attaining puberty, so that their parents did not have to pay considerable dowry. As a result, child widows abounded and they suffered inhuman treatments. Several reformers, associated with the *Madras Hindu Widow Remarriage Association* (1874), the *Hindu Women's Remarriage Association* (1882), the *Madras Hindu Social Reform Association* (1890) and their publication entitled *Indian Social Reformer* (1892), the Rama Krishna Mission (1897), the

[349] Muniyandi, *Social Condition in Tamilnadu with Special Reference to Women (16th to 18th Century A.D.)*, pp. 27–119: this entire chapter contains information on rituals pertaining to birth, puberty, marriage alliances, marriage proper, death, funeral ceremonies and inheritance of various *jātis* in Tamil India.

[350] Muniyandi, *Social Condition in Tamilnadu with Special Reference to Women (16th to 18th Century A.D.)*, p. 133: "The **kottah** Vellalar widows of Srivaikundam in Tinnelvelly were shut mercilessly within a huge mud house and men were not permitted to enter the place. They were given little rice, herbs or roots. They were not given fresh cloths and not supplied water supplied for bath. She devoted herself to severe austerity, which would enable her to meet the partner at heaven without delay. Since all the basic comforts were denied they never lived for more than six months."

[351] S. Anandhi, *Middle Class Women in Colonial Tamilnadu, 1920–1947: Gender Relation and the Problem Consciousness*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University/ New Delhi, 1992, p. 17; available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/14993 (accessed on 9 April 2018): There "were only three female literates per 100 male literates in Tamilnadu in 1890. At schools, boys and girls were provided different kinds of education according to the pre-existing gender relations in the Tamil society. Girls, for instance, were taught 'devotional music, basic principles of Hinduism, ideals of Hindu womanhood and duties of the Hindu wife as set forth in 'Bharya Dharma', principal episodes of Ramayana and Mahabharata, lives of Tamil saints and Indian history'".

example of Annie Besant along with her *Theosophical Society* and *Madras Hindu Association* (1904) worked for the emancipation of Tamil women[352].

At that time, Indian women, who could read English, became aware of the Euro-American women's struggle for voting rights and public recognition. The two World Wars disillusioned Indians about British rule in India; many of them wanted political freedom and self-government. Their nationalism aspired for gender quality. The *Indian National Congress* (1885) expressed this nationalism. Subsequent struggle for independence (e.g., Salt Satyagraha Movements) included women participants. In this changed context, the life and work of four reformers can be considered as represenatative examples of women and men, who worked towards gender equality in Tamil India: Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927), Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973).

3.7.1 Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927)

Bharathiyar was the greatest reformer of his time; his nationalism, love for the Tamil language, his desire for enlightened Indians without *varṇa* and *jāti* consciousness and practices, his dream for gender equality had ripple effects. Every Tamil reformer knows his stand and can proudly quote his sayings. Bharathiyar experienced the harshness of British colonial administrators, revenue officers and military personnel, who were bent on using Indians to exploit Indian natural resources and to supress fellow Indians. Brahmin men occupied most of the public offices such as the *Tāciltār* (Urdu: *tahsildar*, 'collector, revenue officer'). Likewise, of the 15,209 B.A. graduates of the University of Madras in 1918, 10,269 were Brahmins; of 1,498 teacher training students, who graduated at this university in the same year, 1,094 were Brahmins. Likewise, of the 54 law graduates, 48 were Brahmins[353]. Thus, the Tamil society had several internal divisions and British colonial oppressions. Bharatiyar expressed his opinion on every major theme of these internal divisions and colonial

[352] Anandhi, *Middle Class Women in Colonial Tamilnadu, 1920–1947*, pp. 27–29.

[353] V. Umarani, *Pāratiyār Eḻuttukaḷil Iṭam Peṟṟuḷḷa Tamiḻc Camutāya Nilaiyum Karuttukkaḷum* (in Tamil: 'Social Conditions and Opinions found in Bharathiyar's Writings'), Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Pondicherry University/ Pondicherry, 1991, p. 26; available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/ 10603/5819 (accessed on 8 April 2018).

oppressions. Without examining these aspects, his teaching on gender equality deserves a fuller analysis.

Umarani's work gives insights into Bharatiyar's parents, native place, loss of his mother at 5, marriage with *Cellammāḷ* at 14, study of Sanskrit and Hindi in *Kāśī* (Benaras), return to Tamil India, experiences of deep disappointments and poverty, and development of patriotism[354]. He dreamt and spoke about freedom of Indians to think for themselves, to administer their resources, to cultivate their languages and cultures and to learn edifying things from Indian and non-Indian sources. To achieve this grand vision for India, active contributions of Indian women were essential. Their subjugation based on ancient religious and cultural sanctions hindered this vision and he opposed it vehemently. The following two examples sufficiently highlight his efforts to attain gender equality.

Bharatiyar's poem *Putumaip Peṇ* ('Modern Woman') pulsates with his new emphasis on gender liberation, equality and justice. Its ten stanzas outline, what modern women could be and what they could do[355]. He adores Mother India, who is as fresh and beautiful as a new lotus plant that sprouts in a muddy pond. She should declare freedom for women because they are the music of the *Nārataṉ*'s *Vīṇai* (the 'lute of *Nāratha*'), *Kaṇṇaṉ*'s flute, and the virginity of the Vedas. The women should not die; instead, they must live well. Crazy are those who seek to enslave humans, who are endowed with reason and knowledge (*aṟivu*). A person who seeks to develop himself/herself as a deity in a righteous way, must burn the anti-feminine elements in fire and heed to the advice of women.

The fourth stanza dismantles the traditional, male-centred religious and social prejudices against women: belief in the equality of women and men will enable the world to flourish. Goddess *Śakti* ('power, energy') embodies all good qualities. Shyness (*nāṇam*) and fear (*accam*) belong to dogs (and not to women, as the above-mentioned teaching of *Tolkāppiyam*

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[354] Umarani, *Pāratiyār Eḻuttukaḷil Iṭam Peṟṟuḷḷa Tamiḻc Camutāya Nilaiyum Karuttukkaḷum*, pp. 30–54.

[355] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ–Makkaḷ Patippu: Kavitaikaḷ, Vacaṉak Kavitaikaḷ, Putiya Pāṭalkaḷ Aṭaṅkiya Muḻumaiyāṉa Tokuti* (in Tamil: *Bharatiyar's Poems–People's Edition: A Complete Volume with Poems, Prose Texts and New Poems*), 1st ed. 1992, 6th rpt., Chennai: Kavitā Papḷpkēṣaṉ, 2016, pp. 397–399.

stipulated). Instead, women possess wisdom, good virtue and courageous patriotism. Femininity utters divine words[356].

The remaining sixth stanzas ask the Tamil people not to suppress the modern women in the name of *kaṟpu* (feminine marital 'loyalty, purity'). They are indeed not a novelty of modern times; even the four Vedas speak about them. However, people of the post-Vedic periods distorted this original teaching. Men must note these things: a modern woman walks upright; she looks straight; she follows her virtuous way without fear of anyone in this world. Her mature thinking will not make her stumble. The feminine virtue spits out the ignorance that has darkened the life of women thus far. Courageous women will destroy their confinement within their homes; they will excel in worldly duties, study different academic disciplines, visit the countries in the four directions of the world, learn new things and bring them to India; their contributions will help India to flourish. Women will learn all sciences and create a comfortable world for all peoples. They will destroy old lies and smash the stumbling blocks on their way. They will perform all humanitarian works; even god will rejoice in them. Therefore, praise the modern women! Their feminine light will transform the world. After all, they embody Goddess *Parāśakti*.

Bharatiyar's poem *Peṇmai* ('Femininity') venerates womanhood[357]: womanhood is noble. Mother (*tāy*) is the true woman (*cati* = Skt. *satī*). We need to support women so that love

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[356] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, pp. 397–398: the fourth stanza of this poem reads as follows:

"ஆணும் பெண்ணும் நிகரெனக் கொள்வதால்
அறிவி லோங்கியிவ் வையந் தழைக்குமாம்
பூணு நல்லறத் தோடிங்குபெண்ணுருப்
போந்து நிற்பது தாய்சிவ சக்தியாம்
நாணும் அச்சமும் நாட்கட்கு வேண்டுமாம்
ஞான நல்லறம் வீர சுதந்திரம்
பேணு நற்குடிப் பெண்ணின் குணங்களாம்
பெண்மைத் தெய்வத்தின் பேச்சுக்கள் கேட்டிரோ."
(āṇum peṇṇum nikareṉak koḷvatāl
aṟivi lōṅkiyiv vaiyan taḻaikkumām
pūṇu nallaṟat tōṭiṅkupeṇṇurup
pōntu niṟpatu tāyciva caktiyām
nāṇum accamum nāṭkaṭku vēṇṭumām
ñāṉa nallaṟam vīra cutantiram
pēṇu naṟkuṭip peṇṇiṉ kuṇaṅkaḷām
peṇmait teyvattiṉ pēccukkaḷ kēṭṭirō.)

between a consenting woman and a consenting man (*kātal*) can succeed, problems can be solved and courageous children are born. The breast milk of a mother strengthens the child; the words of a wife saves the face of her husband; the virtues of women removes hurdles. As long one protects the virtues of women like one's eyelids, no one will be humiliated. One should imbibe feminine *śakti* and strengthen women, who give life, protect life and make it delightful. Praise the mother, whose (golden) hands has fed and nourished us.

Bharatiyar's poem *Vēṇṭuvaṉa* ('the necessary things') explicitly asks for women's liberation[358]: this bhakti song differs considerably from other *bhakti* songs of the *Śaivites* and *Vaiṣṇavites* because it does not merely long for a mystical union of one's soul with a deity. Instead, its asks for firmness of mind, sweetness of speech, good thoughts, realistic goals that can be achieved here and now; one's dream must come true; there should be charity and joy. One should lead a dignified life in this world, by opening his / her eyes and performing his/her duties in a firm manner. Liberation of women is indispensable; the Great God must protect us. Our life should be beneficial to others in such a way that heaven can appear here on this earth. Truth should be established.

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[357] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, pp. 399–400.

[358] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, p. 83: Bharatiyar's 34th *bhakti* song reads as follows:

"மனதி லுறுதி வேண்டும்	(maṉati luṟuti vēṇṭum
வாக்கினி லேயினிமை வேண்டும்	vākkiṉi lēyiṉimai vēṇṭum
நினைவு நல்லது வேண்டும்	niṉaivu nallatu vēṇṭum
நெருங்கின பொருள் கைப்பட வேண்டும்	neruṅkiṉa poruḷ kaippaṭa vēṇṭum
கனவு மெய்ப்பட வேண்டும்	kaṉavu meyppaṭa vēṇṭum
கைவசமாவது விரைவில் வேண்டும்	kaivacamāvatu viraivil vēṇṭum
தனமு மின்பமும் வேண்டும்	taṉamu miṉpamum vēṇṭum
தரணியிலே பெருமை வேண்டும்	taraṇiyilē perumai vēṇṭum
கண் திறந்திட வேண்டும்	kaṇ tiṟantiṭa vēṇṭum
காரியத்தி லுறுதி வேண்டும்	kāriyatti luṟuti vēṇṭum
பெண் விடுதலை வேண்டும்	peṇ viṭutalai vēṇṭum
பெரிய கடவுள் காக்க	periya kaṭavuḷ kākka
மண் பயனுற வேண்டும்	maṇ payaṉuṟa vēṇṭum
வானகமிங்கு தென்பட வேண்டும்	vāṉakamiṅku teṉpaṭa vēṇṭum
உண்மை நின்றிட வேண்டும்	uṇmai niṉṟiṭa vēṇṭum
[.....]."	[.....].

Bharatiyar's poem entitled *Peṇkaḷ Viṭutalaik Kummi* ('Women's Liberation in the *Kummi*-Style song')[359] teaches important lessons that were new to non-Christian, non-Buddhist, non-Jain Tamils. Women are entitled to read books and get formal education. Those men, who wanted to keep their women at home behind lock doors stand ashamed. Likewise, they cannot bargain the (dowry) price of their brides, as if they bought a bullock or a dog in the market. They should not force any woman to marry a man against her will. If men speak about marital fidelity (*kaṟpu*), they should realise that it is common to both wives and husbands[360]. All the religious writings and legal principles must enhance the life of women. Otherwise, reject them and create new ones. Let the women have freedom to choose their own husbands and lead a happy life.

Bharatiyar's poem *Muracu* ('War Drum') advises women and men, girls and boys to lead a worthy, selfless life based on mutual recognition, respect and help. It rejects distinctions and violent actions based on *jāti*. Its 9th and 10th stanzas speak about women's liberation and they are delightful to read and their meanings are thought-provoking[361]: The Lord, who carefully

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[359] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, pp. 395–396.

[360] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, pp. 395–396: the fifth stanza of this poem reads as follows:

"கற்பு நிலையென்று சொல்லவந் தாரிரு
கட்சிக்கு மஃது பொதுவில் வைப்போம்
வற்புறுத் திப்பெண்ணைக் கட்டிக் கொடுக்கும்
வழக்கத்தைத் தள்ளி மிதித்திடுவோம்"
(kaṟpu nilaiyeṉṟu collavan tāriru
kaṭcikku maḥtu potuvil vaippōm
vaṟpuṟut tippeṇṇaik kaṭṭik koṭukkum
vaḻakkattait taḷḷi mitittiṭuvōm)

[361] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, p. 467:

"பெண்ணுக்கு ஞானத்தை வைத்தான் – புவி
பேணி வளர்த்திடும் ஈசன்;
மண்ணுக்குள்ளே சில மூடர் – நல்ல
மாத ரறிவைக் கெடுத்தார்.

கண்கள் இரண்டினி லொன்றைக் – குத்திக்
காட்சி கெடுத்திட லாமோ?
பெண்கள் அறிவை வளர்த்தால் – வையம்
பேதமை யற்றிடும் காணீர்."
(eṇṇukku ñāṉattai vaittāṉ – puvi
pēṇi vaḷarttiṭum īcaṉ;
maṇṇukkuḷḷē cila mūṭar – nalla
māta raṟivaik keṭuttār.

tends to and develops the world, has entrusted his wisdom to the women. By contrast, few foolish men in this world have rescinded women's discernment. Is it acceptable to wound and spoil one of the two eyes? If we can educate women, the world will get rid of ignorance.

Thus, Bharatiyar's support for the liberation of women from the socio-cultural and religious bondages were revolutionary. They are concise, clear, rational, humanistic and well-informed. They arouse the emotions of the hearers and readers and motivate them for action. He composed more songs about women's dignity and liberation[362]; they have inspired successive generations of scholars and activists who worked (and still work) for the liberation of women in India.

3.7.2 Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953)

Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, a great reformer and educationist of his time, wrote his famous work entitled *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai* ('Woman's Nobility or Life Support', 1927)[363]. After describing the uncompressing greatness of women, the third chapter of this book deals with *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai* ('Woman's Nobility'). It begins and ends with Bharatiyar's call for women's liberation. At the beginning it quotes this saying: 'Let us burn the stupidity that degrades women'[364]. This line comes in Bharatiyar's poem entitled *Viṭutalai* ('Freedom')[365]; it emphasises freedom from oppressions based on *jāti* distinctions, the

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kaṇkaḷ iraṇṭiṉi loṉṟaik – kuttik
kāṭci keṭuttiṭa lāmō?
peṇkaḷ aṟivai vaḷarttāl – vaiyam
pētamai yaṟṟiṭum kāṇīr.)

[362] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, pp. 394–395: the song entitled *Maṉait Talaivikku Vāḻttu* ('Praise to the Mistress of the Home') recognises the role of a wife. As far as the author of this knows, this is the first song that she came across that appreciates the work of a woman, who as a wife and a mother takes care of her home and everyone who lives there or comes there. Two songs are entitled *Peṇ Viṭutalai* (Women's Liberation'): the song on page 395 contains three stanzas and the other on page 458 has a stanza. The poem entitled *Tāy Māṇpu* ('Nobility of the Mother') acknowledges the self-sacrificial services of a mother.

[363] V. Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai* (in Tamil: '*Woman's Nobility or Life Support*'), Ceṉṉai: Cātu Accukkūṭam, 1927.

[364] Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai*, p. 35: "மாதர் தம்மை இழிவு செய்யும் மடமையை கொளுத்துவோம்" (*mātar tammai iḻivu ceyyum maṭamaiyaik koḷuttuvōm*).

[365] *Pāratiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, p. 185: the third stanza of this song reads as follows:
"மாதர் தம்மை இழிவு செய்யு

differences between the rich and the poor, and the unequal gender relationships. In future, all Indians should lead a life without inequalities in communities, economic conditions and gender relationships. All people should be equals.

Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār picks up the first line of the poem and carefully explains, how the early Tamil people honoured the feminine principle not only as a merciful goddess, but also as a symbol of learning (*kalvi*, 'education' = *kalaimakaḷ*, 'Woman of Art') and wisdom (*Ñāṉam* = *tirumakaḷ*, 'Holy Woman'). They also considered India as a Mother India[366]. If one would seriously consider the noble purpose of a woman, they would not abuse the woman to satisfy their sexual lust or only to cook meals. Instead, she possesses the power to either construct or destroy the world. If a mother raised her children in evil ways, the world will have merciless people, who will annihilate humankind. By contrast, a mother chooses to believe that her children would become an educated scholar, a hero and a good person[367]. To prove the principle that ancient Tamil people understood the significance of interdependence between women and men, Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār quotes few poems from *Caṅkam*- and *Bhakti*-Literature and encourages his women and men readers to adopt a lifestyle of mutual recognition, respect and growth. Finally, he concludes his chapter on women's rights with the above-mentioned two stanzas from Bharatiyar's poem *Muracu*.

மடமை யைக்கொ ளுத்துவோம்;
வைய வாழ்வு தன்னி லெந்த
வகையி லும்ந மக்குள்ளே
தாத ரென்ற நிலைமை மாறி
ஆண்க ளோடு பெண்களும்
ஸரிநி கர்ஸ மான மாக
வாழ்வ மிந்த நாட்டிலே."
(mātar tam'mai iḻivu ceyyu
maṭamai yaikko ḷuttuvōm;
vaiya vāḻvu taṉṉi lenta
vakaiyi lumna makkuḷḷē
tāta reṉṟa nilaimai māṟi
āṇka ḷōṭu peṇkaḷum
sarini karsa māṉa māka
vāḻva minta nāṭṭilē).

[366] Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai*, p. 29.

[367] Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai*, p. 20.

The fourth chapter (pp. 81–146) explains *Peṇ Vaḷarippu* ('Raising Women'): from the beginning the parents must instil good thoughts and behaviour patterns. They should help the girl children to take of their mind and body well. Age-based information and pedagogical methods will enable the girls to grow well and achieve much in life. Its fifth chapter (pp. 147–160) is entitled *Iṟaivaḻi* ('Spiritual Way'). It underlines the fact that male constitutes only 50% of life and the woman complements it with another 50% of life. God has created human beings in this manner and the men should not reject it. The remaining chapters give practical guidance to managing household activities, marriage, begetting and raising children, maintaining good physical health, reforming prostitutes (*patiyilār*, 'those without husbands'), dignified widowhood. The 13th chapter engages with the theme *peṇmai*, *tāymai* and *iṟaimai* ('Femininity, Motherhood and Being Divine', pp. 428–432). Femininity stands for peaceful conditions; peace is another word for god. Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār's concluding remarks are noteworthy: A female person is born as a girl; she lived as a wife; she served as a mother. Now she appears as a deity (*teyvam*). Worldly people do not have to search for a deity in either a book or a place; instead, they can find it in a woman and venerate her[368]. Finally, he ends his book with a full quote of Bharatiyar's above-mentioned poem *Peṇmai* ('Femininity')[369].

3.7.3 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968)

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi was the first Tamil woman medical doctor, who became an unparalleled social reformer[370]. As member of a legislative council in Tamil India, she fought against several social evils such as child marriages, the system of *devadāsī*, widow burning,

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[368] Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai*, p. 432: "பெண், மகளாகத் தோன்றினாள்; மனைவியாக வாழ்ந்தாள்; தாயாகத் தொண்டு செய்தாள். இப்பொழுது தெய்வமாகக் காட்சியளிக்கிறாள். உலகீர்! அக்காட்சி காணுங்கள். தெய்வம் தெய்வமென்று எங்கு ஓடுகிறீர்? நூற்களை ஏன் ஆராய்கிறீர்? இதோ தெய்வம்; பெண் தெய்வம்; காணுங்கள்; கண்டு வழிபடுங்கள்." ("Peṇ, makaḷākat tōṉṟiṉāḷ; maṉaiviyāka vāḻntāḷ; tāyākat toṇṭu ceytāḷ. Ippoḻutu teyvamākak kāṭciyaḷikkiṟāḷ. Ulakīr! Akkāṭci kāṇuṅkaḷ. Teyvam teyvameṉṟu eṅku ōṭukiṟīr? Nūṟkaḷai ēṉ ārāykiṟīr? Itō teyvam; peṇ teyvam; kāṇuṅkaḷ; kaṇṭu vaḻipaṭuṅkaḷ.")

[369] Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār, *Peṇṇiṉ Perumai allatu Vāḻkkait Tuṇai*, pp. 433–434.

[370] G. Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Bharathidasan University/Tiruchirappalli, 2011, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/9629 (accessed on 10 April 2018).

social stigma attached to widows, prostitution, polygamy, divorce rights, voting rights, lack of women education, legal hurdles for women to inherit immovable properties, alcohol consumption, gambling, mismanagement of young offenders in prisons, and the like[371]. Gowri gives a succinct summary of Muthulakshmi Reddi's achievements in a patriarchal society: her father Narayanaswamy Iyer was a Brahmin teacher and the principal of the Maharajah's College in Putukōṭṭai. Her mother Chandrammal was a devadāsī from the *Isai Vellalar* community. Muthulakshmi was born in 1886. Her father educated her and by 1912, she became the first woman medical graduate in the Presidency of Madras. She joined the Lesislative Council of India and rose to the position of its deputy president. She worked hared to abolish child marriage and the practice of *devadāsī* system. She persuaded the educational authorities to waive the fee for poor girls, to give medical aid to needy women. She lobbied for women's freedom, cooperated with women leaders such as Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Begum Hamid Ali. She even travelled to England to press for women's liberation and reserved seats for women in government offices, "municipalities, district and local boards, and the police force"[372].

Gowri explains how Muthulakshmi willingly derived her insights from all possible sources to fight against social evils and how she actively engaged with like-minded European and Indian women[373] and men like Subramaniya Bharathiyar[374]. She spoke appreciatively of Christian missionaries who had worked for the betterment of women in Tamil India[375].

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[371] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, pp. 127–150.

[372] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, pp. 4–5.

[373] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, p. 18: She joined the *Women's Indian Association*. "The Organization, founded [on 8 May] 1917 [in Adayar by Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Anne Besant and Margaret Cousins], consisted of core Irish Suffragists and elite Indian Women of several castes and religions. Some of the most noteworthy included [Josephine Buttler,] Annie Besant, Margret Cousins, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Malathy Patwarthan, Parvathy Ammal Chandra Sekaran, Mangalammal Sadasiva Iyer, Ammu Swaminathan, Hira Bai Tata, Rahamat Unisha Begam and Begam Yakub Hasan of Arcot".

[374] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, p. 22: Muthulaksmi Reddi "met Subramania Bharathi at Dr. Nanchunda Rao's residence in Madras in 1908. Subramania Bharathi at that time was the Editor of a news paper called, *India*. He requested Muthulakshmi Reddi to write essays on women's rights." She admired M.K. Gandhi, Vivekananda and others.

[375] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, p. 72: "She strongly believed that [Christian] missionaries had done more work for Women's Education in this country than

Following their example, in 1930 she founded the *Avvai Home* in Mylapore, which was the first non-Christian institution to protect the liberated "girls of the Devadasi Community"[376]. She was instrumental in the drafting of the *Hindu Code of Law* (1954–1956), which provided legal framework to regulate issues related to marriage, divorce, succession, adoption and guardianship of minors, and the like[377]. Along with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Begum Hamid Ali, Muthulaksmi Reddi sailed to England (1937) and raised the question of women's right to vote in India. On her return, she continued to work for the liberation of women and educating men to accept them as their equals.

3.7.4 Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973)

One of the reformers who opened public space in Tamil India for women was Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973), whom the Tamil people fondly call *Tantai Periyār* ('Noble Father'). He proposed rational discernment as an authority to deal with social problems. He opposed religions, traditional beliefs and customs that could not be substantiated with rational arguments and evidences. His *Cuyamariyātai Iyakkam* ('Self-Respect Movement', 1926) "outlined its basic principles as: (1) no god, (2) no religion, (3) no Gandhi, (4) no Congress and (5) no Brahmins. Its actual political agenda, however, did not stop with these five goals, but included in large measure an anti-patriarchal stance too."[378]

Anandhi noted that *Tantai Periyār* promoted gender equality by rejecting the Tamil past, especially the story of Kaṇṇaki and even the patriarchal teachings of Tirukkuṟaḷ that enslaved women. He critiqued the Tamil words and saying that degraded women's bodies and did not recognise their intellectual capabilities. He asked his followers not to worship male gods with multiple consorts. He endorsed a new type of marriage, known as *Vāḻkkai Oppantam* ('Life Agreement'), between a free woman and a free man as consenting and cooperating equals. This marriage did not have to include the tying of *tāli* ('marriage badge') because it

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Government itself. The women population of this country owed a deep debt of gratitude to the several missionary agencies for their valuable contribution to the educational upliftment of Indian women."

[376] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, p. 66.

[377] Gowri, *Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi: Social Reform and Women's Upliftment—A Study*, p. 184.

[378] Anandhi, *Middle Class Women in Colonial Tamilnadu, 1920–1947*, p. 165.

symbolised slavery of the wife to her husband. He insisted his followers to register their marriages. He wanted the women to decide whether and when they wanted to have children; he supported their efforts to own properties and to have a share in the properties of their husbands.

Anandhi further explains, how *Tantai Periyār* required the male members of the *Justice Party* to honour women with education and freedom of decision making. He himself organised large-scale events for inter-*jāti* marriages and widow remarriages[379]. Having examined all efforts of the Self-Respect Movement and Justice Party to promote gender equality among the Tamil women, Anandi comes to this sober conclusion: gender issues served a special type of nationalism, in which the old patriarchal prejudices, habits and traditions were merely reorganized; and gender imbalance remained[380].

In conclusion, the history of gender imbalance in Tamil India is long and complex. Its seeds were sown in the pre-*Caṅkam* Period. In subsequent centuries, they impacted religious, cultural, social, political and economic traditions of patriarchy and son-preference. The Tamil *bhakti* religions included few women leaders and enabled other women to express their religious emotions and attachments in ways that made sense to them. The authors of the Tamil didactic literature repeated patriarchy and womens subjugation. The reform movements of 19th and 20th centuries derived their inspiration from various sources: they evaluated their socio-religious traditions in the light of the British and secular legal systems, English education and other reforms mentioned in the following chapter(s).

[379] Anandhi, *Middle Class Women in Colonial Tamilnadu, 1920–1947*, pp. 167–186.

[380] Anandhi, *Middle Class Women in Colonial Tamilnadu, 1920–1947*, p. 222: “In short, the specific nature ·of Indian nationalism acted as an important constraint to any progressive resolution of the women's question in colonial Tamilnadu. In constituting the Indian nation as an 'imagined community' in opposition to the colonial project, women's freedom was subordinated to the ideal of the nation and patriarchy was reconstituted and reaffirmed. It was the distancing from the ideal of' freedom' propagated by the nationalists which provided room for the Self Respect Movement (and the autonomous women's organisations to a lesser extent) to address the women's question in radical terms.”

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND GENDER IN BRITISH INDIA

This chapter explores gender injustice in British India. It examines the contributions of few British civil servants to combat the practice of female infanticide, *satī* and female illiteracy. It discusses the impacts of Anglican clergy men, *Wood's Educational Despatch* (1854), the *Sepoy Mutiny* (1857), *Queen Victoria's Proclamation* (1858) and British laws (e.g., the *Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act*, 1856 and the like) on Indian women and gender relationships. This chapter concludes with a brief analysis of reform works undertaken by leaders such as Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), her husband Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–1890), Krupabai Sattianadhan (1862–1894) and Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922).

4.1 British fight against female infanticide in India until 1813

In 1765, the officers of the English East India Company obtained the *Diwani Right* from the Mughal rulers of the region now known as Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.[381] This right included the privilege of collecting taxes on behalf of Mughal rulers. Consequently, they began taking care of taxes, political administration, civil justice, religious matters, and the like. While they applied their British laws in their Presidency towns such as Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, they appealed to Mughal rules in other areas. They had no interest to interfere into the day-to-day lives of either Muslims or Hindus, their marriage customs, property rights, and the like. However, soon they noticed the low status of women, infanticide in general and female infanticide caught their attention. Their attempts to improve the status of women in the society and to abolish infanticide led them to introduce laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, property rights, and the like. They established courts in the cities and smaller towns to execute

[381] The "5th Report on British Statutes Applicable in India, 1957", *Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/1-50/Report5.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018), Point 4 on p. 4: "The East India Company had no propriety interest and had no jurisdiction over the administration of the rest of the territory of British India, until the grant of the *diwani* to the Company in 1765 by the then Mughal Emperor. By this grant, the Company was vested with the fiscal administration of the country and it was soon assumed that the *diwani* included the power of administration of civil justice. Courts were, accordingly, established in these areas but these courts (outside the Presidency towns) derived their authority not from the British Crown but from the Mughal Government in whose name the Company was managing the *diwani*. As a result, it was decided by the East India Company authorities not to disturb the personal laws of the Hindus and Mohammedans [sic! = Muslims] in matters such as marriage, succession and religion."

these laws and to punish the law breakers. Since 1789, they devoted their attention to improve the status of women in India and to abolish female infanticide.[382]

4.1.1 Charles Grant's views on India in need of moral transformation

Indian writers on female infanticide and *satī* have not considered the origin of social reforms in Indian soil under the rule of the British. Their roots lay in the spiritual revival of Christians in Britain and their abolition of African slavery in British colonies (1807–1834)[383]. Two Christians, who were intimately associated with the introduction of British reforms in India, were Charles Grant (1746–1823) and Claudius Buchannan (1766–1816). Grant (1746–1823) lived in Kolkata in the 1760s. He understood how the Bengali people had organised their socio-cultural and commercial networks.[384] On returning to London in 1790, he developed a passion for evangelical Anglicanism. He rose to occupy the powerful chairmanship of the Board of Directors of the *English East India Company* and became an influential Member of Parliament.

On 16 August 1797, Grant published his *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain*[385] and wanted to initiate social reforms. Until that time, the British followed the principle of administrative neutrality; they did not question those socio-religious practices such as infanticide, child marriage, and *satī*. Grant lamented the cruel treatment meted out by the boy-husbands against their child-brides in their *zenana*s ('enclosed houses, women's quarters'); the wives attended to the needs of their husbands as slaves and

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[382] L.S. Vishwanath, "Female Infanticide: The Colonial Experience", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 22, 2004, pp. 2313–2318:2313.

[383] Charles Grant, William Wilberforce (1769–1833), Henry Thornton (1760–1815) and others fought against the African slave trade. They convinced the British Government to pass the famous Slave Trade Act of 1807. While slave trade ended, slavery continued. In 1833, the British Government again published the *Slavery Abolition Act* to stop slavery in all British overseas colonies. These changes had directly affected the British affairs in India.

[384] Henry Morris, *The Life of Charles Grant: Sometime Member of Parliament For Inverness-shire and Director of the East India Company*, London: Joh Murray, 1904.

[385] Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals and on the Means of Improving it, written chiefly in the Year 1792*, London: n.p., 1797.

avoided any interactions with outsiders.[386] They did not receive any formal education. Their consent to marriage was considered unnecessary. If they were barren or gave birth only to daughters, they were mistreated; when their husbands died, they were burned alive on the funeral pyre of their husbands[387]. Grant's evangelical fervour shaped British activities in India[388].

One of Grant's earliest appointees to India was Claudius Buchannan (1766–1816), the famous evangelical chaplain. Immediately after his arrival in 1799, he supported William Carey and his colleagues in Serampore. His writings[389] convinced his readers to request the British Government for the establishment of the Church of England in India.[390] The socio-cultural and religious changes that happened in Britain of that time and the impact of the writings by Grant and Buchannan convinced the British Parliament to revise the Charter of the East India Company in 1813 and prepared the way for the way for the establishment of the first Anglican bishopric in Kolkata in 1814.

Grant, Buchannan, and their friends in India were probably aware of the great social problems of their time in Britain. These included infanticide, prostitution, keeping concubines,

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[386] Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain*, p. 51.

[387] Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain*, pp. 104–105: Grant quoted a law, which he called Code 253: 'It is proper for a woman, after her husband's death, to burn herself in the fire with his corpse. Every woman who thus burns herself, shall remain in paradise with her husband, three crores and fifty lacks (three million and half) of years.

[388] Morris, *The Life of Charles Grant*, p. v. C.H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1834, (1940)*, rpt., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968, 276: Philips had a different view of Grant and stated the following about his character, accomplishments, ill health, and legacy: "In 1813, when yet a young member of Parliament, he [i.e., Charles Grant] rapidly made a reputation by valiantly fighting shoulder to shoulder with his father in defence of the Company's Charter. His later career belied his early promise. He served without distinction as Chief Secretary for Ireland and as President of the Board of Trade, and he came to the India Board with a reputation for indolence; but, in the last respect, he was misjudged. Despite his air of habitual somnolence, he worked hard; even so, hindered by an exaggerated fastidiousness in literary expression and also by a lack of decision and despatch inherited from his father, he accomplished little. He was honest but obstinate, and he displayed little insight. His constitution had been undermined in India, and suffering as he did, from increasing ill-health, he lost his self-reliance."

[389] Buchanan's writings include these books: *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India, both as Means of Perpetuating the Christian Religion among our own Countrymen; and as a Fountain for the Ultimate Civilization of the Natives* (1805) and his *Christian Researches in Asia* (1811).

[390] Daniel O'Connor: *The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, pp. 113–117.

Baby Farming[391] and the like[392]. Yet, Grant, Buchannan and their friends did not permit these British social problems to paralyse their reformatory works against the mistreatment of women in India, female infanticide, *satī*, and the like[393]. In this context, the examples of Jonathan Duncan (1756–1811) and Alexander Walker (1764–1831) help stand out. Their association with Charles Grant and other Christian public servants both in Britain and India seems to have supported their efforts.

4.1.2 Impact of Jonathan Duncan on curbing female infanticide

When Grant and his wife lived in Kolkata, they extended hospitality to fellow British civil servants[394]. Jonathan Duncan (1756–1811), as will be discussed below, was one of the recipients of Grant's hospitality and acquaintance. On 8 January 1802, he wrote a letter to Duncan, who was at that time the Governor of Mumbai, and informed him about the merits of trading privileges extended under his influence on individual merchants. Within the next two years, Grant became the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors for the East India Company in London. In 1805, he assumed the leadership of the board.[395]

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[391] Caroline Hinkle McCamant, "Baby Farming", *Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, ed. Paula S. Fass, Vol. 1, London: McMillan Library Reference, 2003, p. 77: Baby Farming is a name given to private middle-aged nurses or midwifes or keepers, who against a fee cared for infants of unwed mothers and others. Often, these infants received such mistreatment that they died before their first birthday.

[392] Margaret Abraham, "Infanticide", *Routledge International Encyclopaedia of Women—Global Women's Issues and Knowledge, Vol. 3: Identity Politics to Publishing*, eds. Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 1137–1137:1135: Margret Abraham summarised her findings on the prevalence of infanticide in England and France as follows: Infanticide persisted in western Europe during the Middle Ages; although in some cases it was defined as a frame, prosecutions were rare and penalties were mild. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it reached epidemic proportions in England and France: many dead infants were found in the sewers of Paris, and in England infants' corpses were found in streets, ditches, and parks and floating in the river Thames. Historians usually attribute this to oppressive social conditions—female domestic servants and factory workers were often sexually exploited by their male employers and saw no option but to dispose of their illegitimate infants. England eventually addressed infanticide in 1922, when it passed the Infanticide Act; this was replaced by a new act in 1939.

[393] Daniel J.R. Grey, "Gender, Religion, and Infanticide in Colonial India, 1870—1906", *Victorian Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2011, pp. 107–120:107.

[394] Morris, *The Life of Charles Grant*, p. 155.

[395] Morris, *The Life of Charles Grant*, p. 249.

Jonathan Duncan was a Resident of Benares (1788–1795), who later became the Governor of Mumbai (1795–1811).[396] Alexander Walker succeeded him as Governor of Mumbai. The following examples from Duncan's writings, which appeared in the official British publication, demonstrate his commitment to inform his senior authorities in Kolkata about the practice of female infanticide in Benares. His letter dated 2 October 1789, addressed to the Governor General in Council, informed how the Rajputs in Benares starved their female infants to death because they did not want these infants to grow up and marry men of non-Rajput castes. Even economically wealthy Rajput families committed female infanticide[397].

Duncan called the practice of female infanticide as a "horrid custom"[398]. After consultation with the local religious scholars and practitioners, Duncan came up with a novel idea to ban female infanticide in Benares. On 23 December 1789, he informed Sir John Shore, the Governor General in Council in Kolkata, about it. He got the conviction that people belonging to four caste groups practiced female infanticide. He persuaded three Rajput men to agree to the following theological conclusions and asked them to convince their fellow caste men to give up female infanticide: killing female infants amounted to murder, which was a crime. Each murderer would suffer eternal punishments in the hell called *Kal Sooter*. If ever they would be reborn, they would become either cats or lepers. Hence, the Rajputs should abstain from harming and killing either female babies or women or widows. Duncan asked the Rajput men to propagate this agreement in English, Persian and Sanskrit[399].

This agreement created an outcry among the Brahmins of Benares. They resisted it in different ways. A report from 1795 describes this resistance: Brahmins did not want anyone to interfere into their religious affairs. Some of them lacerated their bodies with knives or razors. Some of them threatened to swallow poison. Some of them built a "a circular enclosure called

[396] V. K. Narain, *Jonathan Duncan and Varanasi*, Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1959.

[397] *East India Affairs: Copy of all Correspondence which has taken place on the Subject of Hindoo Infanticide, and of all Proceedings of the Indian Government, with regard to that Practice; 1789–1820*, London: House of Commons, 1824, p. 6.

[398] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 6.

[399] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 7.

a koorh"[400], put a pile of wood, and sat on it fasting. Sometimes, they also had an aged woman sitting near them. If any British officer would go near them, they wanted to set themselves on fire. Some Brahmins, who could not deal with the demands of the British officers, occasionally brought out their women or children, made them to sit down, and threatened to behead them, if anyone approached them on behalf of the British government. Despite these and other forms of resistance, Duncan and his British officers established "zillah courts"[401] in Benares and began punishing those Rajput men and women, who starved their female infants to death. By February 1800, they tried to prevent female infanticide not only in Benares, but also in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

The year 1800 was important for another reason: three British Baptist missionaries, namely William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, who are known as *The Serampore Trio*, established their missionary work in the Danish Colony of Serampore near Kolkata. They welcomed the British efforts to abolish female infanticide and *satī* and worked with them. In 1802, Carey produced a detailed report on female infanticide in the Island of Sagar. In the same year, the British magistrates and judges in Kolkata began treating the infanticide not merely a socio-religious custom, but as a deliberate murder[402]. Accordingly, they punished the perpetrators severely. An important reason for infanticide was the vow of newly married parents: if they would have more than four children, they would offer the fifth child to their deity[403]. This new interpretation of infanticide as a deliberate murder laid a firm

[400] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 9.

[401] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 10.

[402] *Papers Relating to East India Affairs: Answers to interrogatories of the Governor General; and New System of Revenue, and of Judicial Administration (1801) – Police of the Districts – Missionaries – Religion of the Hindoos Infanticide – First Introduction of Christianity into India*, London: The House of Commons, 1813, p. 429: "If any person or persons shall wilfully, and with the intention of taking away life, throw or cause to be thrown, into the Sea, or into the river Ganges, or into any other river or water, any infant, or person not arrived at the age of maturity, with or without his or her consent, in consequence whereof such person so thrown into water shall be drowned, or shall be destroyed by sharks or by al[l]igators, or shall otherwise perish; the person or person so offending, shall be held guilty of wilful murder, and, on conviction, shall be liable to the punishment of death; and all persons aiding or abetting the commission of such act, shall be deemed accomplices in the murder, and shall be subject to punishment accordingly."

[403] *Papers Relating to East India Affairs*, 1813, p. 427.

foundation for future laws. Subsequent generation of scholars admired Duncan's efforts to abolish female infanticide in India[404].

4.1.3 Impact of Alexander Walker on curbing female infanticide

Like Jonathan Duncan, Alexander Walker (1764–1831) curbed the practice of female infanticide among the Jedaja Rajputs[405] in Baroda, Gujarat. On 15 March 1808, he composed a long report with 298 points[406] and described his attempts to abolish female infanticide: accordingly, the practitioners did not want to displease either their Supreme Being or offend their caste pride[407]. They called female infanticide as either "Dekree Marne ne Chal" (i.e., the "custom of killing daughters") or "Naree Deekree marne ne Chal" (i.e., "the custom of killing young daughters") or "Deekree Babut" (i.e., "the article of girls"). At the birth of unwanted female babies, the midwife informed the eldest man or woman of the house, the father of the child, obtained their opinion and shared with the mother, who in turn applied opium to her nipples and suckled the new born daughter. Soon the infant would die. The final decision

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[404] Nancy Gardner Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company: Public Justice verses Public Instruction*, New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd., 2010, pp. 114–115: "Jonathan Duncan was virtually elevated to sainthood for his initiatives in the East India Company's infanticide policy. At the base of the marble monument to his memory in the Bombay Cathedral two cherubs display a scroll with the inscription 'Infanticide Abolished in Banaras and Kattywar': a contemporary scholar of Indian mythology, Edward Moor, dedicated his work to Jonathan Duncan, proclaiming that 'to You and YOU solely, is humanity indebted for her triumph over unnatural enthusiasm, in the entire and voluntary abolition of that most extraordinary practice, INFANTICIDE".

[405] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 115.

[406] *East India Affairs*, 1824, pp. 31–52. Lalita Panigrahi, *British Social Policy and Female Infanticide in India*, Delhi: Manoharlal, 1972, p. 5. Panigrahi states that Alexander Walker's knowledge about Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1569–1627) and his prohibition of female infanticide. Few Sikh and the Marathi rulers also did not approve female infanticide.

[407] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 32: He narrated a story of a powerful King of the Rajputs, who had charged his Brahmin priest to find for his infant daughter "a prince of desert [i.e., in Rajasthan] and rank equal to her own". The priest travelled everywhere and could not identify a possible groom for the baby princess. At his insistence, the baby princess was killed. This story about the origin of female infanticide among the Jahrejah in Gujarat urges the Hindu parents "to provide suitable husbands for their daughters; and it is reproachable that they should pass the age of puberty without having been affianced, and under the necessity of living in a state of celibacy". Stephen Neill, *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 162–163: Neill reiterated these two reasons for the persistence for female infanticide in India. Firstly, parents could not pay the marriage cost of their daughter. It was shame for them to keep a marriageable girl unmarried at home. Neill states that by November 1851, concerned officers of the *English East India Company* released a pronouncement that tried to persuade the fathers not to spend extravert money on the marriage of their daughters. They also provided some assistance.

rested with the father. If he chose to accept his daughter, she could live. By contrast, if "a mother entertains the wish of preserving a daughter, and her husband is averse to it, the infant must be put to death" [408]. Walker reported further how the Rajputs hated the birth of a girl baby and did not welcome it. If they could accept this baby, they made sure that the baby died on the day of its birth.[409]

Walker also mentioned the prevalence of *satī* among various caste groups in the North-West Province. The resident repeatedly reminded them of their own saying that makes killing a woman unlawful, unacceptable and heinous:

> The doctrines of the Hindu religion have been singularly careful to protect the female sex and infants from violence, and it is unlawful to put a woman to death for any offence whatever. In support of this opinion, they quote the following sloke [sic! = Skt. *śloka*, 'slogan'] or verse:
>
> Shut gao wurdhe vepra
> Shut vepra wudhe istreea
> Shut istreea wurdhe bala
> Shut bala wurdhe muresha.
> 'To kill one Brahmin is equal to one hundred cows:
> To kill one woman is equal to one hundred Brahmins:
> To kill one child is equal to one hundred women:
> To kill one hundred children is an offence too heinous for comparison.

Despite these efforts, female infanticide continued, particularly among the Rajputs in Western India.

4.2 Opening India for Anglican work since 1813

As mentioned earlier, Charles Grant proposed the establishment of an Anglican bishopric in Kolkata. He recommended that the East India Company, as a representative of the Christian Government in Britain, should neither collect pilgrim tax and nor administer "endowments bestowed on temples, mosques and tomes."[410] The British policy makers in London received

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[408] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 35.

[409] *East India Affairs*, 1824, p. 36.

[410] Arthur Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India: An Examination of the Christian Forces at Work in the Administration of India and of the Mutual Relations of the British Government and Christian Mission, 1600–1920*, London: Faber & Gwyer Limited, 1929, p. 150: In 1796, Collector Place of Fort St. George reported that the East India Company took over the administration and maintenance of the famous Vaiṣṇavite Temple in the city of Kāñcipuram. He himself donated jewels to the divine images there, which were proudly displayed. By 1833, the Company administered 7,600 main Hindu temples in Madras

Grant's recommendations with great hesitation; they agreed to the bishopric, but postponed the execution of "Grant's other injunctions"[411] In any case, Grant succeeded in officially introducing Anglican Christianity in India succeeded. Earlier, the East India Company refused to recognise any Christian missionary activity in India and feared of adverse consequence for its trade and existence. Its survival depended on the good will and cooperation of non-Christian Indian merchants, spies, mercenary soldiers, tax collectors, police people and others. For this reason, the company kept the missionaries away. Following the changed rules, the first Anglican Bishop Thomas Fanshaw Middleton landed in Kolkata on 20 November 1814. The Board of Directors of the East India Company in London and the Council in Kolkata received reports by non-Christians, who accused the works of Christian missionaries such as William Carey.[412] Gradually, the British policymakers changed their socio-political outlook towards Christian missionary work in India. In 1833, they permitted Christian missionaries from North America, West Europe and other countries to work in British territories in India. Non-Christians did not accept these decisions and suspected the British for spreading Christianity. Their suspicion culminated in the *First War of Indian Independence* (1857)[413].

4.3 Christian contributions to prohibit *satī* in 1829

British district magistrates in Bengal, Madras and Bombay systematically collected detailed information on the performance of *satī*[414], the age, caste, dates of the victims. For example, in 1819, nearly 1,000 widows were burned alive; the youngest victim was one year old. Many victims were five years. Several of them were middle-aged women from 25 to 60

Presidency; their stated reason for protecting these temples was spiritual: the prayers of the people made the Company a happy institution. Missionaries like Alexander Duff, Anglican bishops like Daniel Wilson and Daniel Corrie, and British civil servants like Charles Grant and Governor Bentinck opposed this practice and persuaded the East India Company to give it up.

[411] Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1834*, p. 277.

[412] Neill, *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, pp. 151–155.

[413] Neill, *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, p. 470: Neill referred to V. D. Savarkar's writing entitled *The First War of Independence* (2nd reprint of 1930).

[414] *East India Affairs: viz. Copies of All Communications Received from India since the 10th of July 1821, Relative to the Burning of Females on the Funeral Piles of their Husbands*, London: House of Commons, 1823.

years old. Most of them were either Brahmins or Rajputs[415]. Increased vigilance led to the reduction of *satī* victims. For example, the number of women burned in Bengal 1820 was less of 242 widows burned in 1818[416]. A closer analysis of the *satī*-reports rom 1823 to 1827 in Bengal, Madras and Bombay Presidencies[417] reveals the following three truths.

Firstly, the Board of Directors of the East India Company in London perceived *satī* as a religious institution that should not continue[418] because it contradicted the values of "humanity and justice" and offended the "the English laws" that were meant to protect all Indians.

Secondly, some British officers could persuade the widows to give up their resolve for *satī*[419]. Happily, this was not the first known instance of a Marathi Brahmin widow being saved from *satī*. The famous Clarinda of Pālayamkōṭṭai was a widow in Tanjore. In the 1770s, John Lyttleton, an English officer prevented her from committing *satī*, took her to his residence in Tanjore, taught her the basics of Christianity, and named her Clarinda. After his

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[415] *East India Affairs*, 1823, p. 30.

[416] *East India Affairs*, 1823, p. 64.

[417] *Hindoo Widows: Copies of Extracts of all Communications and Correspondence, relative to the burning of Widows on the Funeral Piles of their Husbands; with such Proceedings as may have been had thereon, in the Court of Directors since the 5th July 1825; with a detailed Statement of the Number of Suttees since the Year 1823; with Copies of all Reports, Statements, or other Documents, upon the Subject; which may have been received in India, or by the East India Company, which have not already been presented*, London: The House of Commons, 1827.

[418] *Hindoo Widows*, 1827, p. 2: The third Article of resolution of 1821 reads as follows: "We feel it therefore an imperious duty to enter into a deeper examination than we have ever yet done, of the important question, whether there in reality exists a necessity for sanctioning the practice under any regulations or limitations whatsoever – we mean a necessity so clear, and ascertained so free from doubt, as to justify the permitting, and leave no dissatīsfaction for still continuing to permit a practice by which many thousands of His Majesty's most innocent subjects are allowed to perish in flames, in a part of India where the British power is absolute, and where every crime and practice less barbarous is cognizable and made liable to punishment by the British laws".

[419] *Hindoo Widows*, 1827, p. 130: On 15 January 1825, A. Sinclair, the Assistant Magistrate in Kumpakōṇam reported to the Magistrate of Tanjore, how he prevented a Marathi Brahmin widow from committing satī. She fasted since her husband became ill and weak. Sinclair rushed to the spot, where the dead man was to be cremated, where the widow wanted to commit self-immolation. She replied, "she would pull out her tongue – she would starve herself to death". After her husband's body was cremated, she survived and lived. This story reads real and authentic. The Tamil still use the expressions, when they are deeply disappointed and wished to die: *nākkaip piṭuṅkik koṇṭu cāvēṉ* ('I will die by pulling my tongue out') and *paṭṭiṉiyāy iruntu cāvēṉ* ('I will die by starving').

death, the Lutheran missionary Christian Friedrich Schwartz baptised her (1778) and sent her as an evangelist to Pālayamkōṭṭai. There she founded a small Christian congregation (1785).[420]

Thirdly, local Indian rulers came forward to prohibit *satī* in their areas. The first example narrates how King Rakunāta Toṇṭaimāṉ of Rāmanātapuram persuaded one his family members not to commit *satī*. Captain Fyfe, the Resident of Tanjore, wrote on 12 June 1825 the following:

> It has been customary in Tondiman's family for the wife to sacrifice herself on the funeral pile of her husband. On the present occasion the first wife declared her intention of burning with the body of her husband; but I am truly happy to say, that she was dissuaded from her resolution by the arguments and entreaties of Ragonath Tondiman.[421]

On 1 July 1825, the Governor in Madras received this report joyfully, affirmed Rakunāta Toṇṭaimāṉ's "humane and enlightened principle by which he has been actuated" and requested him to "treat the widow through life with marked consideration and kindness, so that she may never have cause to repent of having yielded to his influence."[422]

The second example comes from the King Serfojee II of Tanjore. He was a student of the above-mentioned missionary Christian Friedrich Schwartz, whom he respected as his father. Schwartz protected him against his usurpers, proved his right to become a king, and taught him English and other subjects. The British officers were happy that the King Rakunāta Toṇṭaimāṉ of Rāmanātapuram and King Serfojee II of Tanjore opposed *satī*:

> [Serfojee denounced *satī*] as a barbarous and inhuman rite; he declares that he will interdict his own wife in the most solemn manner from sacrificing herself upon his funeral pile, and that he will discourage the practice wherever his influence can have any weight; but though so decidedly against it himself, he is still of opinion that anything like an exertion of authority, or even very

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[420] The current Diocese of Tirunelveli within the Church of South India evolved from this congregation. For details of Clarinda's life and work, see A. Mātavaiyā, *Clarinda*: *A Historical Novel, edited with an Introduction by Lakshmi Holmström* (1st ed. Madras: Cambridge Press 1915), rpt., Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2005; David Packiamuthu, "Schwartz, Clarinda and Sathianathan", *Christian Friedrick Schwartz: His Contributions to South India*, Madras: Lutheran Heritage Archives at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, 1999, pp. 58–73.

[421] *Hindoo Widows*, 1827, p. 131.

[422] *Hindoo Widows*, 1827, p. 131.

> active endeavours for its suppression, whether by European or native influence, would have the very opposite effect.[423]

British government records that the author of this thesis has examined do not speak about the contributions of William Carey (1761–1834) and Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) to the abolition of *satī* in 1829[424]. Carey's abhorrence of *satī* goes back to 1 April 1799, when he witnessed how a widow climbed on the funeral pyre of her husband and got herself burned to death. He noted that he and his colleagues "could not bear to see more, but left them, exclaiming loudly against the murder, full of horror"[425] at what they saw. In 1820, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed the common Indian misconception of women that believed that women were "by nature of inferior understanding, without resolution, unworthy of trust, subject to passion, and void of virtuous knowledge"[426], who after the death of their husbands should not remarry; they should lead an ascetic life. Mohan Roy responded by stating that no one should equate the physical weakness of women to their mental or intellectual or spiritual weakness. Injurious views and practices regarding women should vanish.

Finally, on 4th December 1829, Governor General William Bentinck (1828–1835) published the famous Regulation XVII that prohibited *satī* in Bengal Presidency as an illegal act. Henceforth, the Bengal Code would treat it as a murder and a crime and punish it as such. Bentinck and his team saw *satī* as a "moral weakness of Indian men, who lacked the masculine strength to nurture rather than to degrade their women"[427]. Two days later, Bentinck asked William Carey to translate his decree from English into Bengali. Sunday 6 December 1829 was a Sunday and Carey was getting ready for his Sunday worship service. "Carey

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[423] *Hindoo Widows*, 1827, p. 132.

[424] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, pp. 3–5: Raja Ram Mohan Roy published two pamphlets to oppose *Satī*: 1) *Conference Between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive* (1818) and 2) *On Concremation: A Second Conference Between an Advocate and an Opponent of That Practice* (1820). Roy and his contemporaries in English schools in Kolkata studied the writings of "Francis Bacon, John Locke, David Hume, Edward Gibbon, Voltaire, Tom Paine, Jeremy Bentham, James Steward Mill, and Robert Owen. The new English-language schools included the study of such works in their curricula, apparently with some intention of thereby promoting reform efforts."

[425] Document number 61 in Kuriakose, M.K. (Compiler and Editor): *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, Madras: The Christian Literary Society, 1982, pp. 72–73.

[426] Document number 76 in Kuriakose, 1982, pp. 95–97.

[427] Barabara D Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf: *A Concise History of Modern India*, (2001), 3rd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 82.

jumped with joy, abandoned his plan to preach on that Sunday, to carry out the 'fast unto the Lord,' spoken of in Isaiah 58.6 and Proverbs 24.11. At long last the widows were legally free to live as human beings, and no longer would be children be cruelly orphaned in the name of 'religion'"[428].

Powerful Hindu elites did not take this prohibition lightly. Robert Frykenberg, who examined original manuscripts on *satī* of this period records that "30,000 gentry (*bhadralok*) of Calcutta co-signed a 'Sacred Petition' about this violation of their 'religious freedoms'" and British government's interference "in their eternally hallowed and time-honoured tradition of burning their widows."[429] He states further that these opponents submitted this petition to the Privy Council in Whitehall, London, on 7 July 1832. The British officers in Kolkata at that time did not let them to be hindered by these protests. Andrea Major, who had studied the practice of *satī* in the Bengal Presidency states that by 1830, this prohibition was extended to Madras and Bombay Presidencies as well.[430]

4.4 British attempts to educate girls in India until 1854

4.4.1 Pre-British female education in Tamil India

The schools in early 18th century Tamil India did not have organized syllabus as modern schools do. A person, who was good at certain fields of study or practice, known as sixty-four arts (*aṟupattunāṉku kalaikaḷ*), would gather young boys, seat them on raised bench-like mounds (*tiṇṇai*) in the veranda of their houses, and teach them for a while. These veranda schools (*tiṇṇaipaḷḷikkūṭam*), also known to the European observers as *pial* or *payal*-schools,[431] cultivate knowledge and expertise that as necessary for the existence of a community in a place. Therefore, education (*kalvi*) was contextual and boys learned it by imitating, what their

[428] Ruth Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi: *William Carey: A Tribute by an Indian Woman*, Missouri/UP: Good Books, 1993, p. 21.

[429] Frykenberg, Robert E.: *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 270.

[430] Andrea Major: *Sovereignty and Social Reform in India: British Colonialism and the campaign against satī, 1830–60*, London: Routledge, 2011, p. 18.

[431] Bhavani Raman, *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012, p. 106: The word *payal* comes from the Portuguese word *poial* meaning "stone bench at the entrance of house".

teachers did, taught, and how they lived. Sita Anantha Raman examined the history of Tamil schools from 1870 to 1930.[432] As a background for this period, she portrayed the public schools established by the Lutheran missionaries (e.g., Ziegenbalg and Schwartz) in Tranquebar and Tanjore. She rightly acknowledged the pioneer contributions of these missionaries to female education.

Earlier, two groups of women enjoyed a level of formal education beyond their in-house training in domestic affairs such as cooking, rearing sons, welcoming guests, and doing other daily chorus of activities. The first group consisted of women in royal households such as the Marathi Princess Rāmacantrāmpā, the daughter of King Rakunāta Nāyakkar of Tanjore, as a polyglot and writer of acknowledged works.[433] The second group of women, whose work demanded reading, writing, singing and dancing in front of deities in temples, in religious festivals, and private parties such as betrothals and marriages, were the *Tēvatāci* (Skt. *Devadāṣī*, 'female servant of god'). Other girls, who fortunately escaped infanticide, did not have opportunities for formal education or training.

William Stevenson, a chaplain at St. Mary's Church within Fort. George (i.e., the headquarters of Madras Presidency in Chennai), gained insights from the schools of the Lutherans in Tranquebar, founded in December 1715 the first St. Mary's Charity School with 18 Eurasian boys and 12 Eurasian girls. Besides, the Lutheran model of education, this school also followed the pedagogical model of the London Bluecoat School. This school admitted children, who were about five years old. The boys learned the art of reading, writing, keeping account, and developing other competencies. The girls received training in "reading and the necessary parts of house-wifery"[434].

The *Female Orphan Asylum* was the second girls' school in the city of Madras. Lady Campbell, the wife of Governor Archibald Campbell, and the Nawab of Arcot contributed to its formation in 1787. By 1790, around 200 girls studied in this school. William Gericke, the

[432] Sita Anantha Raman, *Female education and social reform in the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency, 1870–1930*, PhD Dissertation, University of Los Angeles/USA, 1992.

[433] Raman, *Female education and social reform in the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency, 1870–1930*, p. 13.

[434] O'Connor, *The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858*, p. 91.

Lutheran missionary in the service of the Anglican Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, supervised this school.[435] Soon thereafter, missionary Christian Friedrich Schwartz and the British Resident John Sullivan persuaded the Raja of Ramnad to establish school and offer English medium education. At that stage, boys and girls learned together.

Raman states that the Tamil rulers followed the initiatives of the missionaries, but established their *cattirams* ('choultry, rest-house') differently. The rulers of Tanjore, for example, founded in the name of their queens more than twenty *cattiram*s from 1743–1837; there they arranged for the 'education' of pilgrims, orphans, and other children[436]. Some of these children were girls. By 1833, other girls' schools existed in the city of Salem and other parts of Madras. While European women and men were teaching these girls, Tamil Bible women functioned as go-betweens. They listened to the instructions of the missionaries and translated them to the Tamil women. In turn, they informed the missionaries, what they had observed among the Tamil women. By 1840s, the District of Tirunelvēli had the most number of girls' schools, which the local non-Christians did not like. In 1841, the worshippers of Śiva formed their *Vipūti Caṅkam* ('Holy Ash Association') and opposed all Christian efforts to educate women. Particularly, the girls' school (1844), founded by the wife of Robert Caldwell in *Iṭaiyaṉkuṭi* (often written as *Edankundi*), became an important institution.[437]

4.4.2 Origins of British education for girls in India

1821 was an important year for female education in India. Influential Hindu men in Kolkata did not want to have a school for girls and prevented all previous efforts, for example, suggested by Miss Cooke of the British Foreign Bible Society. However, in December 1821, the Calcutta School Society requested the Church Missionary Society to establish a school for girls in Kolkata. Nancy Gardner Cassels states that this school enrolled 217 girls.[438] Within a

[435] Raman, *Female education and social reform in the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency, 1870–1930*, p. 16.

[436] Raman, *Female education and social reform in the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency, 1870–1930*, p. 17.

[437] Raman, *Female education and social reform in the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency, 1870–1930*, p. 34.

[438] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 360. Cassels explained further how wealthy Bengali Brahmins and Hindu Rajas donated money to establish schools for girls. On page 364 she affirmed: "In Madras and Bombay reports on female education had been farce."

year there were "22 schools with 400 girls." Gradually, Hindu Bengalis saw the importance of girls' education and began establishing schools for them in the 1840s.

In 1821, Governor Thomas Munro of Madras (1761–1827) asked his district collectors to report on existing schools in their places. In the following year, he recommended schools for Hindus and Muslims in every administrative district known as *taluk*. British officers in London evaluated the situation of education for their Indian subjects as described by their own representatives and Christian missionaries. They carefully considered the new socio-political conditions of Indians and their expectations. Accordingly, they changed the Charter of the East India Company in 1833. This charter terminated "the commercial activities of the Company" and required it to concentrate more on their "edifying functions"[439] Additionally, it opened Indian trade to all interested companies and allowed merchants, settlers and missionaries to work in India without special licenses. Mayhew stresses the fact that the members of this committee that enacted this Charter of 1833 "paid special and careful attention to the evidence and recommendations of missionaries"[440].

The arrival new missionaries from different European and North American countries had several consequences. One of them was the emergence of schools for boys and girls in cities, towns and villages. Christian missionaries taught academic subjects that they knew best and expounded the message of the Bible, as they understood it. Wherever possible, they tried to accommodate their teaching to the life situations of their students and encouraged to organise alternative communities with Christian values.

Frykenberg[441] mentions key schools in the capital cities of the British Presidencies, namely Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, received their English schools, mostly founded and staffed by Christian missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland. In 1830, Alexander Duff (1806–1878) founded his famous school in Kolkata to provide Scottish education to the young people of Kolkata as an alternative way of making meaning and living. He expected his students to revisit their ancestral beliefs and practices and to embrace Christianity. Few of his

[439] Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 108.

[440] Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 108.

[441] Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, p. 324.

students became influential Christian leaders. Duff's educational philosophy and experiences provided a successful English-medium educational model. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), who served as the Secretary to the Board of Control of the English East India Company (1832–1833) and was familiar with the legacy of Charles Grant, was convinced of the backwardness of Sanskrit-inspired languages and social customs.

The views of Duff and Macaulay informed some aspects of the *English Education Act* of 1835, which the Council of India in London enacted. Since William Bentinck enacted it in Bengal, it became Bentinck's Resolution of 1835. This Act provided funds for English-medium higher education in India. In the same year (1835), John Wilson (1804–1875) started his school in Mumbai. Two years later, in 1837, John Anderson (1805–1855) founded the Madras Christian College in Chennai. It is not an exaggeration that these three educators played an important role in defining modern education in India.

Stephen Neill adds another important episode of female education in Chennai. In 1843, Braidwood, the wife of John Braidwood, who helped John Anderson, founded a school for girls. Within a year, 253 girls of different ages, caste groups and languages studied in it. Few girls liked its Christian atmosphere and wanted to become Christians. For example, Alimalammāh, the wife of the Telugu Christian named Rāmānjulu, became a Christian. In 1847, five girls asked for baptism as well. Another characteristic of this school was its willingness to admit girls married in their childhood.[442] In this respect, this school created revolutionary opportunities for girls to get higher education.

4.5 British attempts to educate girls in India since 1854

4.5.1 Charles Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854

In 1853, the East India Company changed its Charter for the last time. A year later, in 1854, Charles Wood's Educational Despatch enabled girls and boys to obtain secular education from primary to university levels. Charles Wood and his committee received inspiration from the work of Christian missionaries such as Alexander Duff of Kolkata, John

[442] Neill, *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, p. 321–322.

Wilson of Mumbai[443], and John Clark Marshman of Serampore[444]. They also considered the proposals made by scholars like Charles Trevelyan.[445] Overall, "the fight for Christian principles was fought, and fought successfully in India."[446]

Voluminous body of writings[447] is available on the content and impacts of this dispatch on India: it laid the foundations for systematically organised educational provisions for girls and boys in India with their own departments and administrative structures. It offered guidelines for the optimal function of schools and collages; it paved way for the formation of private academic institutions and government universities. In fact, in 1857, the capital cities of the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras received their universities. This despatch stressed the importance of education not only in native languages, but also in the medium of English. It provided government aids for schools, colleges and universes, and scholarships for deserving students. Stephen Neill points out the most important effect of this dispatch as follows: it did not permit India to simply remain "an Asian country, sunk in its own great traditions of the past,"

> [but it introduced India] into the international life of the peoples of the world. The decision that English should be taught with the aid of government to the development of a new elite, alert, progressive, in contact with the trends of thought in the Western world, increasingly vocal in its demands for independence. English was to become, and remains the most widely spoken of the languages of India.[448]

This despatch provided alternative ways of interacting with indigenous cultural, religious, socio-political issues. Some Indians, who did not want modernisatīon, interpreted this dispatch

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[443] Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 169: "This dispatch owed much to the evidence given by Duff, Marshman and other missionaries before the parliamentary committee. Its ultimate form was due to the wise and farseeing mind of Charles Wood."

[444] Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, p. 334: "The leading proponents of this policy, in addition to Wood, were Alexander Duff, Sir Charles Trevelyan, and John Clark Marshman, son of the Serampore missionary and editor of the influential *Friend of India* in Calcutta."

[445] Charles E. Trevelyan, *Education of the People of India*, London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1838.

[446] Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 109.

[447] Suresh Chandra Gosh, "Dalhousie, Charles Wood and the Education Despatch of 1854", *Journal of the History of Education Society*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1975, pp. 34–47.

[448] Neill, *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, p. 164.

as unwanted imposition of British values on India and the neglect of indigenous achievements. Other Indians, who welcomed it, were either enthusiasts for British education or moderates who remained Indians and engaged with Indian cultures and values from the perspectives of their new learning.

As far as this thesis is concerned, the contributions of this Despatch to female education are vital. Its education was not gender-specific, but it was available to both girls and boys. The fact that the universities did not admit female students until 1870s did not deter girls from pursuing higher education.[449]

4.5.2 Female education and Protestant missionaries

The most notable impact of Wood's Education Despatch manifested itself in the schools administered by Protestant missionaries in India. For example, in 1858, Protestant missionaries of various denominations and agencies met together in *Utakamaṇṭalam* (i.e., Ooty), in the *Nilgiris Mountains* of Tamil Nadu, India and discussed pressing issues on their mission practice.[450] R.B. Blyth, a missionary from the Free Church of Scotland Mission, summarised the status of female education at that time and suggested four practical measures to promote female education.[451] He began his report affirming how few Hindus and Muslims tried to develop the thinking skills of their women. Secondly, he stressed the importance of rightly educating "fathers, husbands and brothers" in accepting the education of their daughters, wives and sisters as an essential social institution necessary for their more satīsfying daily life. Thirdly, Christians should not be satīsfied in offering female education in special hostels for girls, tutoring few women in their closed *zenana*-households, and in other isolated places. Instead, Christian day schools must offer opportunities for female education.

[449] One of the greatest needs of that time was trained teachers for various schools. Mary Carpenter (1807–1877), a Unitarian woman reformer from Bristol, England, who was in contact with the Brahmo Samaj in Kolkata, founded a teacher training institute in Egmore, Chennai, in 1870. For further details on this theme, see Raman, 1992, pp. 2, 52 and 54.

[450] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund [Ooty in The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India]: April 19th – May 5th 1858*, Madras: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1858.

[451] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, pp. 191–197.

Fourthly, Christians should not underestimate the challenges that they would face and should overcome.

The first major challenge for Blyth was the adverse public opinion on women and their role. He expressed this popular idea as follows:

> Whatever ancient Native literature may teach, modern works, Prose and Poetry, concur with what we see around us, in assigning to woman nothing higher than the discharge of ordinary domestic, and even menial, duties. In beautiful language, and with many fine illustrations, the excellencies and amiabilities which should adorn the female character are pointed out, but no pathway to their attainment, either by sound instruction or by high motives, is made know. [452]

When Christian teachers tried to persuade the fathers to send their daughters to school, they received the following unkind response: "Why are you so anxious that our daughters should read? It is not our custom. Mind your own business. We will not send them."[453] Moreover, Hindu women adjust their days and activities according to their popular notions regarding "omens, prognostics, spells, and unlucky days". Blyth cites a passage from K.M. Banerjea's work on *Native Female Education*. Banerjea was a Bengali convert of Alexander Duff of Kolkata; as an ordained pastor, he was particularly interested in supporting Bengali women education and he gave a graphic description of Bengali women in their homes: these women did not have opportunities for reading, writing, intellectual quest or recreation; confined to their enclosed houses, they thought of ornaments, household things, sleeping, quarrelling, playing with cards.

> They live in a state of moral insensibility, and do not consider themselves bound, as rational and responsible Agents, to perform anything besides their assigned work in the house. She allows her children to gather strength in immoral and vulgar habits, (such, for instance, as those of lying and speaking obscene language with perfect impunity,) and can form no conception of subjecting them to a course of moral pupilage [sic!]. [454]

In order to overcome these difficulties posed by common opinion and practice of Hindu men regarding female education, Blyth suggests three ways ahead: first, European missionaries could show the way by following examples such as John Anderson of Madras

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[452] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 191.

[453] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 192.

[454] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 193.

Christian College. He educated few women. He also raised the consciousness of young people for female education. European women had better access to Hindu women and they use it to educate Hindu women more. European men, whenever they interacted with Hindu or Muslim men, they could openly mention about educating their women folk.

Secondly, Christian missionaries could use the printing press to promote their ideas on female education widely. Their writing should include subjects such as "History, biography, statistics, social science, narrative, reasoning, good-humoured raillery, every legitimate weapon [sic! = tools] may be wielded with advantage on this field."[455]

Thirdly, Christian missionaries should have support systems that attract girls to come and study. They include effective recruitment methods such as "good school-houses, competent teachers, right methods, suitable books, and constant, kindly superintendence"[456]. Likewise, the girls should experience a variety of learning opportunities such as "a combination of looking, listening, individual answering, pointing, repeating, reading, and writing". This education should happen in the native language of the girls. They should be equipped to converse in subjects such as "History, Geography, Arithmetic, Grammar, Natural History, Music, and Sewing." When they are not reading, they should spend time in writing. Similarly, girls could acquire vocational skills pertaining to industries so that the industrial schools can become "self-remunerative." Amid these good educational methods and contents, Christian schools should offer courses on the Bible to all students. Blyth concluded his text by stating that for every school for boys there must be a school for girls. As they taught various subjects, they should think about the basic Christian conviction that "there is no true principle where the Gospel Christ does not dwell" and "none could be saved without coming to the Cross of Christ"[457].

[455] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 194.

[456] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 195.

[457] *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund*, 1858, p. 197.

4.6 Impact of Queen Victoria's Declaration on Christians

On 10 May 1857, few Indian soldiers in Meerut, at that time in the Presidency of Bengal, revolved against their British officers. This *Sepoy Mutiny* or the First War for Indian Independence, spread to other places and lasted until 1 November 1858. It ended the political monopoly of the English East India Company in India. following Queen Victoria's Declaration 1 November 1858, read out in Allahabad, the territories of the English East India Company in India became part of the British Empire.

A copy of this original Proclamation, reprinted at its 50th anniversary in 1908 by the British Parliament in London,[458] deserves a brief analysis: it states that Queen Victoria was the monarch of Great Britain and Ireland. She was in charge for all British colonies and dependencies in "Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia". She was the "Defender of the Faith" of the Anglican Church. Now she took over "the Government of the Territories in India heretofore administered in trust [… for her] by the Honourable East India Company." Indians living in these territories became her subjects and were expected to be loyal to her, her heirs, successors and deputies. They should follow such "Laws and Regulations as may hereafter be enacted." Most importantly, this declaration did not require any Indian to embrace Christianity against his or her will. It promised to enhance the quality of life for all because, the Queen said: "In their Prosperity will be our Strength; in their Contentment Our Security; and in their Gratitude Our best Reward. And may the God of all Power grant to Us, and to those in authority under Us, Strength to carry out these Our Wishes for the good of Our people"[459].

This dramatic political change had far-reaching consequences. For example, it influenced, how British officers and Indian administrators addressed issues related to female education

[458] *East India (Proclamations): Copies of the Proclamation of the King, Emperor of India, to the Princes and People of India, of the 2nd day of November 1908, and the Proclamation of the late Queen Victoria of the 1st day of November 1858, to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India*, London: The House of Commons, 1908.

[459] *East India (Proclamations),* 1908, p. 2.

and gender justice in subsequent years. The law prohibition *satī* (1829)[460], the *Emancipation Act* (1850) enabling religious converts to claim their inheritance, the *Hindu Widow Remarriage Act XV* (1856) rejecting the old socio-religious practices of Hindus became more acute. Those who benefited from oppressing women opposed these laws.[461]

Cassels rightly concluded that this *Widow Remarriage Act IV* was perhaps the "boldest of the East India Company's pieces of social legislation."[462] It opened up new ways for widows, whether they were children or adults, to reconsider their life. It instructed the Company's courts not to question Hindu prohibitions of widow's remarriage; at the same time, it asked these courts not to prohibit those widows, who wanted to remarry.[463] Should they get remarried, they would lose any support from relatives of their deceased husbands. At the same time, they had a new future. Above all, they could decide their own destiny. This possibility of new thinking and decision making was important not only for widows, but also for all women in India at that time.[464]

4.7 Key British laws to empower Indian women

The British administrators in India had troubles to navigate between many types of criminal laws: the Muslims, the Hindus and the British had their own law courts. Their ideas of crime, methods of prosecution and punishment differed. Nancy Gardner Cassels explains various British attempts to introduce new laws and courts. In 1772, Warren Hastings (1732–1818) established the *Nizamut Adawlut*, also known as the *Sadr Diwani Adalat* ('chief-court of justice') as the Supreme Court to deal with crime (according to Muslim laws) and inheritance

[460] Lawrence James, *Raj–The Making of British Raj*, London: Abacus, 1997, p. 226: after Bentinck had consulted Hindu religious scholars and ascertained that the practice of *satī* had no scriptural backing, he outlawed *satī*. This "end of the voluntary burning or burial of Hindu widows was the first, direct affront to Indian religious beliefs and gave credence to misgivings about the imposition of Christianity" on Hindus.

[461] *History of Christianity in India: 1707–1858*, 1985, pp. 413–414: For example, a Kulin Brahmin in Bengal had 42 wives. He naturally defended the continuation of previous systems.

[462] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 400.

[463] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 400.

[464] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 400: this possibility of shaping their own future remained available to the widows; however, according to Cassels, few widows chose to remarry. "Finally, Section XIV of the 1965 Hindu Succession Act won for the Hindu widow recognition of her full and absolute rights of ownership of her first husband's estate."

of property (according to either Hindu or Muslim laws, depending on the religion of the accused). Later, several Bengal Regulations remained in force. The following five representative Acts illustrate how new legal provisions tried to safeguard the personhood, dignity, modesty, and value of individual women in India.

4.7.1 The Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act (1856)

Geraldine Forbes mentions the ethnographic work of the Bengali reformer Iswar Chandra Vidyasager (1820–1891), who had interviewed 133 *Kulin*-Brahmin men in Hooghly District of Kolkata and discovered their polygynous practice. A 51-year old man "married 107 times." The 55-year old Bholanath Bandopadhyana had 80 wives. Another *Kulin*-Brahmin had 72 wives. Disappointed by these polygynous relationships and the number of child widows, Vidyasager went on collecting 1,000 signatures in support of widows' remarriage. He submitted these signatures and his findings to the Indian Legislative Council in Kolkata, who were at that time considering the *Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act* (1856).[465]

On 25 July 1856, the Legislative Council in Kolkata promulgated this brief Act with seven Articles.[466] Its opening statement mentioned that some traditional Hindus did not permit widows' remarriage. On the other hand, other open-minded Hindus believed that "a true interpretation of the precepts of their religion" and "the civil law administered by the Courts of Justice" would not contradict their custom and would agree with their "own conscience". Its first Article assured that the marriage of a widow, who married another man after the death of her first husband, was legal and her children were legitimate. The second Article reiterated that upon remarriage, if she had no specific will from her deceased husband, the widow could not claim any inheritance from him. Her remarried present husband should care for her and their children.

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[465] Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India: Vol. IV.2: Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 21–22.

[466] The "Hindu Widow's Re-Marriage Act, 1856 (Act No. XV of 1856)", *Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, available at http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=9 (accessed on 28 February 2018).

The third Article states that if the deceased husband did not leave behind a will expressively allowing his widow to care for his children, she would lose their guardianship. The fourth Article was revolutionary: a childless widow, who did not remarry, had the right to inherit from the property of her deceased husband, whether he had left behind a will or not. The fifth Article tells that when a widow remarried, she, like her husband, would have the same rights for properties. The sixth Article provided legal acceptance of the remarriage, whether it took place in a temple or at home or in any other public place. The seventh Article protected the right of minor married girls, who became widows. To protect their childhood, these minor girls could not remarry without the express consent of their fathers or grandfathers, mothers or elder brothers or other male member of their families. However, if the widow were "of full age" she did not have to get any permission from her father or male relatives. Instead, she could decide her remarriage by herself.

These laws benefitted many young widows. At the same time, their critiques blamed that these State-sponsored laws intruded into the private life of the people, limited their autonomy, and yet gave rise to self-conscious people and their nation.[467] As time passed by, changing views of human beings, human rights, constitutional provisions, and living circumstances of people made this law obsolete. Therefore, in December 1979, the Law Commission of India repealed it completely[468]. Yet, it is evident that the *Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act* of 1856 served its purpose for nearly 120 years. Its fundamental ideas about widows' right for maintenance, inheritance and remarriage passed into future laws such as the *Hindu Marriage Act* (1955).

[467] Tanika Sarkar, "Women in South Asia: Raj and After", *History Today*, Vol. 47, No. 9, 1997, pp. 54–59:55: "Since the late eighteenth century, British rule had exempted the domain of personal laws from state intervention, unless customary or scriptural sanction could be cited as a reason for change. [… Of the three historical developments that followed, the first was important. The] domestic sphere, governed by the personal laws, and a site of relative autonomy, became the last bastion of a vanished freedom, as well as the possible site of an emergent nation."

[468] The "81st Report: The Hindu Widows Re-marriage Act, 1856: Eighty First Report", *The Law Commission of India, Ministry of Law, Government of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/report81.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

4.7.2 The Indian Penal Code (1860) defending women's dignity and honour

The Bengal Regulation VI of 1832 curtailed the power of Muslim penal laws[469] that existed at that time. When the East India Company changed its Charter in 1833, Thomas Babington Macaulay joined Governor Bentinck in Kolkata and drafted the *Macaulay Penal Code* of 1837.[470] Successive Law Commissions had divided opinions of making Hindu and Muslim laws compatible with British Laws. After Barnes Peacock (1810–1890) became the Chief Justice of the court in Kolkata, he revised the legal drafts and created the *Indian Penal Code* (IPC, 1860), which largely remains valid in contemporary India.[471]

The IPC has many provisions pertaining to women. It follows the outline of the Indian Penal Code of 1860, but adapts it to contemporary situation of India.[472] Its every article reflects the original intent of the first architects of the IPC. The following examples bring out clearly crimes against women and the punishment that they deserve. Article 8 defines the gender in 19th century English tradition, namely it uses the pronoun 'he' to mean both a male and a female. From 21st century understanding of gender, this definition remains questionable; however, at that time, it was a great thing that women had the same rights as men. According to Article 10, a man is a male person, so is a woman a female person. This Article does not differentiate the stages of a human person as a child, youth and adult. Articles 312 to 316 spell out the punishment for any person who causes miscarriage of a pregnant woman against her express wish and for the sake of her healthy life.

Articles 315, 316 and 318 are central for legal understanding of infanticide. Therefore, their full text appears in this quote:

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[469] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, pp. 1–19.

[470] Wing-Cheong Chan, et. al. (eds.): *Codification, Macaulay and the Indian Penal Code: The Legacies and Modern Challenges of Criminal Law Reform*, Burlington/VT: Ashgate, 2011.

[471] Cassels, *Social Legislation of the East India Company*, p. 24: Macaulay's Penal Code "has received numerous tributes, not the least of which is the fact that, although it was not enacted until 1860 in a version revised by Barnes Peacock, it is still the Penal Code of India today."

[472] The "Indian Penal Code (1860)", *Ministry of Law and Justice*, available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1860/186045.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

> 315: Act done with intent to prevent child being born alive or to cause it to die after birth: Whoever before the birth of any child does any act with the intention of thereby preventing that child from being born alive or causing it to die after its birth, and does by such act prevent that child from being born alive, or causes it to die after its birth, shall, if such act be not caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the mother, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both.
>
> 316. Causing death of quick unborn child by act amounting to culpable homicide: Whoever does any act under such circumstances, that if he thereby caused death he would be guilty of culpable homicide, and does by such act cause the death of a quick unborn child, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine. […]
>
> 318. Concealment of birth by secret disposal of dead body: Whoever, by secretly burying or otherwise disposing of the dead body of a child whether such child die before or after or during its birth, intentionally conceals or endeavours to conceal the birth of such child, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both. [473]

The Article 354 upholds and affirms the untouchable dignity and honour of a woman. With all vehemence and determination, it opposes any type of sexual harassment either in public sphere or in a private realm and imposes penalty (of maximum three years of imprisonment), which in modern terms might not seem severe enough; but in those days, it set the notion that assaulting a woman would incur criminal punishment. Sexual harassment included "(i) physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or (ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or (iii) showing pornography against the will of a woman; or (iv) making sexually coloured remarks".

Forcing a woman to disrobe and be naked constituted sexual harassment and meant a criminal offence. It received three to seven years of imprisonment and fine. The third kind of sexual harassment was voyeurism, which included secretly watching a woman either in her privacy or in her sexual act and publicising it with intent to harm her name and dignity. The fourth kind of sexual harassment consisted of stalking a woman against her will by following her and seeking personal interactions with her. The only exception was following her to prevent any crime that would be committed against her by another person.

[473] The "Indian Penal Code (1860)", pp. 73–74.

Articles 366 to 374 add other crimes against women such as kidnapping or abducting or concealing or exploiting or forcing them for marriage with others, prostitution, and such evil acts. The person, who kidnaps, conceals, or forces a minor girl for any type of sexual act, will suffer life imprisonment. Likewise, either trafficking or enslaving women and girls for any illegal activities such as prostitution or labour constitutes a punishable crime. These crimes invite either ten years or lifelong imprisonment.

Articles 375 and 376 outline punishments for rape; it defines rape as a sexual act of violence against a woman without her will and consent. If she gave consent "in fear of death or of hurt" in order to protect herself or a person whom wanted to defend, that consent would not considered a consent. Rape, whether committed individually or by a gang, would invite life imprisonment. Articles 497 and 498 defend the modesty of a married woman. They describe punishments that are applicable for men, who entice or abuse the wife of other men. These Articles warn husbands, who should not threaten, hurt or defame their wives in any manner. Thus, the IPC of 1860 laid a firm foundation to protect women, girls, wives and widows. Subsequent revisions of these provisions, for example in 1959, 1968 and 1971, keep the spirit of these Articles and improve on it. The most recent version the IPC, which the author of this thesis could consult, is the digital version of June 1971,[474] which comprises 582 A-4 size pages.

4.7.3 The Indian Divorce Act (1869)

Indian sociologists Vidya Bhushan and D.R. Sachdeva assert that Hindu religious treatises promoted the indissolubility of marriage.[475] Accordingly, a Hindu wife could not divorce her husband, however violent or abusive or cruel or immoral or deserting or impotent or sick or invalid or crazy or lunatic he might have been. Even if he maintained extra-marital relationships with either concubines or wives of other men or prostitutes, his wife was expected to endure him. If he changed his religious convictions and affiliations, she had no

[474] The "42nd Report: The Indian Penal Code, June 1971", *The Law Commission of India, Ministry of Law, Government of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/1-50/Report42.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

[475] Vidya Bhushan and D.R. Sachdeva: *An Introduction to Sociology*, 1st ed., 1961, 44th ed. of the revised and enlarged version, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 2011, p. 343.

way of leaving him. The divorce and matrimonial causes were different. In mid-nineteenth century India, many wives were minors, i.e., below 13 years of age. If a wife became a Christian and her husband could not agree with her decision, she could not get away from him.

The Indian Divorce Act, introduced on 26 February 1869 to help Christian wives, provided legal ways to manage the situation.[476] However, its 10th Article put a constraint, namely, it required the wives who wanted and needed divorce to obtain their husband's prior consent. This constraint remained debatable for a long time. The *Law Commission of India* suggested three revisions (in 1960, 1983 and 1998). Their 15th report stated the *Indian Divorce Act* (1869) and the *Indian Christian Act* (1872) were based on English laws. Socio-cultural changes both in England and India necessitated the introduction of the *Marriage Acts* (1949 and 1954) and the *Matrimonial Causes Act* (1950); it retained several aspects of the acts of 1869 and 1872, yet became suitable "to the present conditions"[477].

In 1983, the *Law Commission of India* revised this law for the second time.[478] Christian wives complained that it was not advisable and possible for them their husband's consent for divorce. The *Law Commission of India* evaluated all options, tried to ensure that the divorced women did not suffer either social or economic hardships, and they articulated their views with these moving words: Indian society must protect women. It should allow the female divorcees to perish without giving them "some measure of economic independence."

> Every divorce solves a problem, and creates another. Both problems need to be solved, no matter who is responsible for the breakdown of the marriage. If the divorce law is to be a real success, it should make provision for the economic independence of the female spouse. After all, Indian society today is so constituted that a woman is a generally helpless and her position becomes worse if she is divorced. It is necessary that the law should protect her interest even if she be an erring spouse, lest she becomes destitute and a dead loss to society.[479]

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[476] The "Indian Divorce Act – Act Number IV of 1869", *Feminist Law Archives*, available at http://feministlawarchives.pldindia.org/wp-content/uploads/INDIAN-DIVORCE-ACT-1869.pdf (accessed on 2 March 2018).

[477] The "15th Report: Law relating Marriage and Divorce amongst Christians in India", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/1-50/Report15.pdf? (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[478] "The Grounds of Divorce amongst Christians in India: Section 10: Indian Divorce Act 1869", The *90th Report: The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report90.pdf (accessed on 2 March 2018).

[479] The "Grounds of Divorce amongst Christians in India: Section 10: Indian Divorce Act 1869", p. 16.

In 1994, the Government of India introduced the *Christian Marriage Bill*. Its outlay and contents rested on similar laws that existed earlier.[480] Petitioners, lawyers, and courts found further difficulties with divorce. As a result, the Law Commission revisited the Indian Divorce Act and paid special attention to Article 10. This article posed even greater problems for the wives, particularly Christian wives, who sought divorce from their abusing husbands, their lawyers, and courts. In 1998, the Law Commission pointed out an example.[481] Their point 1.4. explained that a husband who wanted to get rid of his wife could accuse her of adultery and petition for divorce. On the other hand, his wife had to prove more reasons such as her husband's conversion from Christianity to another religion or marriage with another woman, adultery, rape, desertion for two years, and the like. The Indian Divorce Act has not yet reached its most definite form. It continues to evolve. The 211th Report of the Law Commission of India (October 2008)[482] contains the most recent suggestions and recommendations ensuring the dignity of women in all spheres of their life.

4.7.4 The Act preventing the murder of female infants (1870)

This *Act for the Prevention of the murder of Female Infants,* first promulgated on 18 March 1870 in key regions of the Bengal Presidency,[483] soon became binding in Bombay and Madras Presidencies as well. Its Preamble considered female infanticide as a murder. Article 1 stipulated that this Act should be published officially in all places, where "any class, or family or persons" commit female infanticide. Article 2 required the civil administrators to fulfil several obligations: first, they should keep up-to-date "registers of births, marriages, and deaths occurring in such districts, or in or among the class, family, or persons". Secondly, they should create and locally support a police force to monitor the implementation of this Act. The

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[480] The "Indian Christian Marriage Bill, 1994", *Feminist Law Archives,* available at http://feministlawarchives.pldindia.org/wp-content/uploads/43.pdf? (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[481] The "164th Report: Indian Divorce Act (IV of 1869), November 1998", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/101-169/Report164.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[482] The "211th Report: Laws on Registration of Marriage and Divorce: a Proposal for Consolidation and Reform (October 2008)", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/ reports/report211.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[483] The "Act No. VIII of 1870: An Act for the Prevention of the murder of Female Infants", *A Collection of the Acts passed by the Governor General of India in Council in the Year 1870*, Calcutta: Office of Superintendent of Government Press, 1871, pp. 81–84.

remaining four sub-points of this Article outlines the duties of this police force. Article 4 described the punishment for the offenders, which could be an imprisonment for six months or a fine of Rupees 1,000 or both. Article 5 demanded the officiating magistrates to rescue female infants threatened with infanticide and place them in care homes. These stipulations and provisions provided the seedbed for later government policies and practices to safeguard female infants, women interests.

4.7.5 The Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872)

This Act, enacted on 18 July 1872[484] and known as Act Number XV of 1872, recognised the established marriage traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and other Protestant and Orthodox Christian traditions present in British India and other areas now known as Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Clergymen of these traditions got the power equal to marriage registrars to formalise marriages between a Christian bride and a Christian bridegroom of approved age. Article 3 defined Indian Christians as "the Christian descendants of natives of India converted to Christianity, as well as such converts".

Articles 10 and 11 required the officiating clergyperson to follow the "rules, rites, ceremonies and customs" of their respective church. They should conduct the marriage within the designated place of worship between 6 am and 7 pm. Articles 12 to 13 prescribed how the marriage ban for the bride and bridegroom should be announced, recorded and communicated to all concerned authorities.

Articles 19 to 26 required that the clergyperson should conduct the marriage within two months of the announcement of the bans. Should anyone raise concerns and questions in writing, the clergyperson should postpone the marriage until he obtained clarity from the bride, bridegroom, and if possible also from their parents or relatives or guardians. If there was no clergyperson, a Christian bride and a Christian bridegroom could approach the authorised Marriage Registrar and get married. These rules pertaining to age, consent, witness,

[484] The "Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872 [updated on 20 July 2016]", *Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India*, available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1872/The%20Indian%20Christian%20Marriage%20Act,%201872.pdf (accessed on 2 March 2018).

solemnisatīon, and registration aimed to streamline Christian marriage practices. It is evident that this Act did not name any caste of the bride or a groom. Similarly, it did not mention anything about either dowry or bride price.

A direct consequence of this *Indian Christian Marriage Act* (1872) resulted in the publication of the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act* dated 8 March 1886.[485] Accordingly, people could voluntarily register births and deaths; the local registrars should keep these records of births and deaths. Article 32 of Chapter 5 of the Act requires the registrar to record not only births, deaths, but also baptisms, naming ceremonies, dedication rituals, and burials. An indirect purpose of this Act seems to generate knowledge of girls and women, whose births and deaths were registered. Demographers or statisticians could compare the data of female infants, girls, wives and widows against the data of male infants, boys, husbands and widowers. In this manner, they could detect trends that were favourable either to women or to men or both. Accordingly, they could devise further laws to promote safety of women. All these legal efforts were revolutionary at that time and tried to provide the Indian women with equality, value and dignity.

4.8 Reforms by Savitribai Phule and Jotirao Govindrao Phule

Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), her husband Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–1890) were known for their gender-related reform works in and around the city of Pune, Maharashtra, western India. Jotirao Govindrao Phule welcomed the initiatives of the British policymakers and educators to shape university students in Kolkata; but he insisted that such an education would not benefit the people at the grassroots level, because the people of upper *Varṇa*s and *Jāti*s, who occupied important government jobs at all levels, did not permit the students of the *Avarṇa*s and the lower *Jāti*s to enter these schools. He requested the British Government in Kolkata not to allow "boys under 19 years of age and girls under 11" to marry. They should make it mandatory that children "of the middle and lower classes of Hindus" should have access to education. "But the education should not be transmitted through the medium of

[485] The "Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, 1886 (Act No. 6 of 1886)", *Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, available at http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=56 (accessed on 5 March 2018).

Brahmin teachers, for while educating, they create in the minds of the pupils wrong religious ideas and lead them astray"[486].

In recent years, the works of Savitribai Phule attracted much attention[487]. She supported her husband's reformatory works among the downtrodden peoples of Pune. In 2015, Deepika Sharma identified six aspects of her gender-related contributions[488]: in 1848, she established a formal educational institution in Bhide Wadai, Pune, for the benefit of oppressed girls and boys. Secondly, four years later, in 1852, she founded the *Mahila Seva Mandal*, the first feminist organisatīon defending equal status of women and their legitimate rights available to them through the British laws. Thirdly, she composed poems, essays and lectures on diverse themes such as education for all, the irrelevance of caste distinctions, the necessity of liberating the *Mahar*s and other so-called 'Untouchables' from oppression to a dignified life. Fourthly, she and her husband jointly played an important role in organising the *Sarvajanik Satya Dharma* (the' Religion of Universal Truth'), which did not recognise the role of Brahmin priests. Fifthly, she respected her husband, but did not follow him mutely. After he had died, he courageously lit his funeral pyre. This act itself highlighted her revolutionary nature: what was once perceived to be the duty of a son, she overtook and performed it. Finally, she became an exemplary model for other reformers: she opposed any type of hierarchy and subjugation, whether it was caste or any other social status. She believed in the humanity of all people, whether they 'Hindus' or Muslims or others. She spearheaded a movement of barbers and persuaded them not to shave off the hair from the heads of Brahmin widows. She supported a home for pregnant widows and people who were affected sickness or famine. Overall, the role model of this Phule Family became an important point of reference

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[486] Jotirao Govindrao Phule's Opinion on Infant Marriage in India as quoted in Amiya P. Sen (ed.), *Social and Religious Reform: The Hindus of British India*, (2003), 5th rpt., New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 145–146.

[487] For details on her life and work, see M. G. Mali (ed.), *Savitribai Phule Samagra Vangmaya* [The Complete Works of Savitribai Phule], Mumbai: Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya ani Sanskrit Mandal, 1988; Braj Ranjan Mani and Pamela Sardar (eds.), *A Forgotten Reformer*: *The Life and Struggle of Savitribai Phule*, New Delhi: Mountain Peak, 2008; Gopu Sudhakar, *Savitribai Phule*: *Pioneer of Women Empowerment*, New Delhi: Avni Publications, 2018.

[488] Sharma Deepika, "Six reasons every Indian feminist should remember Savitribai Phule," *India Resists*, available at https://indiaresists.com/six-reasons-every-indian-feminist-remember-savitribai-phule/ (accessed on 1 June 2018).

for successive reformers B.R. Ambedkar. It is noteworthy that recognising the significance of Savitribai Phule, the authorities of the University of Pune renamed it as *Savitribai Phule Pune University* (August 2014).

4.9 Reforms by Krupabai Satthianadhan

Krupabai Sattianadhan (1862–1894) was the first Indian woman novelist, who composed her works in English. Her parents Haripunt and Radhabai were "the first Brahmin converts to Christianity in Bombay Presidency"[489]. They lived in Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra. Their conversion to Christianity caused several problems. Before she was 13, she lost her father and elder brother Bhaskar. Later, two European ladies and an American woman doctor in Mumbai helped her to learn more. She wanted to study medicine and become a medical doctor. For this purpose, she moved to Chennai and lived in the house of W.T. Sattianadhan, who was a well-known clergyman. Later in 1881, she married his son Samuel, who had just returned from his studies at the University of Cambridge in England. Due to ill-health she could not continue her medical studies. She followed her husband and worked in Ooty in the Nilgiris, Rajamundry in Andhra Pradesh (1884), Kumbagonam (1885) and Chennai (1886) in Tamil Nadu. Thus, she acquainted herself with the situations of girls and women in different parts of India. Tuberculosis made her life miserable.

Krupabai wrote her *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* in 1893, when her husband took her to Coonoor in the Nigiris for recoupment. It appeared in the last year of her life. It tells how a Hindu wife lives in the house of her husband under the control and watchful eyes of her mother-in-law. She is an individual, but without her individuality. She is free to meet the needs of her in-laws and guests, but she had no opportunity to meet her own intellectual, emotional or physical need. She hungered for love, sympathy and acceptance, but she did not get them, at least in the way that she wanted or her old Sanyasi-Father had taught her. She saves the money which her husband would give here now and then, and buys jewels; even if should lose her husband, her in-laws would not take her jewels away. They are her security. As she protects her jewels, she thinks to herself as follows: "Life is not so dear as these jewels

[489] S[amuel Krupabai] Sattianadhan, *Kamala*: *A Story of Hindu Life with an Introductory Memoir by Mrs. H.B. Grigg*, Madras: Srinivasa, Varadachari & Co., 1894, p. ix.

are; for what is the use of living? – she argues within herself, – to be trampled on by others, and to slave for others. Such feelings are purely Hindu and are the outcome of wrongs committed for generations on the poor unprotected Hindu woman"[490].

Mrs. H.B. Grigg, who wrote a moving Memoir in Krupabai's honour and attached it to her novel Kamala, praised her truthfulness, originality, courage and mastery of the English language. Krupabai left

> no children to follow in her footsteps, but her memory is a precious possession to all true daughters of India. It must fill them with hopes that they may yet produce a beautiful and beneficent literature. It must fill them with gratitude, - a gratitude in which we English women share, for she has taught us to know and to love each other better.[491]

Krupabai's second novel *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* was printed posthumously in 1895[492]. From 1887 to 1888, she wrote a series entitled *Saguna* for the *Madras Christian College Magazine*. Oindrila Mukherjee examined this series and concluded that they illustrate Krupabai's desire for equality with men, her defiance of patriarchy and caste-based inequalities and discriminations, her doubt about traditional place of women in Indian societies, her determination to acquire the skills of reading and mathematics, the power of Christian faith as a liberating force, and the opportunities for women's empowerment available through British laws and ways of governance in India[493]. Thus, Krupabai's story and novels[494] demonstrate the liberating power of conversion to Christianity, cross-cultural marriage (between a Marathi woman and a Tamil man), intercultural learning (via Sanskrit,

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[490] Sattianadhan, *Kamala*: *A Story of Hindu Life with an Introductory Memoir by Mrs. H.B. Grigg*, p. xxx.

[491] Sattianadhan, *Kamala*: *A Story of Hindu Life with an Introductory Memoir by Mrs. H.B. Grigg*, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

[492] Another reprint of this novel has a different title: *Saguna: The First Autobiographical Novel by an Indian Woman*, ed. Chandani Lokuge, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

[493] Oindrila Mukherjee, "The first autobiographical novel by an Indian woman writing in English was bothy beautiful and profound", *Scroll.In*, available at https://scroll.in/article/803104/the-first-indian-woman-novelists-first-book-was-both-beautiful-and-profound (accessed on 1 June 2018).

[494] Sabrina Pearl Howell, "Krupabai Satthianadhan's Journey with Christ: The First Indian Woman Novalist in English", *Sharing of Faith Stories: A Methodology for Promoting Unity*, New Delhi: Caleb Institute of Theology, 2018, pp. 109–119:118: Krupabai's other writings include *The Story of a Conversion*, "which was based on the testimony of W.T. Satthianadhan" and *A Fine Sunset of Life: The Closing Days of Mrs. Anna Satthianadhan*, which is "a memoir on her mother-in-law".

Marathi, English and Tamil) and conscious education to discover oneself and others for the sake of mutual benefit.

4.10 Reforms by Pandita Ramabai

English-educated male leaders of the *Brahmo Samāj* (1828) in Kolkata and the *Prāthanā Samaj* (1867) in Mumbai were interested in the education and welfare of women; they believed that educated women would be better companions for them and rear their children well[495]. For example, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901) and his wife Ramabai Rande (1863–1924) of *Prāthanā Samāj* tirelessly worked for the education of women in Western India. The reformers of these associations welcomed the British efforts to abolish Satī (1829) and remarriage of the widows (1856); one of them was Anant Shastri Dongre in Mumbai and Pune. He was the father of the future Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922). Dongre taught his daughter the art of reading and reciting Sanskrit literature, particularly the *Purāṇa*s. After his death, Ramabai moved to Kolkata, befriend the leaders of the *Brahmo Samāj*, particularly Keshab Chunder Sen (1838–1884) and began to read the Vedas and the *Upaniṣad*s. The learned scholars of Kolkata tested her scholarship and honoured her with the title *Pandita*. She married Bipin Behari Das Medhavi, who was a lawyer and member of the *Brahmo Samāj*. Medhavi died soon.

Widowed Ramabai returned to Maharashtra with her daughter. The Ranade Family, who supported the *Arya Mahila Samāj* ('Aryan Women's Association', 1882) to fight against "oppressive customs, child marriage, illiteracy, and especially, oppression of child widows"[496] helped Ramabai. During a visit to England, Ramabai embraced Christianity and started to oppose the Sanskrit religious writings and their anti-feminine customs. Now, the Ranade Family distanced themselves from her. The Sanskritist Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920)

[495] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, pp. 2, 4, 8–9: "Keshab Chander Sen's wife broke with purdah to attend a Brahmo Samaj service at her husband's instigation. She, too, did do in the face of resistance from Sen's relatives, who immediately banned both of them from the Sen joint family household. Kalasbasini Debi, married to Brahmo Samaj member Durga Charan Das, not only was illiterate at the time of her marriage but also opposed the whole idea of women's education. He insisted that she should study, and she went to become India's first women author to publish a book of essays."

[496] Robert Eric Frykenberg, "The Legacy of Pandita Ramabai: Mahatma of Mukti", *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2016, pp. 60–70:62.

accused Ramabai of converting 'Hindu' girls and treated her as traitor[497]. Without giving up, Ramabai founded the *Sharada Sadan* ('Home of Learning', 1889) in Mumbai. Nine years later, she moved her institution *Mukti Mission* ('Salvation Mission', 1898) to Kedgoan, near Pune. There she pioneered education for women and caring of unwanted women remained[498]. Having studied accomplishments and contributions to liberate and to empower women, Frykenberg suggests that her previous titles *Pandita* ('Learned Scholar') and Sarasvatī ('Woman of Learning') were insufficient; she should be rightly called a "true *Mahatma* ('Great Soul')"[499].

When 20th century began, countless reform movements functioned in the three Presidencies of British India. The *Brahmo Samāj*, the *Prāthanā Samāj* and the Ārya *Samāj* had their branches in almost every major city. Associations that worked for women's education, marriage of child widows worked in smaller towns[500]. They derived their inspiration not from Indian sources, but from Western sources. The Scottish missionary John Nicol Farquhar (1861–1929) identified them as the British government, English education and literature, Christianity, Oriental research, European science and philosophy, and the material elements of Western civilisatīon, but the beliefs and the organization of the ancient faiths have been the moulding forces of great potency"[501]. Her influence would live into 20th century India.

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[497] Srivastava, *Rights and Duties of Hindu Society*, p. 19: Ramabai's "conversion [to Christianity] had made her something of a traitor to the orthodox, who charged that their school was a convert Christian mission. […] Soon the inevitable happened. Two girls asked for instruction. Ramabai referred them to a missionary, and a Christian newspaper in New York boasted – incorrectly – that she had won two converts. Tilak's paper Keshari soon got wind of the story. In February 1990 [sic! = 1890) it charged that Ramabai's school was proselytizing and that her Hindu reformer friends were acting as colluders. Again and again the [Tilak's newspaper] Keshari hammered away at this issue."

[498] Frykenberg, "The Legacy of Pandita Ramabai: Mahatma of Mukti", p. 66: "Beside the Mukti Sadan and Sharada Sadan, the Kedgoan Campus soon added Kripa Sadan (Home of Mercy), Prita Sadan (Home for the Aged and Infirm), Sadanand Sadan (Home for Boys) and Bartan Sadan (Home for the Blind), where Braille was taught. Over two thousand souls, rescued from degradation, oppression, or starvation were being fed, cleaned, nursed to health, and taught at Kedgaon."

[499] Frykenberg, "The Legacy of Pandita Ramabai: Mahatma of Mukti", p. 68.

[500] Sen, *Social and Religious Reform: The Hindus of British India*, pp. 212–218: Sen gives a detailed list of reform associations in different regions of British India for the period 1891–1899.

[501] Sen, *Social and Religious Reform: The Hindus of British India*, p. 203.

CHAPTER 5: WOMEN AND GENDER IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

This chapter explores the major turning points in addressing gender issues in Independent India from 1947 to June 2018. The focus of this chapter lies on the major laws that were implemented to safeguard women from various evils such as female feticide and infanticide, child marriages, trafficking of girls, dowry deaths, domestic violence, and the like. Another aspect of this chapter examines the research works that have studied the portrayals of gender issues in women magazines and novels in Tamil, the impact of self-help groups, and the like. Finally, this chapter highlights the mindset of Indians which defies every effort for change. The unspoken reason for this rigid mindset remains theological.

5.1 Constitutional rights, obligations and privileges

The reform movements of the late 19th century took various shapes. One of them the national movement that sought political freedom from British rule. The *Indian National Congress* (1885) contributed to this longing. After much struggle, India became on 15 August 1947 independent and sovereign. The British left India; but many of their legacies remained. Policy makers of the new sovereign India reviewed and modified some of these legacies. One of them renegotiated with the British laws; it rejected some of them and amended others. For example, they overturned the British practice of permitting select women to vote[502]. On 22 February 2018, a reporter summarized this achievement with the following comparison:

> The US took 144 years to give equal voting rights to women [in 1920]. Suffragettes in UK took nearly a century to win the vote [1918]. Women won the vote in some cantons of Switzerland as recently as 1974. But Indian women got the right to vote the year their country was born [in 1947].[503]

[502] After much hesitation, the British permitted the women living in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras to vote in 1921.

[503] Soutik Biswas, "Did the British Empire resist women's suffrage in India?", *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, 22 February 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43081429 (accessed on 10 March 2018).

This voting right gave Indian women a chance to participate in national life; this equality did not immediately translate into other areas of Indian life. Sovereign India has implemented and still implementing several measures to move Indians towards gender equality.

In 1948, the United Nations released their *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[504]. It states that human dignity, inherent in every individual human being, remains "the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Its first Article reminds that all people "are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Article 2 elaborates the fact that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex [and gender], language, religion, political or other opinion". Articles 3 to 6 prohibit slavery, servitude, torture and all inhuman treatments. Article 7 declares that all people have the right for protection before law. Article 16 asserts that a woman and a man of "full age" of any nation or religion could willingly marry and establish their family. Article 17 underlines the right to own property. Articles 18 and 19 highlight the "right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" including voluntary religious conversion.

The *Constitution of India* (26 January 1950)[505] has incorporated all rights and values outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Immediately, it replaced the previous *Government of India Act* (1935) and *Indian Independence Act* (1950). The *Constitution of India* is a living document. Keeping its core values, it accepts minor amendments and thus adapts itself to the needs of the people of India. Its Preamble promises to all Indians that "JUSTICE, social, economic and political, LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, EQALITY of status and opportunity". It also promotes "among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [unity and integrity of the Nation]"[506]. Articles 14–16,[507] 19(1)(g), 21 and 51A are foundational for our current

[504] The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, United Nations*, available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[505] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", *Legislative Department: Government of India*, available at http://www.legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/coi-4March2016.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[506] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", p. 1.

understanding of women's rights and opportunities. All efforts and rights towards gender balance rest on these constitutional securities and assurances.

5.2 Examples of Indian laws empowering women

An important way, how Indian lawmakers tried to promote gender balance, was their attempts to assist women to receive inheritances, maintenance and other succession-related benefits. The *Marriage Act* (1956), the *Hindu Succession Act* (1956) mark important points in recognising the equality of women in making decisions, shaping their destiny and enjoy the fruit of their labour. Women activists and law makers knew their inadequacy; they tried to address them. For example, the Law Commission of India took actions to redress the grievances. In May 2000, their 174th Report advanced their property rights of women in India.[508] Five years later, in 2005, their 204th Report revisited the amended versions of the Hindu Succession Act"[509] and expressed their dissatisfaction as follows:

> Inspite of the constitutional mandate for gender equality, gender bias and discrimination continue to be prevalent in the Indian society in one form or another. Though there are distinct signs of gradual reduction of inequalities on the basis of sex, yet these could not be eliminated altogether. There is no denying of the fact that the fight against gender inequalities has to be pursued with sustained rigours on a long term basis until the ultimate goal of gender equality is attained.[510]

Even after this revision, the law makers found incompatibilities in the legal provisions for the maintenance of Hindu wives. Their report of January 2015,[511] moved their quest for gender equality regarding inheritance and maintenance for Hindu wives a step forward. This report

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[507] Article 14, for example, of *the Constitution of India*: Women have equality before law, equal protection from discrimination based on "religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth." Article 15 guarantees equal access to permitted places, jobs, education, dwelling places, water resources, and the like. Article 16 affirms access to all jobs without caste prejudices.

[508] The "174th Report: Property Rights of Women: Proposed Reforms under the Hindu Law, May 2000", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://www.lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/kerala.htm (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[509] The "204th Report: Proposal to Amend the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 as amended by Act 39 of 2005", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report204.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

[510] The "204th Report: Proposal to Amend the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 as amended by Act 39 of 2005", p. 8.

[511] The "252nd Report: Right of the Hindu Wife to Maintenance: A relook at Section 18 of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, January 2015", *The Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report204.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2018).

recommended that if a daughter-in-law had to take care of her insane husband, her status remains worse than a widow. Therefore, her father-in-law must give her maintenance.[512] Thus, the law makers identified areas and instances that had escaped the attention of the earlier generations. The laws became more specific to contexts, examples and needs of the women upholding their dignity, modesty and value.

These contexts and needs differ from one context to another and from one person to another person. It is imperative that the laws affirm gender equality. The following five Acts seek to protect the women in society, at home, and in work places. The *Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956*[513] is meant to protect women from being forcefully engaged for prostitution and any form of sexual exploitation. In March 1975, the Law Commission of India reconsidered this Act[514] to "rescue and rehabilitate girls and women who, owing to circumstances over which they have no control, have fallen in the trap of prostitution."[515] The law makers found the year 1975 as a good occasion because the United Nations had already declared 1975 as the *International Women's Year*. The punishment should include not only the keepers of the brothels, but also those who are involved in the conveyance of the victims and those who pay for sexual acts.[516] All these legal efforts were meant to uphold the dignity of women and to promote gender justice.

The *Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961* was a landmark achievement.[517] It prohibits both directly and indirectly demanding and giving dowry. Its Article 6 stipulates that where "any dowry is received by any person other than the woman in connection with whose marriage it is given, that person shall transfer it to the woman" within three months.

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[512] The "252nd Report: Right of the Hindu Wife to Maintenance", p. 2.

[513] The "Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (Act Number 104 of 1956)", *Law Ministry of India,* available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1956/A1956-104.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[514] The "64th Report: The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Woman [sic! = women] and Girls Act, 1956", *Law Commission of India,* available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report64.pdf (accessed on 5 March 2018).

[515] The "64th Report: The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Woman [sic! = women] and Girls Act, 1956", p. ii.

[516] The "64th Report: The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Woman [sic! = women] and Girls Act, 1956", p. 76.

[517] The "Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Act Number 28 of 1961", *National Commission for Women,* available at http://ncw.nic.in/acts/thedowryprohibitionact1961.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

In 1980, the Law Commission of India considered *Rape and Allied Offences: Some Questions of Substantive Law, Procedure and Evidence*.[518] The lawmakers have considered the female victims of rape and the consequences which they experience physically, emotionally and psychologically. They are aware how the act of rape destroys the dignity, modesty and safety of a girl or a woman. They underline the seriousness of this crime by stating that rape "is the ultimate violation of the self!" The man, who committed rape, could not claim consent of the girl or a woman, whom he may have threated or hurt or humiliated. Social activists and non-governmental organisations dealing with victims of rape have contributed much to the protection of women. These measures should ultimately equip women to lead a life of dignity and worth. Then only, the society could move towards gender balance.

The *Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986*[519] prohibits "indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." Further, it clarifies the meaning of 'indecent representation' as depicting in "any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating, women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals." Its Article 4 states that no person shall "produce or cause to be produced, sell, let to hire, distribute, circulate or send by post any book, pamphlet, paper, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph, representation or figure which contains indecent representation of women in any form." Protecting the public image of women is vital for the enhancement of gender equality in a patriarchal society.

[518] The "84th Report: Rape and Allied Offences: Some Questions of Substantive Law, Procedure and Evidence", *Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report84.pdf (accessed on 5 March 2018).

[519] The "Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986, Act Number 60 of 1986", *National Commission for Women*, available at http://ncw.nic.in/acts/TheIndecentRepresentationofWomen Prohibition Act 1986.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

The *Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987*[520] indicates the legal necessity to prohibit this inhuman practice and its continuation into our modern times. Article 2(c)(i–ii) defines sati as the

> burning or burying alive of any widow along with the body of her deceased husband or any other relative or with any article, object or thing associated with the husband or such relative […] irrespective of whether such burning or burying is claimed to be voluntary on the part of the widow or the women or other-wise.

Article 2(b)(i–iv) explains the punishment for those persons who justify or prepare or glorify or are involved in the burning or burying of a widow alive. It also prohibits the creation of trusts or funds or places of worship or ceremonies for a *sati*-victim. It is evident that this Act was passed after the gruesome *sati* in Rajasthan in September 1987.[521] However, when eleven persons praised this widow's self-immolation, they were arrested; due to divergent interpretation of this Act, these accused persons were not prosecuted.[522] This example illustrates the frailty of lofty Acts.

The Government of India took all issues pertaining to the violation of women seriously and founded the *National Commission for Women* in 1990[523] to redresses their problem, prevent them from reoccurring and to sensitise the public on women issues. This commission looks after the *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005*. The home is the place where most women face and bear the worst kinds of challenges and threats. The second chapter of this Act outlines violence as any act, whether it is physical or verbal or emotional or

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[520] The "Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, Act Number 3 of 1988), *Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India,* available at http://www.wcd.nic.in/act/commission-sati-prevention-act-and-rules (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[521] "Sati", Saheli: *Women's Resource Centre,* available at https://sites.google.com/site/saheliorgsite/ violence/sati (accessed on 4 March 2018): "On September 4, 1987, a young widow called Roop Kanwar was burnt on her husband's funeral pyre in village Deorala, Rajasthan. The incident triggered nationwide protests against the regressive practice and its subsequent glorification."

[522] "Court Defends Glorification of Sati: special court acquits eleven," *Newsletter Jan–Apr 2004, Women's Resource Centre*, available at https://sites.google.com/site/saheliorgsite/violence/sati (accessed on 4 March 2018): On the 31st of January 2004, sixteen years after Roop Kanwar's immolation in Deorala, the Special Court on Sati Prevention cum Sessions Court in Jaipur acquitted all the eleven accused in four of the 22 cases of glorification of Sati that were filed in 1987.

[523] The "National Commission for Women Act, 1990, Act Number 20 of 1990", *Law Ministry of India*, available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1990/The%20National%20Commission%20for%20Women%20Act.%201990.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

economic or social, that causes or amounts to women or girls experiencing injury, threat, harassment, abuse, deprivation, disposal or restriction. The third chapter explains remedial means, police, judiciary, care homes and medical facilities must follow.

In 2007, the *Prevention of Women against Sexual Harassment Bill* was proposed. After protracted discussions, drafts, and consultations, the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law and Justice published on 23 April 2013 the comprehensive *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013*.[524] The President of India approved this Act of Parliament, and thus, it has far-reaching powers and consequences. Its opening paragraphs explain sexual harassment of women in work places as a violation against their constitutional rights to equality (Articles 14 and 15), life and its dignity (Article 21), practise any profession or occupation, and "to a safe environment free from sexual harassment." The architects of this law have fully considered and incorporated the spirit of the United Nation's *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1993). Article 2 (n) defines sexual harassment as "(i) physical contact or advances; or, (ii) a demand or a request for sexual favours; or, (iii) making sexually coloured remarks; or (iv) showing pornography; or (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature." The workplace covers all places, institutions and sectors, where women perform their duties. This Act prescribes codes of conduct for employers, law enforcing authorities and institutions. In every case, the worth, dignity, and safety of the woman, who lodges a complaint, remain important.

Two years later, in November 2015, the *Ministry of Women and Child Development*, Government of India, published their *Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace*.[525] The minister of the *Ministry for Women and Child Development* states that

[524] The "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (No. 14 of 2013), *Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice*, a facsimile copy of *The Gazette of India* (No. 18, Extraordinary, Part II: Section 1, dated 23 April 2013) available at http://feministlawarchives.pldindia.org/wp-content/uploads/the-sexual-harassment-of-women-at-workplace-prevention-prohibition-and-redressal-act-2013.pdf? (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[525] *Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace* (Prevision, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 for Employers/ Institutions/ Organisations/ Internal Complaints Committee/ Local Complaints Committee, New Delhi: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2015. Available at

improved education and employment opportunities have enabled women to work in many sectors, where many of them experience sexual harassment. Constitutionally, female workers must have safe and secure environments endowed with equality of status and opportunity and without any fear of sexual harassment. This handbook defines an aggrieved woman as follows:

> The Act recognizes the right of every woman to a safe and secure workplace environment irrespective of her age or employment/work status. Hence, the right of all women working or visiting any workplace whether in the capacity of regular, temporary, ad hoc, or daily wages basis is protected under the Act. It includes all women whether engaged directly or through an agent including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer. They may be working for remuneration, on a voluntary basis or otherwise. Their terms of employment can be express or implied. Further, she could be a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or called by any other such name. The Act also covers a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house.[526]

This Act clearly upholds gender equality and states that the impact of a sexual harassment (not its intent) and its subjective experience happening within "a matrix of power" are serious; they invite legal intervention, prosecution and punishment. This Act seeks to create a positive mind-set towards women and girls.

5.3 Supreme Court's judgement on *talaq* (1985 and 2017)

The Supreme Court judgement, known as the "Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors on 23 April, 1985"[527], was indeed a landmark in this history of women in Independent India. It involved a professional lawyer and his wife, whom he had married in 1932; three sons and two daughters were born to them. In 1975, he repeated the word *talaq* three times, 'divorced' his wife and refused to pay her any cost for her maintenance. Three years later, in April 1978, the 62-year old divorcee quoted Section 125 of the *Code of Criminal Procedure*, filed a case with the First-Class Magistrate in Indore, Madhya Pradesh and asked for a monthly maintenance of ₹500/- from her 'former 'husband', who at that time was earning ₹60,000/ per year. In November of the same year, he repeated his *talaq* and

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https://www.iitk.ac.in/wc/data/Handbook%20on%20Sexual%20Harassment%20of%20Women%20at%20Workplace.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[526] *Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace*, 2015, p. 7.

[527] Y.V. Chandrachud, "Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors on 23 April, 1985", *Supreme Court of India*, available at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/823221/ (accessed on 3 May 2018).

claimed to have divorced her irrevocably. He also claimed that according to the *Muslim Personal Law* he had given her necessary money during the intervening years of waiting (*iddat*). Accusations and counter-accusations went in circle for a considerable time. Lawyers, interpreters of the Quran, Muslim Personal Law, social activists expressed their complementary and contradictory opinions. The law courts deplored the inaction of the Article 44 of the Constitution of India, which asked the Government of India to formulate uniform civil code for all citizens. The judges of the Supreme Court reviewed how Islamic countries such as Pakistan responded to the existential needs of the divorced wives. They referred to the *Report of the Commission on Marriage and Family Laws* of the Government of Pakistan dated 4 August 1955, which tried to protect the large number of

> middle-aged women who are being divorced without rhyme or reason should not be thrown on the streets without a roof over their heads and without any means of sustaining themselves and their children. […] In the words of Allama Iqbal, 'the question which is likely to confront Muslim countries in the near future, is whether the law of Islam is capable of evolution – a question which will require great intellectual effort, and is sure to he answered in the affirmative'"[528].

Accordingly, the Justices of the Supreme Court of India dismissed the appeal of the husband and directed him to honour the judgement of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh and pay his divorced wife ₹10,000/-; if she needed a higher amount, according to Section 127 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, she could produce necessary evidence of her changed circumstances and submit a request[529].

Most women in India welcomed this judgement; At the same time, numerous Muslims deplored it. In 1986, the Congress Party won elections, formed the government, overturned the judgement of the Supreme Court of India, and had the Parliament enact *The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act* (1986)[530]. Thus, this "Shah Bano Case", as it came to be called, highlighted the precarious position of women in the Indian society, the tug-of war between the judiciary and the government, the sentiments associated with the religious

[528] Chandrachud, "Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors on 23 April, 1985".

[529] Chandrachud, "Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors on 23 April, 1985".

[530] "The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 (Act No. 25 of 1986, 19th May 1986)", available at https://f-origin.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/539/files/2012/06/muslim-women-protectn-of-rts-on-divorce-act-1986.pdf (accessed on 3 May 2018).

loyalties of the people. Eventually, this law was repealed; the Code of Criminal Procedure remains in force; according to its Sections 125, the divorcing man should support his divorced woman not merely for the period of the *iddat* i.e., about 90 days, but until she is remarried; if she remains unmarried and cannot sustain herself, he must support her if she needs assistance.

On 10 October 2015, Shayara Bano filed brought to the Supreme Court in another case of the *talaq*-divorce imposed on her by her husband Riwan Ahmad. The Supreme Court lawyers and judges examined the motives, teachings, and practice of *talaq* in the Muslim Personal Law, the Laws of the Arab States, the Southeast Asian States, the Sub-Continental States, previous judicial pronouncements on similar cases, and prepared a 395-page report. Ultimately, the Supreme Court treated it as "Muslim Women's Quest For Equality and pronounced its verdict on 22 August 2017[531]: it concluded that the Article 13(1) of the Triple Talaq Act of 1937 should be understood within the "laws in force", i.e., the Constitution of India. The *Triple Talaq* is instant and irrevocable. It does not allow room for two arbiters to try and reconcile the husband and wife and save their marriage bond. Thus, it remains arbitrary. A Muslim man can use it "capriciously and whimsically". This action contradicts the Article 14 of the Constitution of India. The Supreme Court got a majority judgement (3:2) set aside the practice of the *Triple Talaq*[532].

Four months later, on 28 December 2017, the Lok Sabha of the Parliament of India passed *The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017*. It is still waiting to become a law. As it stands, it prohibits divorce by the *talaq*. A Muslim husband can no longer divorce his wife by using *talaq* either orally or digitally or in other form; instead, he can seek his guidance from *The Code of Criminal Procedure* (1973). The lawmakers hope that their ban of *talaq* would liberate Muslim wives, by affirming their constitutional goals of gender morality, dignity, empowerment, equality and equity[533]. Countless Muslim women welcomed this bill;

[531] "The Shayara Bano vs Union Of India And Ors. Ministry Of on 22 August, 2017", *The Supreme Court*, available at https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/multimedia/archive/03194/Supreme_Court_judg_3194881a.pdf (accessed on 4 May 2018).

[532] "The Shayara Bano vs Union Of India And Ors. Ministry Of on 22 August, 2017", pp. 392–393.

[533] Ravi Shankar Prasad, "Bill No. 247 of 2017: The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 [dated 15 December 2017]", PRS Legislative Research, available at

Razia, a 24-year old divorced woman with two daughters, confessed that her "husband divorced her over phone citing birth of daughters as the reason behind it". She hoped that this bill would get her justice. Other Muslim women suggested that this Bill of the *Lok Sabah* ('House of the People', the Lower House of the Parliament) is a welcome start for their betterment. They suggested that this bill should have also banned the practice of polygamy among the Muslims[534].

5.4 Supreme Court's judgement on women's inheritance

Kerala has the longest history of Christianity in India. Yet, until 1986, it had the most unjust gender rule regarding property rights. Christian men, church leaders and state authorities benefited from this rule. Sections 28 of the *Travancore Christian Succession Act, 1092* (Kollan or Malayalam Era = 1916 CE) stated that a daughter, who had not yet received her *Strīdhan* ('woman-gift', i.e., dowry given to a bride by her parents or natal kin or by her husband at or after marriage), was eligible to receive "one fourth of the value of the share of the son or Rs. 5000 whichever was less"[535] As time passed, many political changes took place in Travancore. the *State Law of 1951* repealed the *Travancore Christian Succession Act* and in its place, it recognised the intestate succession provisions in Chapter II of Part V of the *Indian Succession Act* (1925). Additionally, this State Law was fully aware of the Article 14 of the Constitution of India, which guarantees to all citizens, including women, equality and equal protection before law. It prohibits discrimination "on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth." Despite these provisions, Christian men went by their custom rooted in the outlawed *Travancore Christian Succession Act*. Christian women of Tranquebar had inheritance rights, but they received their *Strīdhan*. However, after Mrs. Mary Roy had a filed a petition against the State of Kerala in this regard, Christian women received their inheritance

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http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Muslim%20Women%20(Protection%20of%20Rights%20on%20Marriage)/Muslim%20Women%20(Protection%20of%20Rights%20on%20Marriage).pdf (accessed 4 May 2018).

[534] Press Trust of India: "Muslim women hail triple talaq bill, seek ban on polygamy", *Times of India* (29 December 2017), available at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/muslim-women-hail-triple-talaq-bill-seek-ban-on-polygamy/articleshow/62298393.cms (accessed on 4 May 2018).

[535] P.N. Bhagawati, "Mrs. Mary Roy Etc. Etc vs State Of Kerala & Ors on 24 February, 1986", *Supreme Court of India*, available online at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1143189/ (accessed on 5 May 2018).

right. The Judges of the Supreme Court examined the inheritance laws of Travancore and Kerala. On 24 February 1986, they declared that all Indian Christian women, no matter where they live in India, have equal rights with their brothers and can equally share the property of their fathers.

Omana George points out the theological reason for this injustice practiced by Indian Christians for a such a long time. Paradoxically, they appealed to Genesis 2:24, which states that after marriage the husband left his parental home, lived in the (parental) house of his wife and they both became one flesh[536]. Christian men in Kerala distorted the meaning of this verse. As taught by their church leaders, they believed that the one-flesh-concept of the marriage nullified the wife's legal independent existence and rendered her a non-entity[537]. Even after the Supreme Court's verdict, Christian fathers customarily leave their property for their sons; at the time of marriage, they get a release deed from their daughters and do not give them any inheritance right. What they get as *Strīdhan*, also goes to their husbands; when they become widows, their sons administer their properties. Omana George concluded that Section 14 of the *Hindu Succession Act of 1956*, already amended in 2005, is far better than the inheritance rights of the Christian women. It is the birth right of a Hindu woman of a joint family to have here inheritance and living privileges in her parent's home[538].

According to Omana George, Christian women seldom go to a court and claim their rights. Their emotional attachment to their parent's house remains strong. In case, if they become abused and destitute, they do not have a place to go. Therefore, she proposes a separate *Married Women's Property Act* so that women "can own whatever they inherit or acquire from the parents at the time of marriage"; they should get, what is due to them in addition to their *Strīdhan*. She recommends married daughters not to sign the release deeds to

[536] Omana George, "Inheritance Rights of Christian Women since 'Mary Roy'", *Live Law*, 8 December 2014, available at http://www.livelaw.in/inheritance-rights-christian-women-since-mary-roy/ (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[537] George, "Inheritance Rights of Christian Women since 'Mary Roy'", 2014.

[538] George, "Inheritance Rights of Christian Women since 'Mary Roy'", 2014.

give up, what Mrs. Mary Roy had so courageously fought and obtained for all Christian women in India[539].

5.5 Examples of Indian laws pertaining to girl children

Gender balance requires proper attitude towards girl children from their infancy to their adulthood. If they manage to survive the ordeals of infancy, many minor girls (i.e., below the age of 18) do not have opportunities for formal education in supervised settings of schools or training institutes. Some of them are forced to marry during their childhood years.

5.5.1 Regarding child marriage

In 20th century, the *Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929*[540] tried to address this problem. Its Article 2 defined a male below 21 years and a female below 18 years as children. It specified the meaning of a minor as a girl or a boy under 18 years of age. This Act named child marriage as an evil that should be eliminated. Its Commentary mentioned the minor girls as the main victims of child marriages, who faced the "potentialities of dangers to the life and health" and "could not withstand the stress and strains of married life and to avoid early deaths of such minor mothers." Despite various attempts to curb child marriages, they survived in different forms. For example, in September 1992, five men raped a female social worker in front of her husband because she prevented them from agreeing to a marriage of a one-month old female baby. A local court tried these men and then acquitted them. This incident created many oppositions and did not go without its impact.[541]

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[539] George, "Inheritance Rights of Christian Women since 'Mary Roy'", 2014. For Further details on the achievements and consequences of Mrs. Mary Roy, see Sindhu Thulaseedharan, *Christian Women and Property Rights in Kerala: Gender Equality in Practice*, 2004, available at http://www.cds.ac.in/krpcds/report/sindhu.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2018); Karundeep Singh: "Mary Roy v. State of Kerala", *The World Journal of Juristic Polity*, August 2016, pp. 1–7.

[540] The "Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, (19 of 1929)", *Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India*, available at http://wcd.nic.in/child-marriage-restraint-act-1929-19-1929 (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[541] For further details on the development of this rape incident, see Saigal, Sonam: "Sexual harassment at work: The limits of the law", *The Hindu* (2 April 2017), available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/sexual-harassment-at-work-the-limits-of-the-law/article17763605.ece (accessed on 4 March 2018).

After several discussions, the Law Ministry of India introduced the *Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006*.[542] It kept most of the stipulations of the act of 1929 and added that a child marriage could be nullified, if the woman, so married, desired it within the two years of marriage. However, her children, if any, would remain legitimate. The local courts would decide the kind of maintenance of the wife, married as a child, and her children. Two years later, in February 2008, the Law Commission of India proposed amendments to the Act of 2006.[543] It recommends nullifying the child marriage, if the girl was 16 years of age. If the marriage was solemnised between 16 and 18 of years of age that marriage could be nullified. In this case, the child girls must request the nullification. The law makers are careful to safeguard the dignity and value of the girl children and to promote gender equality.

5.5.2 Regarding trafficking of girls

Trafficking and sale of women and children are crimes, which, in the view of the Law Commission of India, increased. In 1993, they took a *suo moto* action on these crimes[544] and tried to provide justice to these victims. They underlined the fact that Article 373A of the Indian Penal Code empowered the courts to punish the traffickers, if their transaction to dispose "persons below a certain age by way of sale or other mode of transfer" could be established. If they could not prove a transaction, the traffickers could not be punished. Therefore, the Law Commission of India wanted to amend the Article 373A to include any sale of human beings as an anti-social act that destroyed all types of progress over centuries. Then they explained the gravity of this offence as follows: no one should buy or sell women and children. Girls should not be used for commercial purposes. Section 1 (a) of the Article 373A of the *Indian Penal Code* prohibits selling, buying or hiring any person under 18 years

[542] The "Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Act No. 6 of 2007), *Law Ministry of India*, available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/2007/The%20Prohibition%20of%20Child%20Marriage%20Act,%202006.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[543] The "205th Report: Proposal to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and other allied Laws, February 2008", *Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report205.pdf (accessed on 4 March 2018).

[544] The "146th Report: Sale of Women and Children–Proposed Section 373A, Indian Penal Code, 1993", *Law Commission of India*, available at http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/101-169/Report146.pdf (accessed on 5 March 2018).

of age, any woman of any age, any person of "of unsound mind, as they apply in relation a person under the age of eighteen years"[545].

5.5.3 Regarding sex determination and feticide

In 1961, there were 976 girls for every 1,000 boys in India. However, within the next ten years, the number of girls fell sharply to 964 for every 1,000 boys. This fall alarmed the demographers and threatened to damage the morale of the Indian public. On 10 August 1971, the Government of India passed the *Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act* (Act number 34 of 1971)[546] with a view to raise the number of surviving girls and women in India. This Act permitted trained, certified and registered medical doctors to perform feticide in their specified medical facilities within the stipulated period of either 56 days or 8 weeks. Before they abort a foetus, they must make sure that the pregnancy resulted from a rape and would cause "a great injury to the mental health" of the woman. Secondly, they must have medical evidence that the developing foetus is sick and would be born with other incurable abnormalities. Thirdly, an unwanted pregnancy occurred due to the failure of a family planning device and this pregnancy could cause "a great injury to the mental health" of the woman. Article 8 of this Act protected the medical doctors, who acted in good faith and tried to save life: "No suit or other legal proceeding shall lie against any registered medical practitioner for any damage caused or likely to be caused by anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act."[547]

Obviously, the medical techniques that were developed to detect sickness of the foetuses and to assist women, who became pregnant against their wish or consent or expectation, was misused to detect the sex of the foetus; invariably, the female foetuses were aborted. As a result, the Census Report of 1981 showed 962 girls for 1,000 boys. Even in the next decade, the number of women declined steadily in such a way that the Census Report of 1991 recorded 945 girls for 1,000 boys. Demographers and concerned social activists deplored this steady

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[545] The "146th Report: Sale of Women and Children–Proposed Section 373A, Indian Penal Code, 1993", p. 6.

[546] The "Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971", *Law Ministry of India*, available at http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/P-ACT/1971/A1971-34.pdf (accessed on 5 March 2018).

[547] "The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971", p. 3.

disappearance of women in India. To remedy the situation and prevent the abuse of available laws and technologies, law makers introduced new measures and programmes.

One of these measures was the *Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act of 1994*, which came into power only from 1 January 1996.[548] This Act prohibits not only "determination and disclosure of the sex of foetus", but also "any advertisements relating to pre-natal determination of sex and prescribes punishment [i.e., imprisonment, fine or both] for its contravention." It permitted registered medical practitioners to use pre-natal diagnostic techniques for the express purpose of determining sicknesses such as "chromosomal abnormalities, genetic metabolic diseases, haemoglobinopathies, sex-linked genetic diseases, congenital anomalies, any other abnormalities or diseases as may be specified by the Central Supervisory Board."[549] All other offenders were liable for prosecution, imprisonment, fine and all these things together. Later, the Government of India introduced more severe rules[550] and amendments.[551]

Yet, the number of women in India did not increase at all. In 2001, the Census Report recorded only 927 girls for 1,000 boys. This was the lowest sex ratio in 20th century. It meant that more Indians used the pre-natal diagnostic techniques to opt for the birth of sons and to destroy female foetuses. Some of the law makers assumed that the problem of dowry caused the destruction of female foetuses. They found that both poor, rich, ill-educated and well-educated, unemployed and employed Indians practiced this social evil. Earlier many of them committed female infanticide. With the help of advanced technology, they could abort female foetuses under many pretexts.

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[548] The "Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 (Act No. 57 of 1994)", *State Legal Services Authority: Union Territory Chandigarh*, available at http://chdslsa.gov.in/right_menu/act/pdf/PNDT.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2018).

[549] "The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 (Act No. 57 of 1994)", p. 3.

[550] The "Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Rules, 1996 and Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Rules, 1996", *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India*, available at http://pndt.gov.in/writereaddata/mainlinkfile/File51.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2018).

[551] The "Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994, Amendment Act 2002 (No. 14 of 2003", *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India*, available at http://pndt.gov.in/writereaddata/mainlinkfile/File50.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2018).

In 2007, the Government of India published a handbook to educate the public about the importance girl children and women for the country, especially for lawful marriages, companionships, and future growth. They admitted, as in previous occasions, that the cost of dowry was the main cause for the missing girls. Their statement emphasising this fact reads as following:

> The high number of 'missing girls' [i.e., only 927 girls under 6 years of age for 1,000 boys under 6 years of age according to the Census Report of 2001] is indicative of the poor status of the girl child – and of women. The overpowering desire to have a male child stems from economic and social factors: a son does not have to be married off with a dowry, he will grow up to be the breadwinner and support his parents (the fact that this not always true is another matter!), he will carry the family name forward. A daughter is seen as a burden from day one.[552]

5.6 Agencies trying to move Indians towards gender equality

5.6.1 Indian government agencies for gender parity

The Government of India has many institutions, agencies and welfare projects that deal with women issues. The Parliament, the Central Government, the State Governments, the law courts, the Law Commission of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, the National Human Rights Commission and Centre for Social Research are some of them. This section briefly examines select examples of how the Parliament, the State of Tamil Nadu and the law courts in Tamil Nadu addressed few issues related to women for a decade since 2008.

Firstly, the Parliament represents the people of India. Elected representatives address all matters that pertain to the healthy life of people. One of the issues that has attracted their sustained attention under various governments is the necessity for gender equality. They debated, proposed and devised legal provisions and remedial means to promote safety, security, and progress of girls and women in the places of living, learning and working.[553] The

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[552] The "Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Section) Act, 1994: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions: A Handbook for the Public", *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India*, available at http://pndt.gov.in/writereaddata/mainlinkfile/File53.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2018), pp. 10–11.

[553] For an example of an a debated and proposed Act, see The "Prevention of Female Infanticide Bill, 2013, Bill No. 8 of 2013", reproduced in *The SVI Project: Documenting Sexual Violence & Impunity in South Asia*, available at http://sviproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Prevention-of-Female-Infanticide-Bill-2013-to-be-introduced-in-Rajya-Sabha.pdf (accessed on 7 March 2018).

following examples can sufficiently illustrate their efforts to prevent harm to female babies, girls, and women.

On 25 February 2008, the President of India, addressed both Houses of the Parliament in New Delhi and outlined how his administration had planned to alleviate the sufferings of Indian women, give them educational opportunities and to amend then existing laws to better serve the women. He knew how low Indian men had been traditionally thinking about their own women and how they were unable to give up their prejudices.[554]

Despite these and other patriarchal prejudices against women, the Parliament of India kept on trying to improve the status of women in India. On 7 August 2014 several female Members of Parliament stressed the importance of gender equality in India.[555] Two of them clearly articulated the plight of women in India.

Bijoya Chakravarty, who was the Member of Parliament for Guwahati in Assam, explained how sexual harassment and torture of women rose in India and why women victims were unable to get justice. She stated that 15% of Indian women had experienced sexual harassment including rape. She wondered why the "rapists and molesters" failed to view women as their own daughters, sisters, mothers and grandmothers. On the one hand, Indians worshipped female goddesses. On the other hand, they adhered to the mind-set of "Rishi Manu", who had died long ago. She interpreted this mind-set of patriarchal dominance known

[554] "President's Address to Both The Houses of Parliament Assembled on 25 February 2008", Lok Sabha Debates, available at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1642708/ (accessed on 7 March 2018): "Empowerment of women through female literacy is our single biggest challenge in the social sector. The National Literacy Mission will make acceleration of female literacy its key goal. We have moved closer to complete Legal Equality for Women in all spheres by removing discriminatory legislation, amending existing legislation and by enacting new legislation that gives women equal rights of ownership of assets like houses and land. Amendments are being considered to the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. Laws pertaining to bonded labour, plantation labour, factory and migrant labour will also be made gender sensitive. Removal of age-old prejudices, particularly bias against women in society is the biggest challenge to achieve equality. My Government is committed to strictly enforce laws relating to dowry, female infanticide, female foeticide and human trafficking and to realize a gender-neutral India. To ensure proper enforcement of children's rights, a National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has been set up. Government proposes to launch a series of measures designed to address the serious issue of malnutrition among a large number of our children."

[555] "Further Discussion On The Need To Have Stringent Legislation To Check … on 7 August, 2014", *Lok Sabha Debates*, available at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/79988034/ (accessed on 7 March 2018).

as the "I am the boss"-attitude, which in her opinion "kills the very fabric of our society." She insisted that the "the dominating male mind-set needs total transformation in our society". She concluded her speech by describing the reality that she faced: "Presently, every parent is afraid of sending their girls outside their houses alone. Even we, many lady MPs, are also afraid to go out alone. When we cannot protect ourselves in such a condition, how can we give protection to the others?"[556] She concluded her speech by highlighting an action plan for the Government of India to involve four P's, namely "protection of human rights, prosecution of offenders, prevention of violence and provision of services to the survivors."[557]

The second Member of Parliament was Kakoli Ghos Dastridar of Barasat, West Bengal. She forcefully reiterated what her colleague Bijoya Chakravarty said and added other pertinent information on the plight of Indian women. "It is tragically ironic that the one who creates life, that is the mother, is not allowed to be born or not allowed to live. Out of the 12 million girl children born every year in the country, one million do not reach their first birth day. They are killed even before they reach one year of their age."[558]

The second kind of the government agencies are the state governments. For example, the *Tamil Nadu Government Schemes for Women and Child*[559] provide further examples to promote gender equality. These schemes arrange subsidy on the loans, financial help for the needy women, scholarship for girl students, nutrition for female children, help for self-employment for trained women, and the like. These efforts are meant to empower women, promote development, gender equality and justice, to ensure "women's social, economic and political empowerment, fulfilment of their rights, promoting their participation and leadership", "protect Women from Domestic Violence", to guarantee child care, development and sex ratio.

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[556] "Further Discussion On The Need To Have Stringent Legislation To Check … on 7 August, 2014".

[557] "Further Discussion On The Need To Have Stringent Legislation To Check … on 7 August, 2014".

[558] "Further Discussion On The Need To Have Stringent Legislation To Check … on 7 August, 2014".

[559] "Tamil Nadu Government Schemes for Women and Child", *Tamil Nadu Government*, available at http://www.newincept.com/tamilnadu/tamil-nadu-government-women-and-child-schemes.html (accessed on 7 March 2018).

To reach these goals, the Government of Tamil Nadu has the following schemes: *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Residential Schools*, *Chief Minister's Girl Protection Scheme*, *Cradle Baby Scheme*, *National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level* and *Sivagami Ammaiyae Memorial Girl Child Protection Scheme*. Of all these schemes, the *Cradle Baby Scheme* seems to have been effective. For example, on 7 August 2014, the Member of Parliament from Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, informed the Parliament, how this scheme, initiated in 1992 in Salem District, saved 1,338 infants, of whom 1,272 were female.[560]

The third kind of government agencies are the law courts. On 5 February 2008, the Madras High Court closed their investigation of Anjala Kamatchi, a 26-year-old mother of two living girls in Nāmakkal. She had buried her third girl infant alive. The court imprisoned her and fined her. These punishments were meant to help other mothers not to kill their female babies.[561]

The second example, dated 15 December 2017, comes from the records of the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court.[562] Andrews, a lawyer, narrated gruesome stories of terrible violence against women, committed by men, who in his view, were less than animals. He accused the governments, policy makers, social activists, police and the insensitive men of India for their inability in protecting women from the following unspeakable crimes. Andrews started his plea by calling on Mother India: "Hey Bharatha Matha!! look how your daughters are being molested, sexually assaulted and murdered by some of the devilish creatures roaming in your land. The said culprits could neither be termed as 'human beings' nor as 'animals', as even animals are noble in their own way."[563]

Then, Andrews narrated five shocking events that took place in 2017: In February, a youth raped a 7-year old girl in Mugalivakkam, Chennai. In August, a 10-year old girl, who was raped earlier, gave birth to a baby girl in Government Medical College and Hospital in

[560] "Further Discussion On The Need To Have Stringent Legislation To Check … on 7 August, 2014".

[561] "Anjala @ Kamatchi F/A 26 Years vs State […] on 5 February 2008", *Madras High Court*, available at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/212761/ (accessed on 7 March 2018).

[562] "Andrews vs The State on 15 December 2017", *Madras High Court*, available at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/116876038/ (accessed on 7 March 2018).

[563] "Andrews vs The State on 15 December, 2017".

Chandigarh. In October, a drunken man in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh raped a 100-year old grandmother, who died soon thereafter. In the same month, four men raped a 30-year old mother in front of her husband and children in Muzzafar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. In December, a gang of men raped and burned a 15-year-old minor girl in Sagar City, Madhya Pradesh. He summarised his views with these words: "The above rapes and gang rapes reported in the media are only to show that the horrific and gruesome crimes are occurring unabated putting a question mark over the safety of women in India, despite many stringent laws"[564].

The fourth kind of governmental agencies working toward gender balance in India are government-aided research institutions such as the *Centre for Women's Development Studies* in New Delhi. The *Indian Council of Social Science Research* support it. They are involved in research, training, networking, consultancy and advocacy projects. They work toward assisting women, who realising their own potentials, could transform themselves and others with whom they interact. Their equal participation "in all spheres of national development" should result from weakening and eliminating those "ideas and institutions that marginalise" their role and contributions. Women's role and contribution in society are weakened or eliminated. They support women to actively participate in politics and decision-making bodies. They should not be "passive recipients of marginal hand-outs." They need "maternity protection, child care, literacy education, widening opportunities for employment and training." In this manner, they can get rid of "mystification, ignorance and distortions regarding women and their roles in society."[565]

5.6.2 Non-government agencies to empower women

Many non-governmental agencies had much closer contacts with the girls and women of India than several governmental agencies. Wives of male missionaries, the female Zenana missionaries[566], female missionaries, female missionary medical doctors[567], Indian Bible

[564] "Andrews vs The State on 15 December, 2017".

[565] *Centre for Women's Development Studies: Aims and Objectives*, available at http://www.cwds.ac.in/about-us/aims-and-objectives/ (accessed on 10 March 2018).

[566] Harriette Lloyd, *Hindu Women: With Glimpses into their Life and Zenanas*, London: James Nisbet, 1982.

women became models for countless Indian women, who embraced Christian faith. Eliza Kent explained, how some European and North American female missionaries and their Tamil Bible Women assistants enabled Christian and non-Christian Tamil women to get education, vocational training in needle work.[568] Above all, they initiated an alternative way of thinking and living, which transformed the life of Tamil Christian women in places such as Madurai.

Likewise, the exemplary work of Amy Carmichael (1867–1951)[569] in rescuing the *devadāsīs* from various Hindu temples in Tirunelvēli District of Tamil Nadu and the establishing of the *Dohnavur Fellowship* deserve a special mention. Her books entitled *Things As They Are* (1903), *Lotus Buds* (1910) and *Gold Cord* (1932) influenced many readers to follow her example of ministering to girls and women in Tamil Nadu. Following the footsteps of these European and North American missionaries, Indian Christians too established *ashram*s, hostels, hospitals, vocational training centres to ennoble the lives of women in their neighbourhoods.

Indian Independence (1947), the *Universal Declaration of Human Right*s (1948), the *Constitution of India* (1950), the above-mentioned laws about women and girl children, and India's commitments to international agreements such as *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) and *The Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child* (2006) provided fertile ground for the formation and growth of numerous non-governmental agencies that seek to empower women and to move toward gender equality.

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[567] Burton, Antoinette: "Contesting the Zenana: The Mission to Make 'Lady Doctors for India," 1874–1885, *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1996, pp. 368–397. To gain an insight into the magnificent legacy of Ida Scudder, the founder of the Vellore Christian Medical College in Tamil Nadu, see Janet Benge and Geoff Benge: *Ida Scudder: Healing Bodies, Touching Hearts*, Seattle/Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2003.

[568] Eliza F. Kent, "Tamil Bible Women and the Zenana Mission of Colonial South India", *History of Religions*, Vol. 39, No. 2: *Christianity in India*, 1999, pp. 117–149. For her fuller treatment of this subject, see Kent, 2004.

[569] Frank Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur: the story of a lover and her beloved*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1953; Elliot, Elisabeth: *A Chance to Die: the Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*, Old Tappan, N.J.: F.H. Revell Co., 1987; Elisabeth Elliot: *Amy Carmichael: Her Life and Legacy*, London: MARC; 1988; Ruth A. Tucker, "Biography as Missiology: Mining the Lives of Missionaries for Cross-Cultural Effectiveness," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1999, 429–440.

Some agencies raise awareness of women's problems and work in villages, rural areas and slums in cities. Few other agencies provide help in education and vocational training to start and manage small businesses or self-help groups. Other agencies lobby for government's intervention for justice and prevention of crime against women. These agencies are so numerous that they cannot be named within the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis refers to just two non-governmental agencies as representative examples that are concerned with gender justice and moving towards gender balance.

Saheli-Women's Resource Centre is a voluntary movement started in August 1981. It draws its inspiration from socialist moments and applies their ideas to engage with women's "lives, bodies, labour, sexuality, the hold of religion and community, and the role of laws and the State"[570]. Their primary focus lies on violence against women at home and in the society. They include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and repression. Issue such as sati has not escaped their attention. They engage with women's health, debates and practices of sex selection, family planning, anti-fertility vaccines, legal struggles, impacts of caste on women and girls, and the like. They disseminate their knowledge through conferences, demonstrations, publications and posters.

The second representative organisation, the *Partners for Law in Development* began to function in 1998 is headquartered in New Delhi.[571] They promote social justice and gender equality. They provide legal advice for anyone, who seeks to redress women's problems associated with discrimination and marginalisation. They cooperate with local, regional and national initiatives work for the welfare women and girl children. They specialise in legal matters that apply for women and girl children. For this purpose, they maintain online the *Feminist Law Archives*,[572] which preserves legal documents, court judgements and examples of reformatory events under these categories: Acid Attacks, Community Action, Dowry and

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[570] *Saheli: Women's Resource Centre*, available at https://sites.google.com/site/saheliorgsite/autonomy-funding (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[571] *Partners for Law in Development: Advancing Social Justice and Women's Rights through Law*, available at http://pldindia.org/about-us/about-pld/ (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[572] *Feminist Law Archives by Partners for Law in Development: Chronicling the Engagement of the Women's Movement with Law*, available at http://feministlawarchives.pldindia.org/ (accessed on 9 March 2018).

Domestic Violence, Family and the Law, Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, Sexual Violence, Sexuality, Women and Health, Women and Work, Speech and Expression, and the like. Each subsection contains further sub-divisions, where one can easily find applicable legal documents and reports on past attempts to redress women's grievances. They have summarised their goals and methods of work as follows: gender justice requires "capacity development, knowledge creation and advocacy" and the implementation of the standards enshrined in the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*[573].

5.7 Gender injustice in contemporary India

This chronological survey from 2013 to 2018 demonstrates where gender inequality was and where it stands in the first half of 2018. The status of the women in 21st century India differs historically. A small number of women lead a better life because their nature, nurture, experience and exposure to alternative ways of thinking, living, making meaning and organising life was available to them. However, most Indian women suffer under the old prejudices and patriarchal notions of men.

5.7.1 The plight of Dalit women

Members of the upper *Varṇa*s and *Jāti*s have been considering and treating the *Avarṇa*-peoples, who do not belong to the Sanskrit-based fourfold social system as not merely as depressed classes, but also the Untouchables and non-humans. Article 17 of the *Constitution of India* abolished untouchability and forbade its "practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of Untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law"[574]. Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari, who has studied the background, the history and the impact of this Article, commented that the disability arising out of untouchability included "any incapacity, disqualification, restriction, prevention, liability, obstruction,

[573] *Partners for Law in Development: Advancing Social Justice and Women's Rights through Law*, 2018.

[574] The "Constitution of India: As on 9 November 2015", p. 8.

molestation, insult, injury or boycott"[575]. The *Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment* has published State-wise revised lists of all Scheduled Caste groups[576]. According to an analysis by the Times of India in 2014, in the last ten years (2004–2013, as compared to 1994–2003), atrocities against the Scheduled Caste Groups have gone up 245% in Haryana alone![577] In 2016, the highest number of atrocities against the Scheduled Caste took place (i.e., 10,426 cases equalling to 25.5% of the national level); Bihar took the second place with 5,701 cases and 14%[578]. These Scheduled Caste groups call themselves as *Dalit*s ('oppressed, crushed, broken people'). Countless organisations work to improve the conditions of Dalits in international[579], national[580], regional[581] and local levels. Almost all of them have adopted the slogan of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), namely *Educate-Agitate-Organise*. The month of March is celebrated as the *Dalit History Month*.

Even after 70 years of Indian Independence, atrocities against the Dalits, particularly against the Dalit girls, women and widows happen on a regular basis. Mass media do not carry all such events; yet, what they report is gruesome. This section examines only one aspect of these atrocities, namely the unspeakable plight of Dalit women caused by pre-meditated *Varṇa*- and *Jāti*-based prejudices, violent acts of deprivation, discrimination, outrageous attack on modesty such as molestation and rape, trafficking for prostitution and bonded labour

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[575] Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari, *The Law on Abolition of Untouchability: An Impact Analysis since Independence of India*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Burdwan/ West Bengal, 2004, available at (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/63970 (accessed on 9 June 2018).

[576] This list was updated on 26 October 2017 (http://socialjustice.nic.in/UserView/index?mid=76750, accessed on 10 June 2018).

[577] "Crimes against Dalits rise 245% in last decade", Times of India, 9 August 2014, available at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Crimes-against-dalits-rise-245-in-last-decade/articleshow/39904583.cms (accessed on 10 June 2018).

[578] *Crime in India 2016 Statistics*, Delhi: National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2017, p. xxxiii.

[579] For example, *The International Dalit Solidarity Network*, Farvergade 27D, DK-1463 Copenhagen K, Denmark (https://idsn.org/); The *Dalit Solidarity Network UK*, Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London SW9 9TL, England (http://dsnuk.org/).

[580] For example, *National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights*, 8/1, 2nd Floor, South Patel Nagar, New Delhi – 11000, India (http://www.ncdhr.org.in/).

[581] For example, *Dalit Foundation*, Dalit Shakti Kendra, Village Nani Devti, Sanand-Bawla Highway, Ahmedabad district, Gujarat 382 100 (https://dalitfoundation.net/).

in rural and urban areas. Dalit women experience exclusion from education for knowledge, skills and empowerment, employment in organised sectors and equal pay, sanitation and healthcare facilities (e.g., public toilets), village roads, common wells, grazing grounds, cultural rights. Even their murder by upper *Varṇa*- and *Jāti*-villians remains mostly unreported. Most Dalit women work as underpaid landless agricultural labourers and manual scavengers. Those who examined these atrocities against Dalit women conclude that even police and judiciary increased their suffering and helplessness[582]. It is a paradox that despite the active contributions to eliminate violence against Dalit women by government and non-governmental agencies and numerous social activists, Dalit women continue to suffer. Activists and others have identified *Varṇa*, *Jāti* and patriarchy as leading causes for Dalit women suffering.

> From Ancient India to modern India conditions haven't changed that much even after providing safeguards in the constitution. Cases of atrocities against Dalits are on the rise. In every hour two Dalits are assaulted; every day three Dalit women are raped, two murdered and two torched. These numbers are not even close to the reality of crimes committed against them, as village panchayat heads, *khaps* [police], local govt officials are mostly from upper caste and they duly support this system. Many go unreported due to fear of uprisal [sic! = reprisal], intimidation by police or simply that they will do nothing instead they will frame the victims, hurl abuses, beatings and rapes in police custody[583].

Thus, activists who work for the betterment of Dalit women do not speak about the theological reasons, which define femininity and masculinity. Hence, their dream and cry for justice, trust, empowerment, freedom, equality and opportunities to live with dignity and to protect their feminine modesty seem distant.

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[582] "Attacks on Dalit Women: A Pattern of Impunity" in Broken People: Caste Violence Against India's 'Untouchables', Human Rights Watch, available at https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-11.htm (accessed on 10 June 2018): "Throughout this report, Human Rights Watch has documented the use of sexual abuse and other forms of violence against Dalit women as tools by landlords and the police to inflict political "lessons" and crush dissent and labor movements within Dalit communities. In Laxmanpur-Bathe, Bihar, women were raped and mutilated before being massacred by members of the Ranvir Sena in 1997; in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, women have been beaten, arrested, and sometimes tortured during violent search and raid operations on Dalit villages in recent years. Like other Indian women whose relatives are sought by the police, Dalit women have also been arrested and raped in custody as a means of punishing their male relatives who are hiding from the police. As very young women, they are forced into prostitution in temples under the devadasi system."

[583] Gagandeep Singh, "Centuries of Humiliation and Struggle for Dignity Continues", *Velivada.com*, available at http://velivada.com/2018/04/09/centuries-of-humiliation-and-struggle-for-dignity-continues/ (accessed on 10 June 2018).

5.7.2 Gender issues at Pan-India level

On 7th February 2018, the *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare* of the *Government of India* published their *India Fact Sheet* of the *National Family Health Survey-4*, *2015–16*[584]. This eight-page report contains the most recent study of Indian population and includes the following gender-related details: In urban settings the sex ratio is 956 females for 1,000 males. Astonishingly, in rural settings there are 1,009 females for 1,000 men. Sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years stands 899 girls for 1,000 boys in urban settings and alarmingly 927 girls for 1000 boys in rural settings. 81.8% of girls between the age of 15 and 49 are literate in urban areas; in rural areas this percentage sinks to 61.5%. At the same time, literate males in urban settings are 90.8% and in rural areas 82.6%. 17.5% of women between the age of 20 and 24 got married before attaining 18 years. By contrast, only 14.1% of men between the age of 25 and 29 got married before attaining 21 years. Both in urban and rural areas, expectant mothers have routine pre-natal check-ups (69.1% in urban areas and 54.2% in rural areas). Likewise, their children, both boys and girls are vaccinated. This *India Fact Sheet* further indicates that 31.3% of urban women and 15% of rural women are overweight according to the Body Mass Index measurements. 50.8% of urban and 54.2% of rural women are anaemic. This India Fact Sheet measures, using eight indicators, women's empowerment and gender-based violence of women between the age of 15 and 49 years.

"Women's Empowerment and Gender Based Violence (age 15–49 years)[585]

[Line]	[Descriptors]	[Urban]	[Rural]
101	Currently married women who do usually participate in household decisions (%)	85.8	83.0
102	Women who worked in the last 12 months who were paid in cash (%)	23.2	25.4

[584] "India Fact Sheet: National Family Health Survey-4, 2015–16," *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India through the International Institute for Population Sciences (Deemed University)*, Mumbai, published on 7 February 2018, available at https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF31/India_National_FactSheet.pdf (accessed on 12 April 2018).

[585] "India Fact Sheet: National Family Health Survey-4, 2015–16," 2018, p. 6.

103	Ever-married women who have ever experienced spousal violence	23.6	31.4
104	Ever-married women who have experienced violence during any pregnancy (%)	2.9	3.5
105	Women owning a house and/or land (alone or jointly with others) (%)	35.2	40.1
106	Women having a bank or savings account that they themselves use (%)	61.0	48.5
107	Women having a mobile phone that they themselves use (%)	61.8	36.9
108	Women age 15–25 years who use hygienic methods of protection during their menstrual period (%)	77.5	48.2”

As soon as the raw data of the *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015–16* became available to media, Samarth Bansal of the *Hindustan Times* analysed the abovementioned eight gender indicators and published his result on 6 April 2017[586]: women in the North East of India have the best conditions of women’s empowerment. Sikkim and Meghalaya occupy the top positions. By contrast, “Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, fall behind the entire country in ‘women empowerment’. These states, along with West Bengal, occupy the bottom five positions in HT’s [= *Hindustan Time*’s] state rankings.”[587] When it comes to spousal violence, Bansal’s comments are indicative:

> As many as 28.8% of married Indian women reported having suffered spousal violence. State-wise, the indicator divides India into two halves, cut through a vertical line. A higher percentage of married women in the eastern half reported having experienced spousal violence. Manipur, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu are the worst, where more than 40% women said to have been a victim of domestic violence.[588]

[586] Smarth Bansal, “Indian states and women: where are they empowered, where are they not,” *Hindustan Times*, 4 April 2017, available at https://www.hindustantimes.com/interactives/women-empowerment-index/ (accessed on 12 April 2018).

[587] Bansal, “Indian states and women: where are they empowered, where are they not”.

[588] Bansal, “Indian states and women: where are they empowered, where are they not”.

A closer analysis of this report shows the north-south and east-west divide in women empowerment. The following two issues, namely children marriages and missing women, illustrate the existence of gender imbalance and injustice at Pan-Indian levels.

5.7.3 Persistence of child marriages

This section continues the earlier discussion on child marriages mentioned above in this chapter. According to a reliable news in the year 2011, about "40% of the world's child marriages take place in India"[589]. This is a staggering figure! The persisting practice of child marriages in India, particularly in north-western states, betrays gender imbalance and injustice in India, even after the introduction of the *Prohibition of Child Marriage Act* (2006). Its Article 2(a) defines a child as "a person who, if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age"[590]. It also defines a child marriage is "a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is a child"[591]. The 205th report of the *Law Commission of India*,[592] as already mentioned, proposed several amendments.

The *Centre for Social Research*, with the help of *National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development*, has published a detailed report on child marriages in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.[593] This 228-page long report contains chilling factors: Child marriages are riskier for the girl child than for the boy child. Her early pregnancy hinders her emotional and intellectual development. It harms her psychical health. She is then expected to work for the family of her child husband; all these mean exploitation of her time, labour and the like. She may have to endure more domestic violence than an adult woman. If a girl child is trafficked for brothels and prostitution, her life becomes miserable. The

[589] Nel Hedayat, "What is it like to be a child bride? The Truth About Child Brides", *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, 4 October 2011, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15082550 (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[590] The "Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Act No. 6 of 2007), p. 1.

[591] "The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Act No. 6 of 2007), p. 1.

[592] The "205th Report: Proposal to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and other allied Laws, February 2008", see the accompanying letter attached to this report.

[593] "Research Studies: Child Marriage Report", *Centre for Social Research*, available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-f1XIdg1JC_enpoQ2NEbW1Ea2c/view (accessed on 9 March 2018).

contracting parties want to make sure that the young bride is not married off to someone else, especially in the context, where girls are few or non-existent. The parents of the girl child fear that when she grows up, she might cost them more; and she may lose her virginity and thus bring shame on them.[594]

This report on child marriages quotes statistics of research undertaken by several scientific bodies. For example, its reference to the findings of the *National Family Health Survey* of 2005–2006 states that 44% of all married women between the age of 20 and 24 were married, when they were below 18 years of age.[595] Mostly, parents in rural areas do not seem to care about the existing laws that prohibit child marriages. In 2005, the *Frontline* magazine published an insightful essay on child marriages in India[596] and quoted the abstract from a letter dated 26 June 1885 of Rukhmabai, a victim of child marriage:

> I am one of those unfortunate Hindu women whose hard lot is to suffer the unnameable miseries entailed by the custom of early marriage. This wicked practice of child marriage has destroyed the happiness of my life. It comes between me and the things which I prize above all others - study and mental cultivation. Without the least fault of mine I am doomed to seclusion; every aspiration of mine to rise above my ignorant sisters is looked down upon with suspicion and is interpreted in the most uncharitable manner.[597]

It is not an exaggeration to suppose that his experience repeats itself in the lives of all child brides in India. The same essay printed the photos of a child bride with their 'husband' and relatives proudly standing in front of the *Bande ke Balaji Temple* in Jaipur, Rajasthan on *Akshaya Trithiya*, the so-called auspicious day for marriages. The parents of these pre-puberty child brides (beginning 5-years of age) say that they protect the chastity and virginity of their daughters, prevent their sexual exploitation and avoid a large dowry. The child marriages save them from social ostracism. The family of the child groom gets dowry money for immediate spending[598] and an unpaid female servant.[599] These and similar reasons keep this social evil

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[594] "Research Studies: Child Marriage Report", pp. 12–15.

[595] "Research Studies: Child Marriage Report", p. 9.

[596] Asha Krishnakumar and T.K. Rajalakshmi: "Child BRIDES OF INDIA", *Frontline*, Vol. 22, No. 14, 2–15 July 2005, available at http://www.flonnet.com/fl2214/stories/ 20050715006200400.htm (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[597] Krishnakumar, "Child BRIDES OF INDIA".

[598] Krishnakumar, "Child BRIDES OF INDIA".

alive and it seems to increase in intensity. A report of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, quoted in a news of the British Broadcasting Company on 13 May 2015 stated that "47% of girls in India were married before they turned 18, the official age for marriage."[600]

A reason for the persistence of child marriage stems from the unwillingness of grandfathers to change their attitudes and practices about their granddaughters. For example, a grandfather in Rajasthan, who knew of the existence of the laws pertaining to child marriages, claimed to the antiquity of this traditional practice and its validity as follows: "I hate the government for trying to stop us. This is the way we've always done things. The government bans this, saying do not get under-aged children married, but we don't care and we do these weddings anyway."[601]

Educate Girls, which is a non-governmental agency based in Mumbai, helps girls to get education, to avoid child marriages and to strive for a better future. A news coverage of this organisation stated in November 2017 that in "Rajasthan, 50–60% of girls are married below the age of 18. A lot of children – about 10–15% - are married below the age of 10"[602]. This news coverage also cited the findings of the UNESCO: "every extra year of education a mother has reduces infant mortality by 5-10% and raises her lifetime earnings by 20%"[603]. In Rajasthan, many girls could not get education because they were unable to walk long distances to schools. Indian branches of another non-governmental agency *ChildLine* work towards averting child marriages. In 2013, they targeted schools in the town of *Nāmakkal* in Tamil

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[599] Hedayat, "What is it like to be a child bride? The Truth About Child Brides": A 14-year old girl married a 19-year old man and went to with his family. She told that after her marriage her main work was washing "dishes, cleaning the floor, washing clothes and cooking."

[600] "Indian teenager's plea to annul her child marriage", *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, 13 May 2015 and available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-32717947 (accessed on 9 March 2018). This news tells of Santadevi Meghwal of Rohicha Kalan Village Jodhpur District, Rajasthan, who wanted to get her child marriage annulled.

[601] Hedayat, "What is it like to be a child bride? The Truth About Child Brides".

[602] David Reid, "Helping girls to study rather than become child bridges", *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, 28 November 2017, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41483813 (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[603] Reid, "Helping girls to study rather than become child bridges".

Nadu, where more child marriages were reported.[604] One of their success stories, published on 7 March 2018, offers simmers of hope for girl children, who would otherwise be forced into marriages[605]. Yet, the road to attain gender balance in India seems to be long and arduous.

5.7.4 Missing Indian women

The shortage of girls and women to match boys and men in India is another evidence for gender imbalance and injustice. Until 1970, the major cause for missing female children was female infanticide. Advance in pre-natal sex selection technology, first used as a method of population control[606], went out of control in diminishing birth of female infants. The 2001 Census reported the lowest Child Sex Ratio of 927 girls for 1,000 boys. Prosperous regions such as Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, wealthy and formally educated religious groups such as the Sikhs and Jains, certain regions like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, where earlier more girls and women used to live, registered lower number of girls and women than boys and men. The Child Sex Ratio for the Jains was 870 girls for 1000 boys; at the same time, the Sikhs had the lowest Child Sex Ratio, namely 786 girls for 1,000 boys. Usually, slum dwellers and people in rural villages had more girls than boys. After careful analysis of technology-aided sex selection and abortion, Sabu George came to the shocking conclusion.

> On average, each missing girl is an outcome of at least two fetal sex determinations and one sex-selective abortion. Using a conservative demographic estimate from the census data of 1.5 million girls eliminated before birth, this equates to at least 4.5 million criminal actions conducted between 1994 and 2001. Despite the widespread practice of female feticide, the Indian Medical Council and the State Councils have taken little action to deter mass malpractice.[607]

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[604] M.K. Ananth: "Child marriage: schools under the scanner", *The Hindu* (1 March 2013), available at http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/child-marriage-schools-under-the-scanner/article4464889.ece (accessed on 9 March 2018).

[605] "The girl who sabotaged her own wedding", *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, 7 March 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/indian_child_marriage (accessed on 9 March 2019).

[606] Sabu M. George, "Millions of missing girls: from fetal sexing to high technology sex selection in India", *Prenat Diagn*, Vol. 26, 2006, pp. 604–609:605: "Eminent Indian medical researchers who pioneered amniocentesis at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences advocated fetal sexing 30 years ago, arguing that it would assist those Indian women who repeatedly reproduce just to have a son, although this may not be acceptable in the West. They claimed that aborting female fetuses would not affect CSRs [i.e., Child Sex Ratios]. Subsequently, sex selection was promoted as a population control method and to stop female feticide."

[607] George, "Millions of missing girls: from fetal sexing to high technology sex selection in India", pp. 606–607.

Consequently, the number of missing girls and women in India keep on increasing. In 2008, a group of scientists, who examined birth records in Indian hospitals for nearly 100 years, concluded that 44 million women missing in India[608]. Two years later, after India had celebrated the *International Women's Day* on 8 March 2010, *The Hindu* reported that 42.7 million women were missing in India due to "lack of healthcare, malnutrition and selective abortion". Lack of brides posed a serious social problem for young men in Haryana. They had to go to Kerala or Assam and find their brides. This cross-fertilisation across "caste, religious and regional identities" might be a good thing, but the worrying thing was that these men did not exercise their free choice to find brides outside of their region; they had "no choice" all. Kalpana Sharma, the author of this report, reminded the politicians to urgently avert the gendercide and femicide that were happening in their states such as Maharashtra.[609]

Even eight years later, in 2018, the situation of women has not improved significantly. The *Economic Survey 2017–2018* of India, already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis (sections 0.1.1 and 0.5.2), portrays a grim picture of women in India. The slight progress of the number and status of the women from the previous years was good, but insufficient. The North-Eastern States apart from Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh had the most number of women. Kerala came second. "The lagging performers [in relation to women] are Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and, surprisingly Andhra Pradesh. Delhi's performance actually worsens in a decade [from the score of 76 in 2005–6 to just 79.9 in 2015–6]"[610].

This *Economic Survey of India* for 2017–2018 concludes, as already mentioned in the Introduction (section 0.1.1 reiterated with further reports under section 0.5.2), with a shocking affirmation of more missing women than ever before. After stating that "more than 2 million

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[608] Mohit Sahni, et. al.: "Missing Girls in India: Infanticide, Feticide and Made-to-Order Pregnancies? Insights from Hospital-Based Sex-Ratio-at-Birth over the Last Century*," Plos One* (Open Access Journal), available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2377330/pdf/pone.0002224.pdf (accessed on 10 March 2018).

[609] Kalpana Sharma, "The Other Half – Missing: 42.7 million women," *The Hindu* (3 April 2010), available at http://www.thehindu.com/arts/magazine/article385587.ece (accessed on 10 March 2018).

[610] *Economic Survey of India, 2017–2018*, 2018, pp. 110–111.

women go missing across age groups every year (either due to sex selective abortion, disease, neglect, or inadequate nutrition)"[611], it reveals this sickening situation:

> Because the challenge is historical and long-standing, no one stakeholder is responsible for creating it or solving it. On gender, society as a whole—civil society, communities, households—and not just any government must reflect on a societal preference, even meta-preference for a son, which appears inoculated to development. The adverse sex ratio of females to males led to 63 million "missing" women. But the meta-preference manifests itself in fertility-stopping rules contingent on the sex of the last child, which notionally creates 'unwanted' girls, estimated at about 21 million.[612]

63 million missing women and 21 million unwanted girls illustrate the current socio-cultural status, to which grandmothers, wives, mothers, daughters, mothers-in-law, daughters-in-law, and granddaughters are assigned in India. The authors of the *Economic Survey 2017–2018* are quick in providing solutions, which they assume will move Indians towards gender balance. They refer to the major governmental projects such as the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* ('Save Girl Child and Educate Girl Child') and *Sukanya Samridhi Yojana* ('Girl Child Prosperity Account'). They assume that these projects will enable the girl children to get education and their parents to save money on their behalf for future expenses. A mother, who works in either a private or a public sector, is entitled for 26 weeks mandatory maternity leave with salary. Any organisation that employs more than fifty persons must have a crèche for children. The *Economic Survey* knows of the "unequal contest" between government support rendered to working women on the one hand and the unyielding cultural norms on the other. It wishes that the women would participate in and contribute to the "irresistible forces of development" and fall prey to the harmful cultural norms. In this regard, the *Economic Survey* does not say anything about defeating the harmful cultural thoughts and practices.

5.7.5 Increasing instances of rape

Rape is a sexual assault and abuse, "in which a victim is coerced into and forced to perform sexual activities; this can include vaginal or anal penetration and oral copulation"[613]. The victim can be a child, an adolescent or an adult. The offenders are usually domestic

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[611] *Economic Survey of India, 2017–2018*, 2018, p. 112.

[612] *Economic Survey of India, 2017–2018*, 2018, p. 116.

[613] Michelle Parke, "Rape", *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, Vol. IV, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Detroit: Thomson Gale, pp. 1244–1251:1244

partners, social acquaintances, and those with higher power and exploitative skills. Impulsive anger, quick desire to still one's sexual appetite and revenge are some motives. Mostly, the offenders know the victims, their movements, thought patterns and lifestyle. Accordingly, they plan and prepare to realise their purposes. At the end, the rapists, whether they act individually or as a gang, harm their victims physically, psychologically and socially. The traumatised victims suffer long term and are often unable to function well at home and in the society. It is not uncommon that rapists maim or kill their victims, threaten their family members and relatives.

All rape victims in India are invariably girls and women. For fear of social stigma, exclusion and threat to life, most rape victims do not report to the police. Even if reported, it was hard for the judges to believe the words of the victims. Judiciary is slow convincing the offenders. Even the keepers and defenders of the law are not exempt from raping the women under their care. In 1972, two policemen raped a 16-year old tribal girl within their own police station in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh[614]. Only in 1983, Indian judges were asked to believe the words of a victim, who did not consent to sex[615].

Past six years from 2012 to 2018 have been worst for rape victims. The gang rape of a 23-year old woman in Delhi on 16 December 2012 caused a moral outcry in India[616]. As new awareness increased at least tentatively, a report of 5 January 2013 stated that "a rape is reported every 21 minutes"[617] in India. Justice J.S. Verma's committee suggested amendments to Criminal Law; a reviewer of this report highlighted the necessity of the authorities to view rape as a worst crime and the victimised woman person and to do everything to rehabilitate her[618].

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[614] "The rapes that India forgot", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 5 January 2013, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-20907755 (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[615] "The rapes that India forgot", 2013.

[616] "Explaining India's new anti-rape laws", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 28 March 2013, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-21950197 (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[617] "The rapes that India forgot", 2013.

[618] V. Venkatesan, "Books: Rape Victims & justice", *Frontline*, 7 February 2014, available at http://www.frontline.in/books/rape-victims-justice/article5601122.ece (accessed on 5 May 2018): Paragraph 38 of Chapter 3, Handbook on New Anti-Rape Law: "When a woman complains of rape, it is

It is not easy to review all rape-related reports and essays in various newspapers, magazines, journals. However, the three most recent events can be briefly mentioned here. Brinda Karat[619] gives the details of the two girls: the 16-year old girl in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh wanted to report rape in June 2017. The police were unwilling to help her. Since she went to the police, her father was killed on 9 April 2018.[620] On 25 August 2017, a well-known spiritual leader Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh received his sentence from the special court in the town of Panchkula, in Haryana. In 2002, he had raped two of his female devotees in his headquarters known as *Dera Sacha Sauda*. When the verdict was handed out, riots erruped; and claimed twenty-three lives. This reality shows the rampant nature of injustice against women in certain spiritual centres and how slow the judiciary acts. In this case, fifteen years elapsed between the actual crime and the sentence[621].

The rape of the 8-year old nomadic girl Asifa in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir from 12 to 17 January 2018 was horrible and it shocked entire India.[622] A gang of influential office bearers raped and killed her. Local lawyers refused to take up this charge. On 9 April 2018,

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not the physical part of the woman which is directly the focus of attention. It is the offence and the offence against the bodily integrity of the woman as a person which is the offence in question. We, therefore, think that we need a woman to be viewed as a whole and not as a physical centre of sexual congress. At the same time, it must not be viewed that a woman, while making a complaint, is in any way acting less honourably or in any way disturbing what is considered as the repository of honour of the family, community and others."

[619] Brinda Karat, "No place for young girls", *The Hindu*, 13 April 2018, available at http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/no-place-for-young-girls/article23516795.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[620] Karat, "No place for young girls": "What is happening right now in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh? A 17-year-old had tried to file a case of rape against an MLA who belongs to the ruling BJP government. The alleged rape took place last June [2017], but in spite of all her efforts, the police refused to file an FIR against the MLA. She was forced to stage a protest before the Chief Minister's house, but even that made no difference. On the contrary, the girl and her family were harassed. Her father died in police custody. What would that young woman have faced — traumatised, humiliated and then to see her own father being arrested and killed [9 April 2018] because she had dared to make a complaint against a powerful man, backed by the Chief Minister. This is enough to discourage any complaints of sexual harassment against men with powerful connections."

[621] "India guru rape case: 23 die in unrest as Ram Rahim Singh convicted", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 25 August 2017, available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-41049705 (accessed on 15 June 2018).

[622] Karat, "No place for young girls": "Can any human being remain untouched, unmoved by the horrors the child had to face, depicted so graphically in the chargesheet? Is there anyone who will not be shaken with rage and anger against the extreme brutalities committed by the accused? They are accused of abducting her, sedating her, raping her in turn, inviting an associate from Meerut to 'satisfy his lust,' postponing the moment of her death because one of them 'wanted to rape her' again."

the criminal investigators of the Jammu and Kashmir Police submitted a report on this gruesome event and the Supreme Court intervened to process the case appropriately. As the researcher of this thesis writing is section, investigations, national outcry and demand for punishing the offenders continue.

On 25 April 2018 was a golden day: the court in Jodhpur in Rajasthan sentensed the 77-year old Asaram Babu for life; he had raped a 16-year old girl on 15 August 2013, whom her parents had brought to him for 'spiritual healing'. According to the police report, referred to by the *British Broadcasting Corporation*, he raped the girl "while her parents waited outside chanting his prayers" and "threatened to murder her family if she spoke about the incident"[623]. This girl informed her parents about this horror; ensuing battle for justice lasted for five years. This instance underlines the fact that the act of rape does not know any social or spiritual differntiation. It happens in all places and the women remain the victims. The degree of this gender injustice knows no limits. Two days after Asaram Babu was imprisoned, the President of India on 27 April 2018 provided the possibility for a death penalty for rapists of "minors under two different age groups – 'woman' under 12 years and 16 years" and an amendment of Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code to enhance punishment[624]. This provision has not yet reached the hearts and minds of the people.

A single week in May 2018 three rape tragedies took place. Each time, a teenage girl was raped and burned alive. On 5 May 2018: two men abducted, raped and burned a 16-year old girl alive in Raja Kendua, a village in Jharkhand[625]. They abducted her, when her parents were at a wedding party. After they had returned, the girl told them of her ordeal. They went to the village elders, who asked the two rapists "to do 100 sit-ups and pay a 50,000 rupee (£550; $750) fine as a punishment." The rapists were so enraged that they "thrashed the parents",

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[623] "Asaram Bapu: Indian guru sentenced to life for raping girl", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 25 April 2018, available at (accessed on 15 June 2018).

[624] "Death for rapists of minors: Centre to move amendment to make POCSO Act [i.e., Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act] gender-neutral", *The Hindu*, 27 April 2018, available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/death-for-rapists-of-minors-centre-to-move-amendment-to-make-pocso-act-gender-neutral/article23701498.ece (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[625] "India girl, 16, burnt alive after Jharkhand rape", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 5 May 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-44016176 (accessed on 5 May 2018).

rushed to her house, and "set the girl ablaze with the help of their accomplices." Investigations continue. This news report concludes with this sober statement on rapes in India: "About 40,000 rape cases were reported in India in 2016. Many cases, however, go unreported because of the stigma that is attached to rape and sexual assault.

Few days later, in the same week, a "17-year-old girl remains in critical condition after being set on fire by a suspect who allegedly said that he wanted to marry the victim but had been rejected"[626]. On 11 May 2018, a third teenager was raped and burned in Madhya Pradesh. A 26-year old man raped a 16-year old girl in her own home. When she told him that he would inform her parents about this insult, he poured petrol on her and burned her to death[627]. These and other sordid narratives of rape and burning of women fill mass media. They simply highlight the sickened state of patriarchy and its inability to work toward gender justice.

Indian public reacts differently to rape: some people view news on rape as 'weather reports'[628] because the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, Internet) are full of them. They occur daily and people forget the details; only the family of the victims suffer a great deal[629]. On the other hand, some thoughtful parents want to educate their daughters and sons about rape, its impact on fellow citizens and the country. As young girls grow up, they are unable to push their "boundaries for independence"[630]; the man-centred society has created conditions where the girls are unsafe independently. In this context, a journalist asserts that

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[626] "India rape: Third teenager attacked and burned in a week", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 11 May 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-44088004 (accessed on 12 May 2018).

[627] "India rape: Third teenager attacked and burned in a week", 11 May 2018.

[628] Soutik Biswas, "Why did India wake up so late to a child rape and murder?" *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 14 April 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43751166 (accessed on 5 May 2018): An Indian interviewee told Biswas: "'I believe that media is almost tired of reporting violence in India. Rapes, lynching, torture is being reported all the time. It's almost like you have to run a torture report, like the weather report'"

[629] "The rapes that India forgot", 2013: "On most days, Indian newspapers report shocking new atrocities – a 10-month-old raped by a neighbour in Delhi; an 18-month-old raped and abandoned on the streets in Calcutta; a 14-year-old raped and murdered in a police station in Uttar Pradesh; a husband facilitating his own wife's gang rape in Howrah; a 65-year-old grandmother raped in Kharagpur. But in a country where a rape is reported every 21 minutes, even these most horrific of crimes soon get forgotten – except by the victims and their families."

[630] "How do Indian parents talk to their children about rape?", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 21 April 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43794675 (accessed on 21 April 208).

"rape is increasingly used as an instrument to assert power and intimidate the powerless in […] a hierarchical, patriarchal and increasingly polarised society [such as India], where hate is being used to divide people and harvest votes"[631]. He also opined that due to "illegal sex-selection abortions […] 112 boys are born for every 100 girls". The surplus of men, mostly in states like Haryana[632], and the reality of more than 63 million missing women[633], cause severe gender imbalance and injustice.

Atrocities, not merely against adult women, but increasingly against minor children, rise. Sometimes, judiciary is unable to stand above political pressures. Biswas mentions that most reported cases do not end in conviction and punishment. The convicts use political pressure and perhaps also money power to escape. Therefore, Biswas assumes that "many Indians – men and women – refuse to believe that sexual violence is a serious problem eating away at India's vitals. And most political parties […] don't appear to recognise and treat it as the crippling societal crisis it is"[634]. The increase of frequent rapes disturbs democracy-loving people, who in their long-term perspective are worried about "the safety of women and the safety of minorities"[635].

On 15 May 2018, Ananya Vipeyi summarized her view of the rapes and the fragility of what has been dear to all Indians, namely "the guarantee of secularism, the rule of law, democratic rights and the promise of justice [for minorities 'whether by age, by population size, by faith, or by access to economic and cultural capital']. She predicts that if the guardians

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[631] Soutik Biswas, "Why India's rape crisis shows no signs of abating", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 17 April 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43782471 (accessed on 5 May 2018).

[632] Biswas, "Why India's rape crisis shows no signs of abating": Haryana records the highest gang rape and has the worst sex ratio. "In January [2018] alone, a 50-year-old man was held for mutilating a 10-year-old girl, a 15-year-old boy allegedly raped a three-and-a-half-year-old girl, a 20-year-old married woman was raped by two men, a 24-year-old man was held for kidnapping and abducting a student and a minor's girl's brutalised body was found in the fields. And these were only the reported cases."

[633] Biswas, "Why India's rape crisis shows no signs of abating".

[634] Biswas, "Why India's rape crisis shows no signs of abating".

[635] "How a child rape became a religious flashpoint for India", *The Hindu*, 7 May 2018, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-44030451 (accessed on 7 May 2018).

of these secular and democratic provisions do not really avert the mishaps, they would gradually "elude not just minorities but all Indians"[636].

This is a solemn warning especially in the light of not prosecuting the convicts in the law courts. On 20 May 2018, Sivaraman pointed out the pending cases against male abusers of children, who are charged under *The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act* (2012) in Tamil Nadu[637]: these male offenders include family members, school teachers, online stalkers, and other abusers. The longer the cases are pending, the more the victims are traumatised. When they are repeatedly called to witness against the crime, which they suffered long ago, they are forced to relive those painful experiences and these memories haunt them. According to Sivaraman's report, the most number of pending cases are in Uttar Pradesh followed by Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu[638]. The lawyers, social activists and others debate about the meaning and extent of sexual assault against girl children, whether it was touch or penetrative or anything else. The more they discuss, the more the victims suffer. They also know that the lawyers and judges do not convict the male offenders and let them go after a while[639]. As a result, the victimised girls no longer want to face the society that betrayed them. Their prolonged suffering hinders their growth and prevents them from achieving their potentials. As the result, they are unable to constructively participate in the life of their homes, societies, and the country.

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[636] Ananya Vajpeyi, "What the Kathua rape means", *The Hindu*, 15 May 2018, available at http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/what-the-kathua-rape-means/article23884731.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 15 May 2018).

[637] R. Sivaraman, "When the law fails children: on POCSO Act [i.e., *The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act*] in Tamil Nadu", *The Hindu*, 20 May 2018, available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/when-the-law-fails-children/article23939123.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 22 May 2018).

[638] Sivaraman, "When the law fails children: on POCSO Act [i.e., *The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act*] in Tamil Nadu": "In Tamil Nadu, the pendency is over 2,003 cases, the Supreme Court was recently informed. Of these, 219 have been pending for the last three years, and 509 for more than two years. As many as 1,275 cases are pending for the last year and a half. The pendency in Tamil Nadu is significant, although the problem is not as acute as it is in Uttar Pradesh, where the figure is 30,884, or Madhya Pradesh, where it is 10,117 cases."

[639] Sivaraman, "When the law fails children: on POCSO Act [i.e., *The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act*] in Tamil Nadu": "The number of cases registered under the POCSO Act may have increased over the years, but the conviction rate remains alarmingly low. In 2017, for instance, 1,586 cases were registered in Tamil Nadu. Of these, charge-sheets were filed in 703 cases. The courts convicted the accused in eight cases, and 59 ended in acquittal."

5.8 Gender injustice in contemporary Tamil India

5.8.1 Efforts to improve gender justice in Tamil Nadu

This section examines the continuing impact of exemplary women role models, good educational institutions for women, legal measures, women novels and women authors. Together they greatly influence the Tamil people. Yet, certain aspects of lingering gender injustice occur in every social stratum of the Tamil society.

M. Mohana Kani has examined the struggles of Tamil women to attain public recognition from 1917 to 2000[640]: She correctly identified the *Women's Indian Association* (1917) as a good starting point. This association, already referred to in the third chapter (3.6.3), maintained its headquarters in Adayar near Chennai. It promoted girls' education, devised plans to abolish child marriages, secured voting rights for women in regional and local councils and legislative bodies, trained women leaders, and enabled them to help themselves. The exemplary work of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and her co-workers inspired many Tamil people to such an extent that they established similar reform associations (e.g., the *Widow Remarriage Society* in 1921 in Chennai, the *Indian Ladies Samaj* and the *Madras Seva Sadan* in 1923 also in Chennai, the *Avvai Home* for rescued *Devadāsī* girls in 1930 in Chennai)[641].

Likewise, Mohana Kani highlights the importance of the *All India Women's Conference* (founded in Pune in 1927) in Tamil India. Hindu, Christian and Muslim women, who had some knowledge of English, joined this movement. These members worked for personal integrity and unity of all people beyond socio-economic and religious boundaries; they stood for equal opportunities, rights and civil liberties for women and men. They stressed the rights of all people for the necessities of life (food, clothing, housing, education, health, safety, and social trust). They promoted birth control and inter-*jāti* marriages. They promoted competent women to occupy public offices. Mohana Kani refers to newer associations that assist inter-

[640] M. Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University/Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, 2011, available http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/18555 (accessed on 10 April 2018).

[641] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 53–67.

jāti marriages, widow remarriages and women in need[642]. She has also pointed out how various educational committees democratised education and made it available to girls of every age and background[643].

Schools for girls and colleges for women in Tamil Nadu increased in recent years: *Queen Mary's College* in Chennai (1914), *Women's Christian College* in Chennai (1916), *St. Xavier's College* in Pāḷaiyamkōṭṭai (1923), *Holy Cross College* in Tiruchirappalli, and *Stella Mary's College* in Chennai (1947) were the earlier ones. Then colleges and vocational training institutions for girls and women were established in every major city of Tamil Nadu[644]. Gradually, educated Tamil women could become teachers, professors, vice chancellors, engineers, scientists, police, lawyers, soldiers, pilots, accountants, collectors, politicians, members of politicians, and the like.

These laudable achievements deserve recognition and appreciation; but they do not represent the gender situation of contemporary Tamil Nadu. Mohana Kani is aware of this limitation and names several gender issues that negatively affect the women in Tamil Nadu[645]: the socio-cultural systems and practices that tolerate child marriages, *Devadāsīs*, sexual abuse such as rape, prostitution and trafficking of women, dowry deaths, kidnappings and

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[642] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 67–83: *Anjugam Ammaiyar Ninaivu (Memorial) Inter-Caste Marriage Assistance Scheme* (1967), *Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu Poor Widow Remarriage Assistance Scheme* (1975), *Destitute Widows' Pension Scheme* (1975), *E.V.R. Maniammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme for Daughters of Poor Widows* (1981), *Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme* (1989), *Annai Therasa Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme for Orphan Girls* (1999), *Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme* (2007), *Pension to Un-married, Poor, Incapacitated Women Age of Above 50*, and the like. Both government and non-government agencies support these schemes.

[643] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 112–150: Some of these committees and educational policies that affected women in Tamil India included the *University Education Commission* (1948–1949), the *Constitutional Provisions for Women Education* (1950), the *Secondary Education Commission* (1952–1953), the *National Committee on Women Education* (1958–1959), the *Mansa Mehta Committee* (1961–1962) to differentiate curriculum for girls and boys, the *Bhaktavatsalem Committee* (1963), the *Kothari Education Commission* (1964–1966), the *National Educational Policy* (1967–1968), the *Committee on Status of Women* (1971–1974), the *National Policy for Education* (1979), the *National Perspective Plan for Women's Education* (1988–2000), and nine *Five Year Plans* for women's education from 1951 to 2002), and the like.

[644] M. Bavani, *Socio-Economic Conditions of Women in Tamil Nadu (1967–2006)*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Madurai Kamaraj University/Madurai, 2013, pp. 95–98; available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/135544 (accessed on 10 April 2018).

[645] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 188–230.

abductions, eve-teasing, ragging, son-preference through sex-selection methods, and the like. The Tamil indeed have access to laws[646] and can claim constitutional guarantees and rights against exploitations. Since 1975, women can contest elections for *Village Panchayats* and *Panchayat Unions*. *The Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act* (1995) safeguards women's rights to become members and chairpersons of the Panchayats at village, ward and district levels[647].

Besides legal measures, educational improvements, political changes, and opportunities for women work in economic and industrial sectors, the modern Tamil women have another means for self-development; namely, they have access to various Tamil magazines that have been appearing in Tamil India since 1860[648]. N. Mātavaṉ studied some of them and found out, how they promoted women concerns such as education, marriage reform and equality in society, homemaking and economics. However, his research focused on gender-related themes in ten modern Tamil magazines[649], of which six are published by women editors and four are published by men authors. The magazines, whose authors are women have more demonstrable impact on their readers than the magazines edited by men[650].

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[646] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 234–239. Mohana Kani explains the following laws: *The Hindu Women's Property Act* (1937), *The Special Marriage Act* (1954), *The Hindu Marriage Act* (1955), *The Hindu Succession Act* (1956), *The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act* (1956), *The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act* (1956), *The Maternity Benefit Act* (1961), *The Equal Remuneration Act* (1976), *The Contract Labour (Regulation) Act* (1978) and *The Criminal Law Amendment Act* (1983) stipulating women checking women.

[647] Mohana Kani, *Women's' Struggle for their Rights in Tamil Nadu, 1917 to 2000*, pp. 246: Mohana Kani gives a table of these office holders for the year 2006 in local body elections of Tamil Nadu.

[648] N. Mātavaṉ, *Makaḷir Mēmpāṭṭil Taṟkālat Tamiḻmakaḷir Itaḻkaḷ* (in Tamil: *The Role of Modern Tamil Women's Magazines in Women Developmen*t), Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Viswa Mahavidyalaya/ Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, 2011, available athttp://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/171823 (accessed on 10 April 2018). Page 5: Mātavaṉ merely cites the names of these old Tamil magazines for women: *Amirta Vacaṉi* (1860), *Jaṉa Vinōtiṉi* (1870), *Cukuṇa Pōtiṉi* (1883), *Mahārāṇi* (1891), *Vivēka Pōtiṉi* (1887), *Peṇmati Pōtiṉi* (1891), *Vinōtaraca Mañcari* (1891), *Mātar Maṉōrañcaṉi* (1899), *Mātar Mittiri* (1899), *Cakkaravarttiṉi* (1905), *Tamiḻ Mātu* (1906), *Mātar Pōtiṉi* (1911), *Peṇkalvi* (1912), *Mātar Maṟumaṇam* (1936), *Kiraka Laṭcumi* (1937), *Putumaip Peṇ* (1947), *Pākkiyaleṭcumi* (1961), *Maṇamakaḷ* (1965), *Kātampari* (1965), *Maṅkai* (1975) and *Maṅkaiyar Malar* (1975).

[649] Mātavaṉ, *Makaḷir Mēmpāṭṭil Taṟkālat Tamiḻmakaḷir Itaḻkaḷ*, pp. 261–266: These are the ten magazines: *Maṅkaiyar Malar*, *Avaḷ Vikaṭaṉ*, *Ciṉēkiti*, *Kumutam Cinēkiti*, *Taṅka Maṅkai*, *Peṇmaṇi*, *Peṇṇē Nī*, *Kruhaṣōpā*, *Kōkulam Katir* and *Lēṭīs Speṣal*.

[650] Mātavaṉ, *Makaḷir Mēmpāṭṭil Taṟkālat Tamiḻmakaḷir Itaḻkaḷ*, p. 313.

The most obvious influence of these magazines was in the fields of personal health. Secondly, these magazines sought to raise the awareness of women, their capabilities, needs and struggles. Details on general matters (e.g., travel stories) took the third place. Economics occupied the fourth place; education came next; social concerns stood in the last place[651]. These social concerns include the importance and usefulness of female education; their emphasis on health deals with prevention of disease through regular physical exercise, good food and hygiene, and recognizing and healing diseases; information on women leaders from different countries and cultural contexts inspire the readers. These magazines give practical suggestions for organising small groups, cottage industries, marketing products, and the like[652]. It is obvious that these magazines have not addressed the religious and theological reasons for gender inequality in Tamil Nadu.

The next important modern tool for women's progress in Tamil Nadu are the novels. Obviously, the already mentioned above, the first Tamil novel *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* ('the *History of Piratāpa Mutaliyār*', 1879) by Māyūram Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai (1826–1889) still occupies a prominent place in the Tamil history of novels. However, as time passed by, their emphasis also shifted. In 2005, Ku. Nākarājaṉ studied the Tamil novels by seven women authors in the 1990s[653], namely *Intumati*, *Civacaṅkari*, *Rājamkiruṣṇaṉ*, *Vāsanti*, *Civakāmi*, *Cuprā* and *Pāmā*. He grouped his findings under five headings: family, family relationships, family difficulties, things that benefit families and things that divide the families[654]. He found how these novels portray educated, working women, who face many difficulties at home: their husbands are patriarchal; dowry causes enormous problems. The misunderstandings between the wife and her in-laws abound. The wives face problems in begetting and raising children. The things that unite families are open and understandable communication among all parties, advice given by family elders and received by juniors, the willingness to adjust.

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[651] Mātavaṉ, *Makaḷir Mēmpāṭṭil Taṟkālat Tamiḻmakaḷir Itaḻkaḷ*, p. 269.

[652] Mātavaṉ, *Makaḷir Mēmpāṭṭil Taṟkālat Tamiḻmakaḷir Itaḻkaḷ*, pp. 291–292.

[653] Ku. Nākarājaṉ, *Toṇṇūṟukaḷil Makaḷir Putiṉaṅkaḷil Kuṭumpa Uṟavukaḷum Cikkalkaḷum* (in Tamil: *Family Relationships and Difficulties in Women's Novels in the 1990s*') Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Bharathiar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu, 2005, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/106458 (accessed on 10 April 2018).

[654] Nākarājaṉ, *Toṇṇūṟukaḷil Makaḷir Putiṉaṅkaḷil Kuṭumpa Uṟavukaḷum Cikkalkaḷum*, p. 6.

The things that rift the families apart are the following: child marriage, inter-*jāti* marriages, dowry, patriarchy, death of a spouse, immoral life of the husband (who absconds, prostitutes, drinks alcohol and neglects his family), servitude of the wife, inferiority or superiority complex of both spouses, poverty, lack of financial means to meet the needs, newer ideas of young children that contract family values or traditions, women who work both as breadwinners and home makers, and the like. Sometime, problems arise due to inappropriate interference by the in-laws, the sisters and brothers of the husband, the parents of the wife, and others[655]. The more the wife and her husband understand each other and adjust themselves to each other's need and comfort, the happier their families will be. Again, Nākarājaṉ's analysis of family problems and solutions are cultural, social, psychological, and economic. It has not identified the theological reasons for the mistreatment of girls, daughters, wives and widows in families.

5.8.2 Continuing gender injustice in Tamil Nadu

As already mentioned above the human development involves not only good health, access to knowledge, human rights, human security, decent standard of living, non-discrimination, dignity, and self-determination[656], but also "richness of human lives" [657]. Judged by these factors, gender issues in Tamil Nadu need further improvements.

After India has become a sovereign country in 1947, the conditions of women have improved; but the rate and intensity of development, as seen from the above-mentioned nine perspectives, are slow and incomplete indeed. Exploring few examples of most recently completed ethnographic studies on women in Tamil Nadu helps us to understand gender issues better. They show that self-help groups of women, higher education, sizable economic earnings, employment in organised and unorganised sectors have brought in considerable changes; yet, amid these developments, women feel discriminated in one way or another.

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[655] Nākarājaṉ, *Toṇṇūṟukaḷil Makaḷir Putiṉaṅkaḷil Kuṭumpa Uṟavukaḷum Cikkalkaḷum*, pp. 89–104 and 170–209.

[656] Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016–Human Development for Everyone: Overview*, p. viii.

[657] Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016–Human Development for Everyone: Overview*, p. 2.

Women, who are in vulnerable socio-economic conditions, continue to suffer sexual abuse and sicknesses.

The Self-Help Groups of women offer safe places for women to meet, exchange ideas, and learn professional and practical skills from each other and to make others hear their concerns. They borrow money from banks at low rates of interest, invest it in small-scale businesses, repay it and get a small profit. Available research studies on self-help groups indicate, how the members of these groups get united and gain social, economic, and political empowerment. For example, in 2011, Lakshmanakumar interviewed 400 women members of the self-help groups in Virudhunagar District in Tamil Nadu and pointed out, how these women attain social, political and economic empowerments[658]: they gain knowledge in health issues, village-level dispute mitigation, and education of children, time management, bank transactions and environmental protection[659]. They know how to prevent and deal with other issues such as "harassment of women, alcoholism and gambling, child labour, female infanticide [and] dowry"[660]. Thus, they achieve greater level of social mobility and security, external exposure, awareness of self and others, leadership skills in politics and economics, creativity and personal integrity[661].

What works in grass-root level does not necessarily work in urban settings. Women in the cities have more access to education, generation of wealth and law courts. Yet, they suffer from gender inequality at home, in their work places and the society. Rameswari's ethnographic study, conducted in the city of Madurai just four years ago (2014), confirms the presence and practice of gender injustice among 600 educated Tamil women, between the age

[658] M. Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups: A Study with Reference to Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Madurai Kamaraj University/ V.H.N. Senthikumara Nadar College, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, 2011, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/125294 (accessed on 11 April 2018).

[659] Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups*, p. 294.

[660] Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups*, p. 306.

[661] Lakshmanakumar, *Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups*, p. 308.

of 29 and above 50 years, whom she had interviewed[662]. Then, she arrived at the following startling conclusion: modern, educated women in India face a paradox. On the one hand, they have succeeded in education and acquired professional skills, but they face violence, intimidation, and abuse at home, in the society and in the public place. Their home has become their "battlefield of life". Women still depend on their men; they may earn high salaries; but the unchanging "basic infrastructure of the society" torments them. "Though the economic status has shown an improvement in a geometrical ratio, socio-status is still moving up in an arithmetic ratio"[663].

Similar realities exist in other areas of women's life in contemporary Tamil Nadu. The Dalit women suffer the most; their lack of education, abject poverty, and the geographical places where they live hinder their wider participation. For example, in 2008, Vasanthi interviewed women of three *Pallar*, *Paṟaiyar* and *Cakkiliyar* Communities in *Srivilliputhur*, *Virudhunagar* District, Tamil Nadu[664] and gained the following insights: these women depend on their husbands for sustenance and look after their homes; Vasanthi discovered that more than 70% of women from *Pallar*, *Paṟaiyar* and *Cakkiliyar* Communities are housewives and they hesitate to work in organised sectors; they believe that the circumstances of their families and the lack of appropriate educational and professional qualification prevent them from political participation[665]. Besides these two factors, Vasanthi also has four additional reasons for their non-participation in politics: most of these women have poor health; they cannot raise money to support their political candidacy. The prevailing traditional and cultural attitudes of the people are unhelpful. These women are aware of the violence against women in political situations[666].

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[662] R. Rameswari, *Impact of Education on the Socio-Economic Status of Women in Tamil Nadu with special reference to Madurai City*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Madurai Kamaraj University/Madurai, 2014, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/133421 (accessed on 11 April 2018).

[663] Rameswari, *Impact of Education on the Socio-Economic Status of Women in Tamil Nadu*, pp. 257–258.

[664] R. Vasanthi, *Political Participation among Dalit Women at Srivilliputhur Town in Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu: A Sociological Study*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Madurai Kamaraj University/Madurai, 2008, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/136611 (accessed on 11 April 2018).

[665] Vasanthi, *Political Participation among Dalit Women at Srivilliputhur Town*, p. 34.

[666] Vasanthi, *Political Participation among Dalit Women at Srivilliputhur Town*, p. 294.

At the same time, those women, who have been democratically elected for local political governance, for example in *Village Panchayats*, have their own challenges. In 2007, Uma interviewed women presidents of several *Village Panchayats* and urged the need for their empowerment[667]. Accordingly, most of these women presidents do not have prior experience of working with men in public places; however, when they chair meetings, they have to sit among men and undertake official transactions. If these meetings take place in "remote villages"[668], these women presidents feel uncomfortable. Further, when they take the concerns of the people to higher authorities, they do not get help[669]. Uma states that higher authorities like the District Collector can invoke the Section 205 of the *Panchayat Act* of 1994 and the women leaders of Panchayats or replace them. Sometimes, these women leaders have to challenge the malfunctioning or non-functioning of male counterparts; in such instances, the men resort to "violence, public ridicule, defamation, no-confidence motion, etc."[670] The elected women representatives oppose these threats by organising apolitical networks among themselves and with self-help groups and non-governmental agencies[671]. These women leaders should have conducive socio-cultural conditions, in which they can work with dignity, safety, and security. Until then, gender equality will remain a distant dream.

Even the law profession is not an exemption. In 2017, S. Pavithra conducted an ethnographic research among women lawyers in few districts of Tamil Nadu and confirmed

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[667] G. Uma, *Empowerment of the Elected Women Representatives in Local Bodies through Network*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Gandhigram Rural University/ Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu, 2007, available http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/111620 (accessed on 11 April 2018).

[668] Uma, *Empowerment of the Elected Women Representatives in Local Bodies through Network*, p. 140.

[669] Uma, *Empowerment of the Elected Women Representatives in Local Bodies through Network*, p. 141: "As the [women] Panchayat leaders live near to the people, they are always responsive and accountable and they perform their duties perfectly, but officials do not have that mentality and people do not have any hold over the officials. Excepting politicians, nobody can control the officials. It is an irony that the leaders who are responsible and responsive do not have the power but the officials who do not respond to the people have the power. Panchayat leaders submit petitions to government offices for which there is no respect."

[670] Uma, *Empowerment of the Elected Women Representatives in Local Bodies through Network*, p. 143: "The aversion is not only because women have entered their space but also because women's work procedure is different, compared to the men counterparts'. Moreover, women lay emphasis on development work to be planned and executed. This is not appreciated by men who had been in the past siphoning off the development funds by showing most of the works on paper."

[671] Uma, *Empowerment of the Elected Women Representatives in Local Bodies through Network*, p. 252–258.

the existence of discrimination[672]. The custodians and interpreters of the laws, whom Pavithra studied, were not free of gender prejudices. She found out that female lawyers between 36 and 45 years, whether married or unmarried or whatever designation they may have had, had experienced discrimination. Women lawyers between 26 and 35 years reported events of sexual harassment (e.g., verbal behaviour and unwanted physical touch). First generation female lawyers, whose family did not have any lawyers before them, and female lawyers with moderate income experienced discrimination. Female lawyer, who earned between Rupees 1,00,000 and Rupees 2,00,000, i.e., more than their male counterparts, reported discrimination. Most of the time, the judges gave them gender-based cases to handle. The respondents reported foul gossip, lack of promotion, and other harassments were there. These experiences at work had an unhealthy impact on their personal and family life[673].

Two groups of women in vulnerable condition deserve special mention: first group consists of female patients in Tamil Nadu, who suffer from the *Human Immunodeficiency Virus* (HIV) and the *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* (AIDS). Using the data available with the Tamil Nadu AIDS Control Society and hospitals treating these patients from 2001 to 2005, S. Sakti states Tamil Nadu has the most number of HIV/AIDS patients in India[674]. Her research concentrated exclusively on female HIV/AIDS patients in Chennai and found out 66.5% of infected women were between 20 and 29 years; they were mothers and working women; 85% of them were Hindus; 46.6% belonged to Backward Castes and 26% came from Scheduled Castes; 81.6% were literate; 77% came from nuclear families; 59% were working in unorganised sectors; most of these women came to Chennai either for marriage or work;

[672] S. Pavithra, *The Impact of Gender on Career of Women in Select District of Tamil Nadu*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Anna University/Chennai, 2017, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/181646 (accessed on 10 April 2018).

[673] Pavithra, *The Impact of Gender on Career of Women in Select District of Tamil Nadu*, pp. 153–158.

[674] S. Sakti, *Plight of Women Living with HIV Positive in Chennai, Tamil Nadu: A Diagnostic Study*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The Gandhigram Rural Institute/ Gandhiram, Tamil Nadu, 2005, available at http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/110683 (accessed on 11 April 2018); page 143: "Tamil Nadu has highest number of infection in India. The infection rate is steadily increasing among the STD patients and pregnant women. Young girls are under the threat of infection due to the prevailing myth that the sex with virgin can cure the infection." Sakti quotes on page 145 that in 2001, Tamil Nadu had 15,054 HIV/AIDS patients.

82% of women were married[675]. Due to gender prejudice, the "HIV infection is feminized in India and all infected women are looked down as immoral women. As a result, the infected women are experiencing trauma which affects their total personality"[676].

The second group of vulnerable females are the infants. Sasi Rekha's study of female infanticide in Tamil Nadu (2002) is now 16 years old[677]. However, it opens a window, through which we can see the prevalence of female infanticide in Dharmapuri, Salem and Madurai Districts, Tamil Nadu. She interviewed 166 women, who had practised female infanticide, 20 government officers and 20 workers from non-governmental agencies. Her pertinent conclusions underscore the continuing prevalence of gender inequality in modern Tamil Nadu: accordingly, "age, educational qualification, community, religion, marital status, type of family, monthly income, possession of house/property" did not influence the decision of killing a female baby within seven days of her birth. Instead, the parents (mostly the fathers) or grandparents (mostly the mothers-in-law) considered not only the number of surviving boys and girls in a family, but also, they calculated the cost of the girl-related rituals and dowry. Mostly, they poisoned their unwanted female infants to death. Their practice of female infanticide also had other reasons: they preferred sons to daughters because the sons would ensure "inheritance and family lineage (27.7%), performance of rituals (13.3), support in old age (36.1%) and all these reasons (21.7%)."[678] She further estimated that nearly "99% of the men have a negative, biased attitude towards women/ girl children. This reflected the low social status accorded to women/ girl children. Their attitude varied significantly according to educational attainment and occupational status of the respondents"[679]. The fact that such an attitude remains shows the limitation of all previous efforts to create a gender-balanced society.

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[675] Sakti, *Plight of Women Living with HIV Positive in Chennai, Tamil Nadu*, pp. 238–240.

[676] Sakti, *Plight of Women Living with HIV Positive in Chennai, Tamil Nadu*, pp. 258–259.

[677] S. Sasi Rekha, *A Study of Female Infanticide in the State of Tamil Nadu*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Madras/ Chennai, Tamil Nadu, 2002, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10603/78145 (accessed on 12 April 2018).

[678] Sasi Rekha, *A Study of Female Infanticide in the State of Tamil Nadu*, pp. 142–143.

[679] Sasi Rekha, *A Study of Female Infanticide in the State of Tamil Nadu*, p. 143.

5.9 Unchanging gender mindset of Indians

A major aspect of this harmful cultural norm is rooted in the mindset of Indians on women. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun *mindset* as an "established set of attitudes, esp[ecially] regarded as typical of a group's social or cultural values; the outlook, philosophy, or values of a person; (now also more generally) frame of mind, attitude [and] disposition"[680]. Hence, Indian attitude towards women has grown over at least three millennia and it has become tenacious, persistent, touch, and sticky.

Law makers, judges and politicians are aware of it; they blame it as the greatest obstacle for the achievement of gender justice and equality. For example, the chairperson of the *National Human Rights Commission* "called for a change in the mindset of society to end gender bias"[681] in India. On 10 September 2003, the Supreme Court in New Delhi, admitted the prevalence of discrimination against women.[682] The *Dowry Prohibition Act* did not change the mindset of Indian men. These prevented their women from getting professional education and skills. Instead, they occupied them in the traditional household activities; they used sex-selection tests, performed female feticide or female infanticide. The supreme lawmakers accepted their inability to change the "mental set-up which favours a male child against a female." They believed that the cost of dowry drove parents to prefer sons and to get rid of female foetuses, infants and girl children. Qualified and unqualified practitioners misused medical science to abort female foetuses. They knew what they did was "immoral and unethical", yet they carried out foeticide. Thus, the sex ratio does not grow in different states. Thus, the creators, custodians and interpreters of the India's legal systems bemoan their inability to influence Indian men to change their mind and attitude towards fellow Indian women.

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[680] "mindset, n.", *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, available at http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/252842? redirectedFrom=mindset (accessed 12 May 2018).

[681] "Change in mindset of society required to end Gender Bias–Justice J.S. Verma [dated 2 February 2000]", *National Human Rights Commission*, available at http://nhrc.nic.in/disparchive.asp?fno=423 (accessed on 8 March 2018).

[682] "Supreme Court Judgement on 10 September 2003", *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India*, available at http://pndt.gov.in/writereaddata/mainlinkfile/File44.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2018).

On 9 April 2011, Siva Kumar explained the issue of gender-related Indian mindset with additional remarks[683]: he claimed that the combined effect of religion, legacy and social customs "are the main pillars around which a woman's fate is tied. Religion is a great alibi for the perpetrators of female genocide." The perpetrators use these three pillars to condition the women, who in turn "sow the seeds of subjugation." For example, as soon as an expectant mother knows that she is carrying a female foetus, her psychological condition changes, and she communicates first to the foetus and after birth to the girl child a sense of "discrimination, disrespect and denial." The mother thinks that her daughter would not carry on the name of the family; her marriage and dowry would cost money; after her death, the daughter becomes a "helpless onlooker, when it comes to performing rituals and the last rites." In this context, Siva Kumar argued that the male psyche filled with egocentric thinking "cannot produce women-friendly solutions." Therefore, he concluded that the women, and especially the mothers, should take "the ultimate responsibility to retrieve and salvage their position." They should realise that even the stringent laws would not help much. Change is possible in the hands of well-informed empathetic mothers; a woman as a mother can "sow the seeds of self-respect, confidence and faith in her daughters [… and] nurture the girl child as the most precious gift of God and feed her on the alluring chants of self-confidence"[684].

This article came close to critiquing religious beliefs and customs as the most important source for daughter neglect; instead demanding the men to change their mind-set from egoism to the benefit of women, he challenged the women, already exploited, disempowered and weakened in many ways, to muster courage for change. Thanks to the innate courage of women, India survives. Arguably, do not need another male-centred teaching on mind-set.

According to another report of the Inter Press Service News Agency dated 8 January 2016, the Gender Inequality Index for India was low indeed. Its cause lay in India's "fierce

[683] P.V. Sivakumar, "A matter of mindset", *Metro Plus: Features Section*, published by *The Hindu* (9 April 2011).

[684] Sivakumar, "A matter of mindset", 2011.

resistance to change and entrenched patriarchal mindsets"[685]. Two years later, one could come across similar reference to mind-set among the most-powerful representatives of the people in the parliament. During their debate on the International Women's Day on 8 March 2018, the parliamentarians met in the in the Rajya Sabah and exchanged their ideas.[686] They recalled the work of reformers like Periyār. They asserted that without reservations Indian women could become Presidents and Prime Ministers of India. They referred to Chief Ministers, Minister for External Affairs and the Minister for Defence, pilots,[687] Panchayat leaders, who currently (i.e., in March 2018) are women. They suggested that India should not have only 33% reservation of parliamentary seats for women; instead, they should constitute 50% all parliamentarians proportionate to the population of India. Others deplored the malnutrition and violence that many women still suffer. Few were angry about rapists, who did not even spare baby girls. A parliamentarian suggested that men should not simply praise women as mothers, wives and daughters; instead, they should celebrate them as women. She highlighted the reality that many educated women cannot work in public spheres after their marriages; many *Dalit* and *Ādivāsi* women are often raped. Female infants continue to die; foeticide is prevalent.

Three parliamentarians underlined the cause of violence against women and gender inequality: One of them said that it "is time to take a vow that the mindset against women should change." The second parliamentarian asserted that "even today men decide what women should do. This century-old mindset should change." The third parliamentarian wanted 50% of the Rajya Sabah seats to be reserved for women. Therefore, she urged for transformation in the Raja Sabah itself: "Let's begin the change here. Our mindset is backward."

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[685] Neeta Lal, "India Needs to 'Save its Daughters' Through Education and Gender Equality" [dated New Delhi, 8 January 2016], *Inter Press Service News Agency*, available at http://www.ipsnews.net/2016/01/ india-needs-to-save-its-daughters-through-education-and-gender-equality/ (accessed on 8 March 2018).

[686] The Hindu Net Desk: "Parliament proceedings live: On Women's Day, Rajya Sabha discusses pendency of Women's Bill", *The Hindu* (8 March 2018), available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ parliament-proceedings-live-will-the-stand-off-end-today/article22974592.ece?homepage=true (accessed on 8 March 2018).

[687] Dinakar Peri, Yuthika Bhargava and Deepu Sebastian Edmond: "Women who fly", *The Hindu* (10 March 2018), available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/women-who-fly/article23009593ece? homepage=true (accessed on 10 March 2018).

On 8 March 2018, the Prime Minister of India paid tribute the 106-year old grandmother Kunwar Bai (died in 2018), who sold her goats and built two toilets in her Kotabharri Village in Chhattisgarh. He attributed her concept of hygiene to his project of *Clean India*.[688] Later, on the same day, he urged the mothers and grandmothers in Jaipur, Rajasthan to change their mind-set about female infanticide and girl children. His emotion-laden speech reflects Indian traditional thinking on mind-set; however, he urged the young people not to repeat the mistakes of the past; after all, female foeticide is a cause for "deep shame." Mohammed Iqbal summarised the Prime Minister's speech as follows: a changed mindset is necessary for gender balance. Mothers-in-law should protect the girl foetuses and female children of her daughters-in-law. The Prime Minister asked the people to consider both girls and boys as equals; regarding gender inequality, today's younger generation can correct the wrongs of the past generations[689].

These repeated references to the mind-set neatly fits into the unchanging and unchangeable notion of fatalistic *karma*, which should not continue. Indic religious and cultural traditions, ideologies, theologies, customs and institutions, represented by what are nowadays called 'Hinduism', Buddhism and Jainism share in one way or another the Sanskrit ideas of immutable *karma*. An alternative way of thinking and living is necessary.

Sabu George, who has examined the status of women in India and attempts to improve it, sounded an alarming warning in 2005: human abilities to determine the sex of the unborn children and to abort female foetuses has produced excess of men. He predicted that India would lose one million girls annually. If this trend continued unchecked, it can damage the peace and security of countries like India.[690] Hence, urgent solutions to create gender balance

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[688] PTI: "Modi remembers Chhattisgarh's Kunwar Bai on Women's Day", *The Hindu* (8 March 2018), available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/modi-remembers-chhattisgarhs-kunwar-bai-on-womens-day/article22976163.ece (accessed on 8 March 2018).

[689] Mohammed Iqbal, "Stop the shameful practice of female foeticide: Modi at 'Beti Bachao' programme", *The Hindu* (8 March 2018), available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/stop-the-shameful-practice-of-female-foeticide-says-modi-at-beti-bachao-programme/article22985845.ece (accessed on 8 March 2018).

[690] George, "Millions of missing girls: from fetal sexing to high technology sex selection in India", p. 608: "The maximization of individual 'choice' in matters as fundamental as sex of the child to be born is fraught with frightening consequences. China is eliminating one million girls before birth annually as per census

are indispensable. They do not appear to come from Indic religious and cultural traditions. The foregoing chronological analysis starting with Jonathan Duncan's record of female infanticide in 1789 until the first quarter of 2018 limitations of Indic religious traditions, humanitarian and secular efforts to improve gender balance in India. This deep-seated theological problem requires a theological response, which the next and final chapter of this thesis will explore from a Christian perspective.

2000 data. India will exceed one million within 5 years. The excess of nearly 100 million men in China and India in the next few decades may become a threat to global peace and security […]. This holocaust of unborn girls is unprecedented in human history. It is hoped that the rest of the world will do everything to ensure that girls in countries like India and China have the same right to be born as in the West".

CHAPTER 6: IMAGE OF GOD, WOMEN AND GENDER IN THE BIBLE

This chapter contains a fresh discussion on the image of God, in which both women and men are created. It peruses all evidences of the image of God found in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. It enlightens the difficult passages, who read anti-feminine, but seen in the wider contexts of teachings and examples of the Lord Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul, they have deeper contextual meanings. They grew up in patriarchal societies and maintained to some extent patriarchal attitudes; yet their teachings on salvation of being 'in Christ' and as new creatures are not patriarchal. The creation narrative in Genesis, the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Apostle Paul's views on women allow us to look deeper into the socio-cultural settings of their contemporaries and to appreciate their distinctive emphasis for freedom, equality and order.

6.1 Man and Woman in the Image of God in Genesis

The first three chapters of Genesis contain two complementary narratives of God's creation of a man, a woman, the entry of sin into Garden of Eden, and the banishment of the first two people from that garden. These theological narratives are so fundamental to the self-understanding of the Jews and the Christians that they have created enormous body of literature around these themes. The edited volume entitled *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* is one of the most recent works that summarizes how Jews and Christians of diverse backgrounds and times have engaged with these themes.[691] This chapter examines the key aspects of Genesis 1–3 and their reception in the histories of Jews and Christians. Thus, this chapter provides few insights that support gender balance. First, it begins with an analysis of the creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2.

[691] Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (ed.): *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, Leiden: Brill, 2000.

6.1.1 Man and woman in Genesis 1:26–2:3

This text states that God (Heb. *Elōhīm*, a plural noun, not as deities, but as an honorific singular noun) completed creating (Heb. *bārā'*, 'to make, fashion') the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. As the crown of all creation, *Elōhīm* announced[692], voluntarily and without reference to any outside agency, *Elōhīm*'s intention to make (Heb. *āshāh*, 'to make, accomplish'[693]) a human person (Heb. *ādām*, 'humanity') in *Elōhīm*'s own image (Heb. *tselem*, 'image, likeness') and make him as *Elōhīm*'s representative[694]. Then *Elōhīm* created this *ādām* as a male person (Heb. *zakar*) and a female person (Heb. *neqebah*) in *Elōhīm*'s image (Heb. *demūth*, 'resemblance, similitude'). Then *Elōhīm* entrusted to them the stewardship (Heb. *rādāh*, 'to reign, dominion, tread, and trample') of all created things and beings as animals, insects, birds, fish and the like.

In the Ancient Near East, people made images of their deities and placed them in their temples for worship. Genesis 1 reversed this practice: here God created the human beings in God's image and set them over creation as God's stewards.[695] Moreover, all the deities of the Ancient Near Eastern people were either males or females. Genesis 1 portrays '*Elōhīm* neither as male nor female. It is astonishing that *Elōhīm* created human beings as male and female. This truth indicates the equality of male and female persons before *Elōhīm* and each other. They can equally relate to *Elōhīm*, to each other and to others.

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[692] *Elohim* may have announced *Elohim*'s intention to the created beings. Later Christian interpreters would see Trinity in this plural utterance of 'Let us …'.

[693] This verb *āshāh* also occurs in many passages and refers to God's own making. For examples, Psalm 100:3: God "made us and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture." Psalm 119:73: "Your hands made me and formed me." Job 31:3: God "made in the womb".

[694] *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown, reprinted, Peabody/MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1906, p. 854; Pick, Aaron: *Dictionary of Old Testament Words for English Readers*, 1st ed. 1977, 3rd ed., Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1979, p. 207.

[695] Scot McKnight, "Covenant", *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 2005, pp. 141–143:141. "Scholarship has recently recognized that the creation narrative depicts the universe as the temple of God. Pagans fashioned idols and images for their temples and places of worship, and so constructed an image of God. But the creation account turns pagan worship on its head. Instead of humans fashioning an image of God, the Creator God fashions a human in his own very image (Gen. 1:26–27). He places that very image in the temple of his creation, as its climactic revelation of who he is and what he is like."

Human relationships with God, other persons and created things depend on their ability to think, evaluate, choose, respond and remember. These actions require words, sounds, gestures, emotions and other symbols. Humans have competencies to incorporate these things into their languages, traditions, institutions and cultures. These in turn shape their consciousness and notions of good and evil. These qualities set most human beings apart from other creatures.[696]

Similarly, Genesis 1:26–27 does not describe either the biological or physical or emotional characteristics of the male or the female persons. It does not say anything about their social status, worship, food and social network. It was enough to know that the male and the female persons were equals in every way. Therefore, they were neither superior nor inferior to each other. Their whole personhood, not merely their soul or body or mind mattered. Being in and bearing the image of *Elōhīm*, they could easily relate to *Elōhīm* always and in all places.

One of this unceasing relationship included their responsibility as steward. On behalf of *Elōhīm* they looked after *Elōhīm* creation. This responsibility would have needed multiple competencies: to begin with, they should understand the nature, characteristics and function of each creature. Accordingly, they should plan to meet their needs and make provisions. They should expect predictable problems and solve them. At the same time, they should be ready for unpredictable challenges and emergencies.

While caring for this world and meeting its needs, the male and female persons should not forget their spiritual, moral and social duties. Spiritually, they related to *Elōhīm*. Morally, they discerned what is good and evil. Socially, they looked after each other. As male and female persons they carried out these duties not in isolation, but in cooperation with each other. If they were unsatisfied with anything, they looked for opportunities and methods to transform

[696] Stephen Holmes, "Image of God", *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 2005, pp. 318–319:319: Yet, some people do not have these abilities. Therefore, Holmes cautions us to be careful with this assertion. He believes that the Greek cultural and philosophical traditions caused early Christians to ascribe rationality to the image of God in human beings. Holmes continues his argument further: Christian readings of rationality into the image of God owes "more to Greek philosophical anthropology than any biblical or theological tradition. In any case, it has the unacceptable consequence of denying true humanity to those suffering from profound learning difficulties, and indeed from young children, the unborn, and certain persons toward the end of their lives."

them into something that was better, more beautiful, and orderly. Thus, the image of *Elōhīm* in human beings implied dignity, worth, freedom, rationality, creativity, spirituality, and relationships, and the like. Later Jewish tradition, however, did not fully share these positive aspects; instead, it propagated negative attitudes about women created by God using man's rib.

It is evident that patriarchal influences looked for feminine mistakes, failures and imperfections and attributed them as feminine qualities. They did not realise their own mistakes, failures and imperfections and how women thought of them. The complementary account of woman's creation in Genesis 2:4–24 contains deeper insights that can promote gender balance.

6.1.2 Man and woman in Genesis 2:4–24

This passage contains new information on creation that is not found in the previous account. The separation of the verses in this chapter poses some challenges. Scholars discussed whether the second account begins at verse 3 or verse 4. *The Jewish Study Bible* believes that the first narrative ends at verse 3 and the second narrative begins at v. 4.[697]

The second narrative introduces the *Tetragrammaton YHWH*, which is incorrectly rendered in English as Jehovah or Yahweh. This four-letter word reproduces the covenantal or proper name for the God of Israel. It is so holy that the Jews do not read it aloud. In public liturgical settings, they replaced, and still replace it with either *Adonai* ('Lord') or *Ha-Shem* ('The Name'). This second narrative adds *YHWH* to the divine plural name *Elōhīm* and understands God as *YHWH–'Elōhīm* ('LORD–God').

This *YHWH–'Elōhīm* created (Heb. *bārā'*, 'to make, fashion') world and caused rain; vegetation sprang up; rivers began flowing; the Garden of Eden came into existence. The *YHWH–'Elōhīm* took (Heb. *laqāch*, 'to take') the man (Heb. *ādām*, a single human 'male

[697] *The Jewish Study Bible*–Featuring *The Jewish Publication Society[']s] TANAKH Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 13: "The Jewish textual tradition places a major break between 2.3 and 2.4, rather than in the middle of v.4."

person' and 'humanity' as a whole)[698], placed him in the Garden of Eden to till and maintain it, and permitted him to eat any fruit except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The *YHWH–'Elōhīm* created all animals and birds, asked *ādām* to name them. At that time, *YHWH–'Elōhīm* knew that it was not good for *ādām* to be alone and decided to make a helper (Heb. *ezer*, 'help, helper') for him. *YHWH–'Elōhīm* caused *ādām* to fall asleep, took one of his ribs, closed the opening with flesh, created (Heb. *bānāh*, 'to build, construct, establish, fortify') a woman (Heb.: *īshā*, 'woman' belonging to the man, wife, a female person), and brought her to him. Immediately, *ādām* was so astonished that he sang the first love song: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man [Heb. *īsh*, man, husband, humanity]" (Gen. 2:23). This chapter ends with the statement that the man leaves his parents and "is united to his wife and they become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24). This intimate connection between a man and a woman as husband and wife is the basis for faithful monogamous relationships, bearing children, preventing promiscuity.[699]

N.P. Bratsiotis has examined all textual occurrences of the words *'ish* ('man') and *'ishshāh* ('belonging to man, woman') in the Hebrew Bible and summarized the key points as follows[700]: the exact origins of these two Hebrew words and their etymological meanings remain uncertain. In any case, the word *'ish* seems to suggest the ideas of being strong, sprouting up abundantly, and a courageous doer of things. By contrast, the word *'ishshāh* "is usually derived from the root '*nš*' 'to be sick, weak'"[701]. This evidence shows how revolutionary the author of the Genesis 1 must have been to give an alternative view of the first woman: she was not sickly, as the Semitic people of that time would have understood her.

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[698] Deborah Savage, "The Nature of Woman in Relation to Man: Genesis 1 and 2 through the Lens of the Metaphysical Anthropology of Aquinas", *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, Vol. 18, No, 1, 2015, pp. 71–93:77: The word *ādām* "stands for 'man' as the English language has traditionally and collectively used [… it]; it corresponds to the Greek *anthrôpos*, the Latin *Homo*, the German *Mensch*, or the Polish *człowiek*."

[699] *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2004, p. 16: "It is interesting that although polygamy is amply attested in the Tanakh, v. 24 indicates that the ideal, Edenic condition is monogamy."

[700] N.P. Bratsiotis, "*`ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Riggren, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 222–235.

[701] Bratsiotis, "*`ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 222.

Neither was she inferior to man. God created both the man and woman in God's image as equals!

According to Bratsiotis, the secular Hebrew texts and the Hebrew Bible use word *'ish* to denote an adult man as opposed to an adult woman. Secondly, it means husband of a wife (Genesis 29:32, Proverbs 7:19). Thirdly, it refers to the entire humanity including women and men. Bratsiotis states that booth secular and religious writings attest to this third usage: the desert is a "land where no man is" (Job 38:26) refers to the place without women and men. Sometimes, "fainthearted or cowardly men are characterized as 'women' (Jer. 51:30; 50:37; Isa. 19:16; Nah. 3:13)"[702].

Then, Bratsiotis discusses the theological and anthropological meanings of the word *'ish* representing humanity. First, human beings differ from God, who has not only created them, but also has given them life. God continues to control their life as well. Therefore, human beings are "conscious of God's vast superiority. The pride of man is humbled before the exalted magnificence of God (Isa. 2:11, 17)"[703]. Secondly, human beings differ from animals; in Genesis 2, these could not be the man's partner; they also could not remove his loneliness.

Thirdly, Genesis 2:23 is most central to this narrative. It continues from Genesis 2:7a, which presents the male as "*min ha'adhmah-'dham*, 'from the ground-man'", because he was made of dust of the earth. On the other hand, Genesis 23b presents the female correspondingly as "*me'ish-'shshah*, 'from the man-woman'" because she was taken from the rib of the male and shared his nature and substance. Thus, Genesis 2:23 uses the word *'ish* for the first time in the Hebrew Bible and in relation to a woman. Without the female, the male did not know that he was a male. After God 'had built' (Heb. *bānāh*, to build') the woman from the rib of the male and brought her to him, he realized her as a fellow creature, who was like him in few ways, yet different from him other ways. He called her *zo'th* ('this one, feminine') and thus affirmed her blood relationship and nature with him. In this context, the zo'th was the

[702] Bratsiotis, "*`ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 225.

[703] Bratsiotis, "*`ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 225: Bratsiotis refers to three biblical examples: Elohim is God (Genesis 32:29); 'Yahweh, the Lord' (Isaiah 2:11, 17) and 'in his hand … is the breath of all mankind' (Job 12:10).

'ishshāh, the woman. In fact, the name for the woman is *ishshāh me'ish* ('woman from man') and underlines the fact of the mutual relationship between the male and the female persons. This insight is extremely significant for gender balance.

Bratsiotis continues to point out the importance of Genesis 2.23 in relation to Genesis 1.27. The Hebrew adjectives *zakhar* ('male') and *neqebhah* ('female') denote a person's gender. As gendered persons, they are equals in God's image. Deborah Savage's observations adds further emphasis to this significant insight:

> The Hebrew terms used in this passage, namely, *zâchâr* and *nikevah*, usually translated as male and female, are not always used as nouns; in this case, they are adjectives more properly translated as 'masculine' and 'feminine.' The usual English translation as 'male' and 'female' obscures this distinction; its importance is found by considering the logic of the grammar in the passage. Their reference point is the noun *'adam* mentioned in the first part of the passage: God makes 'adam in his image—'adam is created *zâchâr* and *nikevah*.[704]

The masculinity and femininity, intentionally included in Genesis 1:27, are the basis of humanity as a race. Further, it is important to note that Genesis 2.23 calls the male and female persons respectively as *'ish* and *'ishshāh*, i.e., not merely as a man and a woman, but also as husband and wife. These words "indicate their position in creation as well as their relationship to and with each other."[705]

Fourthly, the man and woman created in the image of God refers to their I-Thou relationship. In this context, the woman's designation in Genesis 2:18 as an *ezer* ('helper') is vital with reference to the man's loneliness in Genesis 2:20b and to the verb *yādha* ('to know') in Genesis 4:1 denoting their sexual relationship. At the same time, the notion of helper goes beyond sexual relationships and includes an active knowledge of being fellow creatures and partners. God created the man before the woman; this difference of time does not indicate man's superiority over the woman, as he had over the animals. This primacy of time cannot mean man's "natural or ethical superiority over the *'ishshāh*, because God himself put the *'ishshāh* at his elbow, indeed by his side (2:21f., *tsela'*, 'rib,' which also means 'side')" [706].

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[704] Savage, "The Nature of Woman in Relation to Man: Genesis 1 and 2 through the Lens of the Metaphysical Anthropology of Aquinas", p. 78.

[705] Bratsiotis, "`*ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 226.

[706] Bratsiotis, "`*ish*; *`ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 227.

This act of God bringing the woman to the man and entrusting her to him resembled the father giving "away his daughter to her husband" instituted monogamy. In this context, another important fact is noteworthy and has significant consequence for gender balance: in the presence of God and the woman, the man acknowledged "the equality of the partnership between *'ish* and *'ishshah* which God had established, and before God he makes a covenant with the woman."[707]

6.1.3 Complementarity readings of Genesis 1:26–2:3 and 2:4–24

G.M.G. Teugles has examined the impact of Genesis 1 and 2 on various Rabbis and their writings. They tried hard to reconcile the passages that in their view offered two views on the creation of the human beings. First, they tried to interpret it via the Hellenistic idea of an androgyne ('man-woman') alluded to in the "Aristophanes' eulogy on Eros in Plato's *Symposium*"[708]. They also wrestled with God's majestic plural of *Elōhīm* in Genesis 1:26 ('Let us make man in our image') and the third person singular male pronoun 'he' in Genesis 1:27 ('He created him, male and female he created them'). The pronouns 'us' and 'he', 'him' and 'them' posed several problems for the rabbis. Genesis 5:2 states that their name was *Adam*.[709] Finally, they fused the two narratives creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and created a single narrative, "each describing another aspect, or another phase of the creation of the human"[710]. The Jewish Study Bible supports the arguments that tend "to harmonize the discrepancies by intertwining the stories, using the details of one to fill in the details of the other."[711]

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[707] Bratsiotis, "*`ish; `ishshāh* [i.e., man; woman]", p. 227.

[708] G.M.G. Teugels, "The Creation of the Human in Rabbinic Interpretation", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 107–127:109.

[709] Teugels, "The Creation of the Human in Rabbinic Interpretation", pp. 110–111: "An interpretation that is found in many variations in rabbinic literature is that the plural refers to God and the angels, with whom He discussed the creation of the *adam*. […] After the rabbinic period, Jewish scholars such as Saadiah Gaon distanced themselves from the idea that God discussed creation, or even created, together with the angels, because they saw in it indeed a dangerous, polytheistic, interpretation in view of Christian interpretations of the verse, who applied the 'we' to God and his Son. […The] singular language refers to the undifferentiated human of the first account and the plural refers to the situation after the division as related in the second account."

[710] Teugels, "The Creation of the Human in Rabbinic Interpretation", pp. 113.

[711] *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2004, p. 15.

The Midrash *Genesis Rabbah*, composed between 200–500 CE, provides an example of the impact of Genesis 1 and 1 on rabbis. It contains several references to the creation of the woman and provides a strong basis for the negative opinion of Jewish men about their women. For example, Genesis Rabbah 18:2 reads as follows:

> After careful consideration God said: "I will not create her [the woman] from [Adam's] head, lest she be swelled-headed; nor from the eye, lest she be a coquette; nor from the ear, lest she be an eavesdropper; nor from the mouth, lest she be a gossip; nor from the heart, lest she be prone to jealousy; nor from the hand, lest she be light-fingered; nor from the foot, lest she be a gadabout; but from the modest part of man, for even when he stands naked, that part is covered.' And as He created each limb He ordered her, 'Be a modest woman.'[712]

Then this *Genesis Rabbah* provides examples how the women did not remain modest (Proverbs 1:25) and secluded as the hidden rib in the man's body. Instead, she walked proudly with outstretched neck (Isaiah 3:16); Sarah eavesdropped (Genesis 18:10); Rachel envied her sister and stole the *teraphim* (Genesis 30:1, 31:19); and Dinah went out (Genesis 34:1)[713]. *Genesis Rabbah* 45:5 clearly adds other four feminine traits and quotes examples from Genesis:

> The Rabbis said: Women are said to possess four traits: they are greedy, eavesdroppers, slothful, and envious. Greedy, as it says, *And she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat* (ib [i.e., Genesis] iii, 6); eavesdroppers: *And Sarah heard in the tent door* (ib [i.e., Genesis]. xviii, 10); slothful: *Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal* (ib. [i.e., Genesis 18] 6); envious: *Rachel envied her sister* (ib [i.e., Genesis]. xxx, i)[714].

As times went by, some scholars assign the divine names *Elōhīm* and YHWH to different traditions and assume that these narratives were originally different and were later joined by an editor[715]. Ed Noort names another example: after studying the Genesis in the context of familiar stories of the Ancient Near East such as Gilgamesh, Noort believes that Genesis 1 and

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[712] *Midrash Rabbah translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices under the Editorship of Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon*, 1st ed. 1939, 3rd rpt., London: The Soncino Press, 1961, pp. 141–142.

[713] *Midrash Rabbah,* 1961, p. 142.

[714] *Midrash Rabbah,* 1961, p. 382.

[715] Neil Forsyth, "Adam and Eve", *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, Vol. 1, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007, pp. 6–12:6: "Two different creation stories are told in the first three chapters of Genesis, with the break coming at Chapter 2:4b. The two stories come from quite different sources such that they use different expressions for God: Elohim and Yahweh Elohim. In English Bibles those terms usually are translated 'God' and 'Lord God'."

2 represent the hard life of women in a patriarchal and agricultural society. The punishment spelled out in Genesis 3:16–19 represent not only the ideal world of "storytellers", but also "the reality actually experienced" therein. In the real world, women and men were unequal persons and they were also treated unequally. The text of Genesis 2 demonstrates that YHWH Elohim did not intend this gender inequality[716].

Another more plausible interpretation rejects these three views and maintains that the second narrative is not a separate creation story at all. For example, all creation stories of the *Ancient Near East* contain information on stars, moon, vegetation, animals, and the like. Genesis 2 does not refer to sun, moon or oceans; therefore, it cannot be a creation narrative.[717] Kenneth Kitchen cites ancient Egyptian engravings that describe the same event in two or more ways. For example, *Amūn*, who created the *Karnak Poetical Stela*, praised *King Tuthmosis III* first in general terms, then in a precise manner and then in a more varied way. Secondly, the *Gebel Barkal Stele* praises a king first in general terms, then gives precise information about his triumphs and ends in a general way. Kitchen remarked these monuments "had *no* prehistory of hands and redactors"[718]. In the same manner, one should not impose any editorial work on the narratives of Genesis 1 and 2. Kitchen summarized his views as follows:

> [The] strictly complementary nature of the 'two' accounts is plain enough: Genesis 1 mentions the creation of man in as in the last of a series, and without any details, whereas in Genesis 2 man is the centre of interest and more specific details are given about him and his setting. There is no incompatible duplication here at all. Failure to recognize the complementary nature of the subject-distinction between a skeleton outline of all creation on the one hand, and the concentration in detail of man and his immediate environment on the other, borders on obscurantism.[719]

David Fergusson, who has examined the various aspects of biblical accounts on creation, believes that "Genesis 1 and the more anthropologically oriented account in Genesis 2 are

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[716] Noort, "The Creation of Man and Woman in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Traditions", pp. 1–18.

[717] Gleason L. Archer, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties based on the NIV and the NASB*, Michigan: Zondervan, 1982, p. 69: Genesis 2 "was never intended to be a general creation narrative. Search all the cosmogonies of the ancient civilizations of the Near East, and you will never find among them a single creation account that omits all mention of the formation of sun, moon, and stars or ocean or seas – none of which are referred to in Genesis 2. It is therefore quite obvious that Genesis 1 is the only creation account to be found in the Hebrew Scripture and that is already presupposed as the background of Genesis 2."

[718] Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, London: The Tyndale Press, 1966, p. 116.

[719] Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, pp. 116–117.

narratives of grace".[720] They tell what happened to Adam and his lifelong helpmate. Their collective disobedience strained their relationship with God, but it did not destroy them. The gracious God created new opportunities not only for their survival, but also for their multiplication. God, who made the world, became their redeemer as well. In this context, creation marked God's first act. Since that time, God sustains and develops the created world and all things in it. The creation narrative of Genesis 1 and 2 tells how God's covenant relationship with the people began.[721]

6.1.4 Matriarchal perspectives of Genesis 2:22–3:1–24

Most of the above-mentioned theological discussions on the image of God start from the male perspectives. Adam remains the centre. However, this Hebrew word for Adam also means humanity[722]. Humanity without the full participation of women is unthinkable. Few scholars have made the woman of the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2 and named Eve in Genesis 3:20 the centre and focal point. For example, Petronella Elizabeth Jongsma-Tieleman, a psychologist, is one of these scholars. She interprets the image of God from the perspective of matriarchy[723] and psychology of religion. She perceives religion as behaviour, in which human emotions, needs and their conflicts matter. She also understands patriarchy of Genesis 2 as a reactionary narrative for the then prevailing and unreported matriarchy. After all, the woman as a caring mother demonstrates endless patience and enduring love. This is the reason, accordingly to Jongsma-Tieleman, why some address "their wives as 'Mom. She is 'the wife', 'the missus [i.e., the 'mistress']"[724]. She states further that while the mother

[720] David Fergusson, "Creation", *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed., John Webster, et. al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 72–90:75.

[721] Fergusson, "Creation", p. 75.

[722] "adam (Strong's Concordance, Hebrew Word number 120)", *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/hebrew/120.htm (accessed on 19 March 2018): This entry expressly mentions *adam* as a synonym for "collective man, mankind" and refers to Genesis 1:26.

[723] Petronella Elizabeth Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 172–186:185: Genesis 2 "is not patriarchal *as long as* the 'matriarchal' background is taken into consideration; i.e. as long as the male is seen as the subservient party."

[724] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", p. 174.

represents the inner world of "care and feelings" and the father represents the outer world of "work, business and society"[725].

Jongsma-Tieleman highlights the importance of ancient Mother Goddess traditions that make fertility as the sole responsibility of women, they did not need a man for procreation[726]. These traditions assign subordinate roles to men, who normally appear as sons or partners. This manner of the religious thinking of the Ancient Near Eastern peoples understands the man, made from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), as a weak and subordinate person destined to become dust (i.e., to die). The fear of death gripped him; he needed scapegoat and found it in the woman,[727] who, as the mistress of life, was superior to him.

Jongsma-Tieleman interprets Genesis 2:24[728] in a contemporaneous manner: when this text was composed, the bridegroom customarily went to the parental home of the bride, consummated marriage, stayed there for few days or even few months, and then returned to his parental home. The meaning of being naked and unashamed was associated with their sexuality; their sexual life did not cause them any emotional conflicts and hurts.[729] Eating the forbidden fruit, i.e., trying to be a god (i.e., dominating and commanding) to each other, led both the man and the woman to intolerance of each other's limits and capabilities and to mutual blaming. Finally, God intervened and brought order by controlling their emotional outbursts. For the woman, childbirth would cause pain; for the man, toiling the ground and earning livelihood would be painful as well. Amid pain life continues.

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[725] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", pp. 174–175.

[726] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", p. 176: "The Great Mother-goddesses, who gave birth to everything, appeared in the beginning of the history of religion. The Great Mother-goddess is the 'mother of all living'. She is almighty, omnipotent and autarchic, not in need of a male partner. Much later in history the role of the masculine seed in fertility was recognised."

[727] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", p. 182: "Here the subordinate sex is threatened with death. But, to the contrary, in 2:7 man is said to be created of the dust of the ground, and 3:19 refers to that. Here mortality is linked to creation. One possible explanation could be that mortality becomes a threat when mortal man transgresses her/his God-given limits. It is also possible to hear in these verses an echo of the Sumerian paradise myth. Using elements of this myth the myth-teller speaks the language of the cultural background of his time: eating of the forbidden fruit is usurpation of forbidden power, a *mortal* sin."

[728] "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (NIV)

[729] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", p. 182.

Eve became the first Jewish matriarch. The other three matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah and Leah followed. Their lives enabled the Jews to realise the importance of "sexuality, fertility, potency, conception, pregnancy and birth"[730], just like the people of the Ancient Near East at that time worshipped the powers of nature and valued human survival. Thus, the creation of female and male in God's image led to the creation of countless women and men, who became agents of human life and survival. Their mutual position in the society ensured the survival of humanity and gender equality.

6.1.5 Ezer: the female helper helping the helpless male

Genesis 2:18 states that *YHWH–'Elōhīm* decided to create for the lonely (Heb. *bad*, 'alone, apart, separated' like a branch of a tree)[731] man a helper (Hebrew male noun: *ezer*, 'help, helper, helpmate'), who was fitting (Hebrew adverb and preposition: *neged*, 'before, in sight of, in front of, in opposition to'). Genesis 2:20 clearly states that the man had named all the animals and other living things; but he could not find an *ezer*, who was just right for him in every way. Finally, *YHWH–'Elōhīm* created an *ezer*, namely the first woman from the rib of the man. As soon as *YHWH–'Elōhīm* had brought her to him, the man accepted her as the 'bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh' (Genesis 2:23); she was an extended version of himself. She was suitable, fitting and appropriate for him; because she was in front of him, he could understand who he really was. At that time, she did to him something, which he himself could have never accomplished.

Colin Brown quotes a text from one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, popularly known as the *Cairo Damascus Document* (Vol. III, 1, 290). It has a reference to *ezer* ('helper'), which the Qumran Community probably upheld. They understood the helper in terms of a partner, who resembled the man, but remained different from him. If the helper were like him or an animal, his solitary nature would not have disappeared. "To be created good, man needs a being like

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[730] W.J. Van Bekkum, "Eve and the Matriarchs", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 128–139:229.

[731] "bad (Strong's Concordance, Hebrew Word number 905)", *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/hebrew/905.htm (accessed on 19 March 2018).

him and yet different from him, so that in it he will recognise himself'[732], more than himself and would engage in I-Thou relationship.

In a similar manner, the psychologist Jongsma-Tieleman cautions us not to read the Hebrew noun *ezer* as "a subordinate help, without [its own] autonomy or identity"[733]. Actually, the masculine noun *ezer* indicates that the helper, whom *YHWH–'Elōhīm* had created was only a woman in her gender and biological make up; but in her status, identity and value she was equal to the man. This realisation is important for the question of gender balance.

Of its 21 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible[734], the masculine noun *ezer* stands two times for the woman (Genesis 2:18 and 20) and 19 times for God as the helper for humankind. The other the first two occurrences are found in Genesis 2:18 and 2:20. *'Elōhīm* as *ezer* rescued Moses from the Pharaoh (Exodus 18:4). Moses prayed *YHWH* to be the *ezer* for the people of Judah (Deuteronomy 33:7). This noun *ezer* appears 11 times in the Psalms (20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:19; 115:9, 10 and 11; 121:1 and 2; 124:8; 146:5) and refer to God's assistance and assurances in times of emotional distress and material uncertainties. The remaining occurrences of *ezer* appear in Isaiah 30:5, Ezekiel 12:14, Daniel 11:34 and Hosea 13:9. The last occurrence in Hosea 13:9 is indicative. The people of Israel should find their *ezer* ('helper') in God. Genesis 2:18 and 20 present the man brilliant, but lonely and helpless without a suitable companion. God brought to him the woman (Genesis 2:22), who helped him to realize his identity and completeness. Thus, the noun *ezer* underlines the importance of woman in God's plan for humanity and thus for gender equality.

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[732] Colin Brown, "Woman", *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, Translated with additions and revisions from the German Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuteher and Hans Bietenhard, Vol. III, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986, pp. 1055–1068:1056. On this page, Brown summarises Karl Barth's view (*Church Dogmatic*, Vol. III, 1, 196) on the image of God in human beings: "In man the image of God is found in two different individuals, whereas in God it is found in the one divine being. Moreover, there is a threeness in the divine Trinity, whereas there is a duality in the image of man and a Threeness in the recurring cycle of parent, children and grandchildren."

[733] Jongsma-Tieleman, "The Creation of Eve and the Ambivalence Between the Sexes", p. 182.

[734] "ezer", (Strong's Concordance, Hebrew Word number 5828)", *Bible Hub*, available at www.biblehub.com/hebrew/5828.htm (accessed on 5 May 2018).

6.1.6 Humanity in the Image of God

Genesis 1:26–27 simply states that God created human beings in God's image and does not explain it any more. This omission has led to several interpretations; each interpretation has its own consequences. For example, feminist scholars of the Bible approach it differently from their male colleagues. Cherith Fee Nordling has summarized various feminist perspectives of reading, interpreting and applying biblical texts to specific situations. She states that these women scholars make their social position and experiences as norms to interpret biblical texts for beliefs and practices. They insist that language and its use shape views and realities. Male-centred language, views, symbols and practices have not fully supported women's aspirations for recognition at home, in societies and in church institutions. Biblical texts "reflect the patriarchal, androcentric, and sometimes oppressive forms of hierarchy, which have prevailed in Hebrew and Christian cultures"[735]. Therefore, all texts and their interpretations need a thorough review from the perspectives, experiences, and aspirations of women and their need to realise their full womanhood in God's providence.

H.S. Benjamins, who has examined the impact of Genesis 1–2 on the Fathers of the Early Church, points out a dilemma, which Apostle Paul had faced in Corinth. Originally, Apostle Paul's views on marriage varied. He did not deny the importance of marriage. However, he did not favour it because he, like his fellow Christians, expected the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 7:29, 32 and 38). Christ's return would end all human relationships on this earth. On the other hand, he could not support "the Marcionites, the Encratites and some of the Gnostics", who demanded total celibacy of Christians and forbade marriage. It was necessary for the Early Church "to find some balance between the radical and eschatological requirements of the Gospel, and daily life arrangements in this world, where people work, eat, marry, produce children, and are still considered to be Christians"[736]. Benjamin proceeds to discuss, how some Church Fathers like Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius,

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[735] Cherith Fee Nordling, "Feminist biblical interpretation", *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 2005, pp. 228–230:228.

[736] H.S. Benjamin, "Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise: The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 93–106:94.

Hermes, Tertullian and Eusebius did not reject marriage, but preferred continence and asceticism. They knew the fact that God created the man and the woman and did not want them to be alone. Strangely, they used this truth to defend their ascetic lifestyle. They found their defence in the writings of Philo, who in his *De Opificio Mundi*, expounded the idea of love and desire that had originated in the mind of the man soon after his creation. Benjamin points out Philo's ideas as follows: Love, for Philo,

> is the origin of all ill-fortune. Love brings together the divided halves of the original androgynous man, created 'after the image', and sets up a desire for fellowship. This aspect of love is a valuable one, but the desire for fellowship also sets up a desire for bodily pleasure, which is the root of wrong and mortality. Philo's notion of the union of the halves is clearly taken from Plato's *Symposium*. It is interesting to note that Christian exegesis did not take over this interpretation, but developed a different concept of union, one which was related to conjunction with Christ.[737].

According to Ephesians 5:23, Jesus Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. Thus, "Christ and the Church thus constitute a complete man, like Philo's united halves". Just as the husband and wife became one flesh in Genesis 2:24, Christians who were united with Christ became one spirit with him (I Corinthians 6:15–17) [738]. In addition to the above asexual concept, Philo's *De Opificio Mundi* and *Legum Allegoriae* presented the man as the symbol of reason and Eve as a symbol of pleasure-seeking sense-perception. Many Church Fathers shared Philo's allegorical interpretation[739], which reduced the value of women at home, in the church and in the society.

The final blow to degrade Christian women and their equality with men came from Augustine of Hippo (354–430). He did not appreciate Jovinian, who asserted that both Adam and Eve could have had sexual union before they had eaten the forbidden fruit. Like Jerome, Augustine did not appreciate this view and defended celibacy and virginity. In this context, Augustine's two key ideas are important. First, he thought of two creations of man, i.e., the potential man in Genesis 1:27 was created male and female and the female in Genesis 1:26

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[737] Benjamin, "Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise: The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature", pp. 95–96.

[738] Benjamin, "Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise: The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature", p 96.

[739] Benjamin, "Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise: The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature", p 96–106. Benjamin names Origen, Theophilus of Antioch, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, and Augustine as those, whose ascetic views have impacted successive generation of Christians and their gender perceptions.

was a mere anticipation. On the other hand, the creation of man in Genesis was actual and historical. Secondly, Augustine upheld the view that God created the woman to bear children.[740]. Augustine hesitated to endorse sexual life in marriage because, believing in Psalm 51:5[741], he understood sexual act as the means for communicating sin from parents to children. The view that he promoted this view as a way for self-mastery[742] is not helpful for gender balance. It undermined the equality of the woman with the man and made her a 'child-producing machine'.

Anthony Meredith thinks that the fathers of the Early Church believed that the meaning of the image of God in human beings referred to their gradual transformation into God's likeness. They were aware how the 'original' sin and actual sins hindered human relationship with God. The Sin did not destroy human ability to respond to God's love and to long for a deeper fellowship with God. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the perfect image of God (Colossians 1:15), offered a way for human beings to restore the corrupt image of God in them. Consequently, they can aspire to attain perfection (Matthew 5:48) because God the Father is perfect. This advice applies to both male and female followers of Jesus Christ[743] and it lays a strong foundation for gender equality.

6.2 Image of God in the rest of the Hebrew Bible

The ideal situation of the man and the woman in Genesis 2 did not seem to have lasted long because Genesis 3 introduces shocking sceneries of temptation by a snake that lead the woman to doubt God's prohibition of eating the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Probably, the man would have been there as well and agreed with the woman's curiosity

[740] Benjamin, "Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise: The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature", p 104–106.

[741] Psalm 51:5: "Surely I [David, after having committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uria and convicted of this sin by Prophet Nathan] was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (NIV).

[742] Ellen T. Charry, "Doctrine of Human Being", *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 2005, pp. 310–313:312.

[743] Anthony Meredith, "Patristic Spirituality", *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Peter Byrene and Leslie Houlden, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 536–556:547. On page 578, Meredith quotes the teachings of Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (328–373) on the image of God, which was related to knowing God. Sin diminishes the knowledge of God; restoring the image of God through repentance and determined discipline will increase the knowledge of God. This truth applies both to women and men.

to test the forbidden fruit. Doubt, curiosity and transgression led the woman and man to disobey God's prohibition, earned God's anger and ended in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Yet, God mercifully clothed them and continued to care for them. Then, the man named his woman *Eve* (Heb. *chavvah*, 'life') suggesting that after Genesis 2, the custody of life during its beginning and growth from the beginning up to ten or more months are entrusted to the woman. The man on his own cannot create life at all. The continuation of his own species, namely men, depended and still depends on the woman. The man fittingly called her Eve, "the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20). This affirmation is important for gender balance because it stresses the mutuality of both the woman and the man. Subsequent developments in women's relationship to men and their wrong developments in women's subordination to men should be understood in the light of Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:23 and Genesis 3:20.

The Book of Proverbs contains insights into the women, who are portrayed both as wise and wicked. The wise woman builds her house in a perfect manner and delights her guests with good hospitality and life (Proverbs 9:1–5). The setting of Proverbs 9 follows the examples of the Ancient Near Eastern literature, in which "gods might celebrate their sovereign by building a palace and inviting the other gods to come to a banquet and to celebrate with them"[744]. The wise woman has built her perfect house and celebrates it with her friends and associates. Those who forsake foolishness could enter her house and enjoy her company. Likewise, the ideal 'woman of worth', described in Proverbs 31:10–31, takes care of home affairs, her husband and children; she trades and earns wealth; she does not attend to her own beauty because she knows that external charm could be deceptive and misleading. By contrast, she organises her life around the moral values, which God has taught. Proverbs 31:30 calls it "the fear of the LORD". Thus, this woman as wife, mother and upholder of her family has become an example for her entire community.

By contrast, men must avoid the example of wicked women: those who follow these women deserve rebuke (Proverbs 1:20–33). A promiscuous woman speaks 'sweet' words and

[744] Christine Roy Yoder, "The Book of Proverbs", *Anselm Academic Study Bible: New American Revised Standard Edition*, Winona/MN: Anselm Academic, 2012, pp. 990–1035:1007.

misleads and spoils undiscerning, unguarded young men. If they followed her, they would lose their marital loyalty and love (Proverbs 5:1–23). An evil woman symbolises deception, sexual immorality and death (Proverbs 9:13–18).

Christine Roy Yoder succinctly summarises the status and role of these two kinds of women in the Book of Proverbs:

> [In Proverbs 9:13–18 the] Woman Folly is the mirror image of Woman Wisdom. Both make identical invitations but only one of the offers is trustworthy. Their hearers must discern which is the true offer. She is depicted with traits of the adulterous woman in 2:16–19; chap[ter] 5; 6:20–35; chap[ter] 7. Woman Folly is restless (cf. 7:11), her path leads to the underworld (2:18, 5:5; 7:27), she is ignorant (5:6). In this final scene, she appears in single combat with her great nemesis, Woman Wisdom. Though the invitations of the two women appear at first hearing to be the same, they differ profoundly. Wisdom demands that her guests reject their ignorance, whereas Woman Folly trades on their ignorance.[745]

Proverbs 8 is a special chapter. It personifies wisdom (Heb. *chokmah*) as a woman: even before YHWH had created time and space, YHWH conceived and formed her (verses 22–23). Then she witnessed YHWH's creation of the material world (the heavens, the earth, mountains, hills, water bodies and clouds). When YHWH fixed the foundations of the earth, wisdom remained his delight, i.e., as an intimate companion (verses 24–30). Those who would follow her, would also have special relationship with YHWH, who creates and maintains the living and non-living things. She guides the thoughts and activities of kings, princes and all those who seek enduring riches and honour (verses 12–18). Yoder points out the impact of this portrayal of wisdom on subsequent generations of Jews and Christians. She informs that Sirach 24 offers an exposition of wisdom, which resembles the wise woman in Proverbs 8. Then, she summarizes, how wisdom as a creative woman has influenced Jesus' perception as God's wisdom:

> The Gospel of John portrays Jesus in the language of wisdom in Proverbs; Jesus like wisdom, calls out to people to listen to him, promises to tell them the truth, seeks disciples, invites them to a banquet, and gives them life. Writers in the patristic period used the language of pre-existent wisdom to express the idea of the pre-existent Word of God. […] Wisdom is of divine origin. She is presented as existing before all things [Proverbs 8:22–26 and she deserved honourable recognition. … She] was with the Lord during the creation of the universe. The pre-existence of Woman

[745] Yoder, "The Book of Proverbs", p. 1007.

> Wisdom with God is developed [… not only in Sirach 24, but also in the] New Testament hymns to Christ", especially in John 1:1–14 and Colossians 1:15–20.[746]

The use of wisdom as woman in Proverbs 8 and 9 reflect certain aspects of God's image in Genesis 1 and 2. The fundamental theological conviction that God created women and men in God's image reiterates ultimate value. Both women and men depend on God for their survival and gender-balanced growth. Genesis 5:1–2 states that when God had created humankind in God's likeness, God made them male and female persons and blessed them. The image of God surfaces then in Genesis 9:6, where it prohibits the shedding of human blood, because God has made the humans in "in the image of God"; therefore, human life is holy and worthy. Nobody should harm it.

6.3 Jewish women before and during Jesus' time

The Lord Jesus Christ was a devout Jew and as such he would have fully known the position and role of women in the regions of Galilee, Samaria and Jerusalem. A large body of literature is available on Jesus' Jewish background and its impact on his life, ministry and teaching[747]. However, the succinct essay on Jewish women by Ansen Rainey of Tel Aviv[748] and Louis Jacob of London[749] contains condensed information on the social, religious and legal status of the Jewish women in Judaism. It gives both the good and not-good sides of the Jewish women from their creation narratives to their status in modern Israel until 1971. The following extract concentrates only on those details that throw light on Jesus' interactions with the women of his day.

According to Ansen Rainey, Genesis 2:23–24 stresses equality between a woman and man. After her disobedience in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), she was viewed as temptress

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[746] Yoder, "The Book of Proverbs", p. 1006.

[747] Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgement and Restoration*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Porter, Stanley E. and Wendy J. Porter: *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism–Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament–Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context*, Vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2013.

[748] Ansen Rainey, "Woman", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 16: Ur–Z, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971, pp. 623–626.

[749] Louis Jacob, "Woman: Attitude to Women", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 16: Ur–Z, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971, pp. 626–628.

and faithless. She needed the support, guidance and protection of men in all stages of her life. Until marriage, the girl should remain a virgin (Deuteronomy 22:13–21); Jewish fathers often did not ask her opinion about marriage (Genesis 24:5, 8). They could even sell their daughters to pay off their debts (Exodus 21:7); by contrast, they should never sell a son. After marriage, she should be like the characteristics in Proverbs 31:10–31: she should be "industrious, thrifty, a good manager, diligent in household skills, and generous in her concern for others"[750].

Institutionalised Judaism assigned secondary roles for women in religious ceremonies and participation. They helped the building of the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:22–29; 38:8), but they could not lead worship services. The 'consecrated women' in Amos 2:7–8 and Hosea 4:13–14 were probably temple prostitutes. There were also female magicians and diviners (Exodus 22:17 and I Samuel 28:3 ff.). The purity laws assigned lower status to menstruating women and the mothers of female infants[751]. Despite these restrictions, there were great leaders such as the Judge Deborah (Judges 4–5). Proverbs 9 symbolises wisdom (Heb. *chokmoth*) as a woman.

Rabbi Louis Jacob (1920–2006) highlights the male-centred descriptions of the Hebrew Bible and rare mention of God as a mother: "Although the masculine pronoun is applied to God in the Bible and He is described as a Father, there is also a prophetic simile comparing God's comfort to those who mourn, to the comfort which a mother offers her son (Isa. 66:13)"[752]. He also points the most troublesome rabbinic prayer, i.e., "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hast not made me a woman" and its non-adherence. Jacob asserts that Rabbis, who had prayed it faithfully also loved their wives and mostly remained in monogamous relationships.

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[750] Rainey, "Woman", p. 623.

[751] Rainey, "Woman", p. 626: "Apart from the laws of impurity to which both men and women were subject, a woman was regarded as menstruous both during her menstrual flow and for seven days thereafter (Lev. 15:11.). She was also regarded as menstruous for the first seven days after giving birth to a male child and forbidden to touch consecrated objects or visit a sanctuary for the next 33 days; both figures are doubled if the child was a female (Lev. 12:2–5)".

[752] Jacob, "Woman: Attitude to Women", p. 626.

Jacob outlines other examples of Jewish practices that had a lower view of women. He cites (disapprovingly) Rabbi Eliezer's minority view that "whoever teaches his daughter Torah teaches her lasciviousness". Likewise, Jewish women gained merit by encouraging their husbands to study Torah and sending their sons to Torah classes. Jacob mentions that several Jewish sources speak of women as temptresses of men. Amid these negative attitudes, Jewish men believed that without wives they were incomplete, joyless and without blessings. They should love their wives as themselves and even honour the Torah as a woman[753].

Some of the Jewish apocryphal books speak about women and their position in the Jewish-Hellenist society. The 8th chapter of the apocryphal book *Tobit* contains the direct reference to Adam and Eve outside of Genesis 3. These names appear in a prayer, which Tobit and his newly wedded wife Sarah spoke on their first night, before they went to sleep and it reads as follows:

> Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.' I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.' And they both said, 'Amen, Amen.'[754]

The reminder of this 8th chapter tells how this prayer protected both the husband and the wife from dangers caused by the devil. The fact that the wife joined her husband in prayer gives an evidence of how some Jewish men respected and accepted women as their equals.

By contrast, other apocryphal books present women as the source of human problems. Ben Sirach seems to have thought about Eve, when he said that "From a woman sin had its beginning and because of her we all die" (Sirach 25:25). Obviously, it captured the story of Genesis 3 and applied it to the Hellenist Jews. Ben Sirach teaches further, how unmarried and

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[753] Jacob, "Woman: Attitude to Women", p. 627: "The Torah, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently hypostatized as a woman (e.g., in Jev[amot, a Talmudic tractate] 63b) and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bridge (Ex[odus] R[abbah] 41:5)".

[754] Amy Jill Levine, "Tobit", *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with The Apocrypha–An Ecumenical Study Bible, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 1368–1388:1380.

married daughters burdened their fathers. Sirach 42:9–14, for example, contains one of the worst misogynies of the apocryphal texts[755].

It is strange that the Latin title of this book contains the word *Ecclesiasticus* ('Church Book')[756]. It is possible that the early Christians learned some of their low views about women from this book. Van Ruiten, who has examined these texts[757] mentions Eve was created for Adam's death, she mated with the fallen angels, namely the Satan, in chapters 6, 7 and 10 of the *Book of Enoch*[758] and human sexuality started "with the curse on man and woman"[759].

It is evident that the apocryphal books of *Sirach* and *Enoch* supported male dominance and female subjugation. They impacted the New Testament texts such as Jude (14–16 with quotes from Enoch 1:9) and 2 Peter 2:2–9 (about the fallen angels, who as in Genesis 6:2 mated with human daughters and produced giants[760]). Obviously, the Christian authors of 2

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[755] Daniel J. Harrington, "Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach", *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with The Apocrypha–An Ecumenical Study Bible, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 1457–1528:1513–1514: "A daughter is a secret anxiety to her father, and worry over her robs him of sleep; when she is young, for fear she may not marry, or if married, for fear she may be disliked; while a virgin, for fear she may be seduced and become pregnant in her father's house; or having a husband, for fear she may go astray, or, though married, for fear she may be barren. Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter, or she may make you a laughingstock to your enemies, a byword in the city and the assembly of the people, and put you to shame in public gatherings. See that there is no lattice in her room, no spot that overlooks the approaches to the house. Do not let her parade her beauty before any man, or spend her time among married women; for from garments comes the moth, and from a woman comes woman's wickedness. Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good; it is woman who brings shame and disgrace."

[756] Harrington, "Ecclesiasticus, …", 2010, pp. 1457.

[757] J.T.A.G.M. Van Ruiten, "Early Jewish Literature", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 34–62:35: Only a few texts speak about a sexual differentiation in the creation of either man and woman, mostly referred to as Adam and Eve: in the *Apocrypha*: *Tobit* 8:6;5 in the *Pseudoepigrapha*: *Jubilees* 2:14; 3:1–7, 8; 2 *Enoch* 30:8-18; *Sibylline Oracles* 1:22–37; *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (*Apocalypse of Moses*] 7:1; 40–42; *Pseudo-Philo*, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 32:15. I will restrict myself to some of these texts (*Tobit, Jubilees, 2 Enoch*, *Sibylline Oracles*)."

[758] Van Ruiten, "Early Jewish Literature", p. 60.

[759] Van Ruiten, "Early Jewish Literature", p. 62.

[760] Patrick A. Tiller "The Second Letter of Peter", *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with The Apocrypha–An Ecumenical Study Bible, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 2132–2136:2134: referring to 2 Peter 2:4, the footnote entry reads as follows: "The angels who sinned are probably the 'sons of God' of Gen 6.2 as popularized by the books of Enoch (see Jude 14−16n.). The allusive use of the noncanonical Enoch traditions contrasts with Jude's explicit quotation from them. *Tartaros* (hell) is the prison of the Titans of Greek myth."

Peter and Jude reflected on the non-canonical *Book of Enoch*. They in turn have influenced the thinking of subsequent generation of their readers.

6.4 Greco-Roman women before and during Jesus' time

Following Hesiod's *Theogony* (about 700 BCE, i.e., during the time of the prophets Amos and Hosea of the Hebrew Bible), the Greeks believed in the existence of goddesses and other female divine powers; yet, for them "Pandora was the first woman ever born, and the female sex did not exist before her birth"[761]. It is said that she derived her name Pandora because all (Greek: *pantes*, 'all') Olympian Gods gave her as a present (Greek: *dôron*, 'gift') to the "barley eating males"[762]. The males ascribe the origin of evil to her. She opened a jar (not the *Pandora Box*), which she was not supposed to open. Immediately, evils, diseases and work fell on men; she hurriedly closed the jar with a lid and trapped the *elpis* ('hope'?) inside it. This *elpis* is an important force that helps people to move on in the hope of a better future. Bremmer concludes his essay on Pandora, the Greek Eve, with these observations: the people of the Ancient Near East told stories about the origins of male persons only. Only Jews and Greeks introduced the origin of the female person. For Jews, Eve became the mother of all living things (Genesis 3:20). In this regard, it is good to note the following:

> [Like] the male Israelites, the male Greeks ascribed the source of their present sorrow state to the creation of woman. Whereas before, men had shared the table of the gods, they now had to work for a living. Even though the arrival of woman was not totally bad, her contribution to the present state of the *condition humaine* was in their eyes not a particularly felicitous one. As such, these myths are just one example of the eternally difficult relationship between the sexes[763].

It is interesting to note that the Christian authors of the New Testament do not mention the story of Pandora. Nevertheless, her story helps us to understand, why the Greeks did not appreciate their women[764]. A Greek text from 1 BCE contains the instruction of a husband to

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[761] Jan N. Bremmer, "Pandora or The Creation of a Greek Eve", *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 19–33:20

[762] Bremmer, "Pandora or The Creation of a Greek Eve", p. 26.

[763] Bremmer, "Pandora or The Creation of a Greek Eve", p. 33.

[764] Craig S. Keener, "Family and Household", *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A; Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000, pp. 353–368:359: In Egypt [where many Greek-speaking Jews lived], for example, many infants died; those who survived hardly attained the age of 25.

his expectant wife. Regarding the child, he told: "if it is male, let it live; if it is female, expose it"[765]. Another evidence of dislike for female children reads as follows: economic consideration forced many families to abandon their female babies. Rescued female babies were raised for various purposes; some of them became prostitutes. Married women left their parental homes and lived in the house of their husbands. Most Jewish and non-Jewish families preferred sons to daughters. The Jews did not artificially try to reduce the number of girl children. It was strange that the Roman Government taxed those, who tried to adopt abandoned female babies. "In places like Ephesus the public bought [female] infants cheaply, whom they then enslaved to Artemis[766].

Thus, the ancient world of the Bible covering Greece, Rome and Egypt practiced female infanticide and preferred sons to daughters. Jesus Christ, his apostles and the early Christians shared some aspects of these peoples: they distanced themselves from their ancestral customs and religions. Catherine C. Kroeger, who has examined the status and life of the Jewish women in Palestine and in Diaspora, mentions that Jewish mothers took care of both male and female infants. Father gave special attention to sons and educated them. Girls had little opportunities for formal education, but learned household activities from their mothers. Only in the Diaspora contexts, Jewish women had more liberty to go on errands into the cities[767]. She explains further that the Jewish girls married "shortly after the onset of menstruation"; her parents arranged for a betrothal, which was binding as a marriage. The actual marriage could take place several months later. It was however essential that the she remained virgin until the day of her marriage. As soon as she was married, she went to her husband's family and lived with him there. She and her husband would try to have their own children at the earliest. The School of Rabbi Shammai allowed divorce for proven adultery. By contrast, the School of

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Their life expectancy was less than 35 years. Deformed infants were often abandoned to death. Likewise, fathers had the authority to reject infants, even if their mothers wanted to keep them. High mortality rate may have driven the parents to commit infanticide, even before they could emotionally be attached to these infants.

[765] J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, 1930, rpt. Peabody/MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, p. 291: the entry under the Greek adjective *thēlus* ('female') quotes the above-mentioned text from Sections p. 33 in volume IV of the Egyptian *Oxyrhynchus Papryi*.

[766] Keener, "Family and Household", p. 359.

[767] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," 1278.

Rabbi Hillel permitted divorce for a woman "spinning in the street, speaking with a stranger, a spoiled dinner, a dog bite that did not heal or finding another woman who was more attractive. The effort to draw Jesus into this debate brought a surprising response (Mk 10:2–9)"[768].

Kroeger adds that Jewish women had less religious rights than men; yet they enjoyed more "honor and integrity" than Greek or Roman women. Some of the latter accepted Judaism because they did not have to undergo circumcision as their men were required to. They found in Judaism "a greater stability and peace"[769] than in other religions. Jewish women had rights for divorce and remarriage; they could own properties and businesses. They could not lead a synagogue in Palestine, but Jewish diaspora congregations, for example in Rome and Thessalonica, had a "leader" and a "mother of the synagogue"[770].

The situation of the Roman and Greek women of that time differed. Greek girls married younger than the Jewish girls. Due to complications of pregnancy and child birth, most young Greek girls died; if they survived, their life expectancy was about 35 years. Greek wives had a deplorable status and neglect. Some of the female infants who were exposed and rescued became prostitutes, musicians and dancers at dinner parties. The city of Corinth was famous for its courtesans, sacred prostitutes of the temple of Goddess Aphrodite. Like the Greek girls, the Roman girls married, when they were about fourteen and often had traumatic experiences[771]. They performed various tasks as farmers, animal herders, merchants, entertainers, courtesan and the like.

Thus, the Jewish, Roman and Greek women of Jesus' time lived, worked and died in patriarchal societies. They met the needs of the males. Otherwise, they seldom had an

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[768] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," p. 1277.

[769] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," p. 1279.

[770] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," p. 1279.

[771] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," p. 1278: A Roman girl "married with reluctance and sometimes had to be pulled from the arms of her mother and nurse in order to be taken to the new husband's home. The day before she had dedicated her dolls in the temple of a goddess, and her hymen was perforated on a phallic statue of the god Priapus or Mutuunus Tutuunus. This last practice was bitterly condemned by the church fathers and may be part of Paul's thinking in Romans 1:26. Although a woman might free herself from the control of a tutor by producing three children, family size was limited by the use of contraceptives (especially the drug silphium), abortion and infant exposure".

independent life of dignity, worth and recognition. Dislike for female babies, mostly due to early death, immoral life imposed on them, the cost of dowry, and their inability to find human and emotional satisfaction[772], created gender imbalance. The Lord Jesus was born into this socio-cultural setting of the Greco-Jewish world and showed an alternative way for women and men to encounter God and each other in their living contexts.

6.5 Jesus as Image of God and women in the Gospels

Ideas associated with the image of God, namely the relationship between a man and a woman as a husband and a wife, occur six times in the New Testament. Its first two occurrences come in Jesus' teaching on divorce (Matthew 19:1–12, also found in Mark 10:6). He chided his listeners for not knowing God's creation of humanity as *arsén* ('male, man') and as *thélus* ('female, woman'), who alone can nurse infants[773]. The third occurrence of the image of God comes in I Corinthians 6:16: Paul uses the image of God to teach religious and moral purity. Christian men should not get united with a prostitute because this joining would be equal to "sharing in one flesh". Instead, as per the fourth occurrence of this concept, they should symbolise Christ's moral relationship with his bride, namely the church (Ephesians 5:31). The fifth occurrence of this concepts comes in Colossians 3:10. This passage admonishes the Christians of Colossae to clothe themselves in a new manner and renew themselves in the knowledge of being created in God's image. The sixth occurrence is found in James 3:9, which reminds the people not to use tongue to praise God and to curse a fellow human being, who is made in the likeness (Greek: *homoiósis*, 'resemblance') of God, and by

[772] Kroeger, "Women in the Greco-Roman World and Judaism," p. 1279: Upper-class Roman women had a secluded life and were busy with learning or playing "home games such as droughts and knuckle bones" or self-adornment using slave services. They found in Christianity "abundant spiritual, intellectual and emotional outlets for their energies and aspirations"

[773] The Bible Hub (http://biblehub.com/greek/2338.htm) highlights the underlying meaning of the Greek word *thélus* (2338 in Strong's Concordance) as follows: "*thēlys* (from *thēlē*, 'the female breast')–properly, a woman with nursing breasts ('one who gives suck'); (figuratively) a mature female who exhibit 'sanctified femaleness,' glorifying God by reflecting the 'other wonderful half" of the divine image (cf. Gen 1:26,27).

implication of Christ[774]. Thus, the concept of the image of God has expanded to include more nuanced meanings than the one in Genesis 1:27.

6.5.1 Jesus as the Image of God and Saviour

The Greek noun *eikōn*, used 23 times in the New Testament, stands for the "mirror-like representation" and a close resemblance of an object or a person. Hence, the image exactly reflects its source (what it directly corresponds to). For example, Christ is the very image […and] supreme expression) of the Godhead[775]. These occurrences of the Greek word *eikōn* outline "a) mankind as God's *image*, b) Christ as God's image, [and] c) believers in their relationship to Christ's *image*"[776] With reference to humankind in God's image, Romans 1:23 follows the Septuagint version of Psalm 105:50. Instead of worshipping God, the creator, humankind chose to worship creatures made by God. In this manner, the entire humankind sinned.

Salvation is only possible through Jesus Christ, who is not only the "image of the invisible God", but also "the firstborn over all creation" (Colossians 1:15). For Kuhli, the affirmation of Christ as the "image of invisible God" with Christ "as the firstborn over all creation" poses exegetical problems. He believes that the phrase "the image of the invisible God" does not refer to Genesis 1:27, but to *sophia* ('wisdom') and the Gnostic understanding of the primal man[777]. Jewish traditions, especially developed by Philo, viewed wisdom as the mediator and protector of creation (*Wisdom of Solomon* 7:21 and 27). Colossians 1:18a presents Jesus as "the head of the body" his church. Kuhli believes that this imagery should be understood from

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[774] John R. Levison, "Literature concerning Adam and Eve", *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A; Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000, pp. 1–6:1.

[775] "eikón (Strong's Concordance, Greek Word number 1504)", *Bible Hub*, available at http://biblehub.com/greek/1504.htm (accessed on 19 March 2018).

[776] Khuli, "*eikon* image, likeness, architype", p. 389.

[777] Khuli, "*eikon* image, likeness, architype", p. 390: "Christ's designation as 'the first-born of all creation' refers to his place as the mediator of creation in contrast to the things created, as is definitely indicated in the prepositional phrases in v. 16. This conceptual complex, like the idea of revelation in 2 Cor 4:4, can scarcely be derived directly from OT statements about mankind made in the image of God. Rather, both sayings about Christ as 'God's *image*' are intelligible only against the background of Jewish teaching concerning Sophia as the mediator of creation and of the Gnostic myth of the *Urmensch* (primal person/man."

the "background of the prevalent conception of the *Urmensch* [German noun for 'the first human being'], which had already been closely connected in Hellenistic Judaism with Sophia speculation"[778].

However, the Pauline text 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 contrasts Adam, the earthly man, with Jesus, the heavenly man; but he connects them together in Romans 5:12. Adam and Jesus Christ represented God's image in different ways: Adam's sin damaged God's image in human beings so that they were unable to maintain pristine relationship with God, their creator. By contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ being the undamaged image of God made his salvation available to all people, both women and men. Therefore, all Christians should put on a "new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:10). Here, the word "image" stands for both women and men, who the followers of Jesus Christ. As they grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, they will increase into the image of their Creator. This particular symbol refers to Genesis 1:27 and it does not know any gender difference. Likewise, the resurrection body of both female and male Christians will bear the "image of the heavenly man" just we have borne the image of the earthly man". The Greek text literally means "the image of the earthly one" and "the image of the heavenly one". Current English translations substitute the word "one" with the male noun "man". It is important to note the gender-neutrality of the Greek phrase *tēn eikona tou choikou* ('the image of the earthly one')[779].

Romans 8:29 offers a key insight into the salvation available in Jesus Christ for both women and men. This soteriological statement encourages Christians to get conformed to the

[778] Horst Khuli, "*eikon* image, likeness, architype", *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Scheinder, Vol. 1, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 388–391:390.

[779] In politics and economy, the image on a coin reflects the person of the emperor (Matthew 22:20, Mark 12:6 and Luke 20:24). In religious use, the noun *eikon* stands for an image of a deity and the worship of that deity. People made images of peoples, birds, animals and reptiles and worshipped them (Romans 1:23). In eschatology, the image refers to the beast (Revelation 13:14 and15; 14:9 and 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20 and 20:4).

image of God's Son, namely Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the "original" image of God; all other images (e.g., as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:4) are mere "copies"[780].

Jesus Christ, the original image of the invisible God, does not make any gender differences. His salvation is available to both women and men, who choose to place their trust in him and accept his lordship over their attitudes, thought patters and lifestyles. The resultant transformation can lead us to attain a better gender equality that has been hitherto not possible.

6.5.2 Jesus and non-Jewish women as a gender issue

Jesus grew up in a culture that had already imbibed many aspects of the ancient Greek, Roman, Hellenistic and Egyptian cultures. All of them had a low view of women and were misogynous. In addition to the above-mentioned discussion on the dislike for women in ancient cultures, Léon-Dufour asserted that an "Israelite woman did not have civil status equal to man's. Perpetually a minor, she could not give testimony in court, nor acquire or bring about justice, not even as her husband's heir"[781]. In this misogynous world, Jesus set a counter example, which Léon-Dufour summarises as follows:

> [Regarding his views on women,] Jesus stood out in sharp contrast with his age. He did not fear associating with them in public [Matthew 26:7, Luke 7:37–50, John 4:27, 8:3–11] and restored them to health [Matthew 8:14; 9:20]. He let himself be followed by them [Luke 8:1–3; 23:55], confided a mission to Mary of Magdala [John 20:17], cited women as examples [Matthew 13:13; 25:1–13; Luke 15:8] or marvelled at their faith [Matthew 15:28]; but he also knew them to be capable of adultery [Mark 10:12][782].

Colin Brown's essay helps us to unpack this condensed statement in the following ways. Firstly, Matthew begins his narrative on Jesus with a brief genealogy. To our astonishment, it contains the names of four women, whose ancestry and "sexual irregularity" were troublesome: Tamar slept with his father-in-law (Genesis 38 and Matthew 1:3) Rahab was a prostitute (Joshua 2:1 and Matthew 1:5); Ruth, a Moabite woman, lay with Boaz on the threshing floor (Ruth 3:6–18 and Matthew 1:5); Finally, Bathsheba, whom King David

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[780] Kuhli, "*eikon* image, likeness, architype", p. 391.

[781] Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated from French by Terrence Prendergast, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1980, p. 47.

[782] Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 431.

forcefully took for himself (2 Samuel 2:2–5 and Matthew 1:6). Likewise, Joseph, the step-father of Jesus, originally thought that Mary may have had sexual affairs with another man and became pregnant (Matthew 1:18 ff.). These women somehow indicated that Jesus would engage with those people, who were socially outcastes. He even said that prostitutes and tax collectors "would enter the kingdom of heaven before the religious teachers" (Matthew 21:31–32) of his time[783].

Boaz Johnson evaluates from the perspectives of the contemporary "#Me Too Movement"[784] the experiences of these four women along with few other women, who had experienced at the hands of men sexual or other forms of violence[785]. He argues that traditionally, men considered women physically, mentally and spiritually weak and found opportunities to abuse them. The God-Man Jesus, on the other hand, gave women the liberating power[786].

Secondly, this liberating, new power was visible in Jesus as an infant. It is truly astonishing that Luke presented the aged widow Anna along with the elderly Simeon and together quoted their sayings about the baby Jesus (Luke 2: 28–38). Anna's prophecy that the infant Jesus would grow up and fulfil the expectations of all, "who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) formed an important aspect of this gospel.

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[783] Brown, "Woman", p. 1062.

[784] The author of this thesis thanks Professor Boaz Johnson of North Park University in Chicago/IL, USA, for sending to her via email on 6 June 2018 his unpublished manuscript entitled *The Marys of the Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement*. On page 10, he narrates the origin of this movement: "In the United States, almost every day there is an article on the #MeToo movement in prominent newspapers like the New York Times, and in other magazines like the Time Magazine and the such. In 2006, a sexual assault survivor, Tarana Burke began the first "Me Too," on Myspace social media site. She did this to help girls and women of color to heal from sexual violence. However, the #MeToo movement took deep and extensive traction after October 5, 2017, when the New York Times broke the story of Oscar winning Hollywood a producer by the name of Harvey Weinstein".

[785] A summary of Johnson's *The Marys of the Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement*: Johnson's list of women includes a) the first woman Eve in Genesis 1–3, b) the 'daughters of men' (Genesis 6:1–4), who contributed to the increase of immorality in this world, c) the women of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1–29) caught within the lust of the men, d) 'the Black Egyptian slave girl Hagar' (Genesis 16, 19:9–21), whom Abraham had rejected and e) Moses' sister Miriam (Exodus 2). All these women were portrayed as weak and victims. In fact, they were courageous in their own way. Then, Johnson discusses the specific roles Marys in the New Testament, namely Mary who was the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Marys at the cross and Christ's resurrection.

[786] Johnson's *The Marys of the Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement*, p. 130.

Thirdly, Jesus healed not only men, but also several women. These included Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14–15), the daughter of Jairus, a leader of a synagogue (Matthew 9:18–19), a woman with a flow of blood (Matthew 9:20–22), the daughter of the outcast Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28) and the like. These and other healings of women mentioned in Mark and Luke drive the key point that the women were no less important than men. Moreover, the healing of the woman with the blood flow rejected Jewish ritual laws of purity and pollution.[787]

Fourthly, Jesus' parables emphasize the exemplary characteristics of women, who demonstrated endurance, hard work and widening impact. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough" (Matthew 13:33). Luke 15:8–10 speaks about a woman, who never gap up, until she found the lost coin. Luke 17:35 refers to two women, who were grinding flour. When Jesus returns suddenly, one would be taken up and the other would be left behind. Such parables encouraged people to go about their daily work and be ready to meet God unannounced and suddenly. They should not lag. Luke 17:32 recollects Jesus' demand for loyalty by quoting the story of Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26), who turned back and became a salt pillar.

Fifthly, Jesus' approach to the Samaritans deserves a closer analysis. When he sent out his twelve disciples, he asked them disciples not to go to the Samaritans (Matthew 10:5–6), but to serve their fellow Israelites (in Judea and Galilee). During his later ministry, Luke presents a different picture of Jesus: he rebuked his disciples for entertaining hostility towards the Samaritans (Luke 9:55). This ambiguous portrayal may have been linked the audiences, to whom these Gospel passages were addressed. The Gospel of Matthews was meant for Jewish readers; on the other hand, the Gospel of Luke was aimed for Hellenist Greeks. Besides these intended recipients of the Gospels, a brief review of the socio-cultural situation provides

[787] Ben Witherington, "Women: New Testament," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, ed. David Noel Freedman, New York: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 951–961:958: "It seems that Jesus rejected many levitical laws about clean and unclean since he apparently fellowshipped with the unclean, allowed unclean women to touch him, and was willing to touch a corpse and stop a funeral procession to help a woman (Mark 5:25–34 and parallels; Luke 7:11–17, 36–50). Nowhere is recorded that after such occasions Jesus went through the regular Levitical procedures to make himself clean again."

further clarification. J. Jeremias gives several reasons, why the Jews were hostile towards the Samaritans: firstly, the Assyrian conquered the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:24–41), forcefully dislocated its inhabitants to other parts of their empire and settled the Northern Kingdom with different Assyrian groups.

Consequently, both the Jews and the Assyrians intermingled on almost every level. Secondly, the Samaritans accepted the Pentateuch as the only valid scripture. They rejected the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Thirdly, they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead because the Pentateuch did not teach it. Fourthly, they disregarded the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and worshipped in their temple on Mount Gerizim. Though the Greek ruler John Hyrcanos destroyed it around 123 BCE, the Samaritans of Jesus' time esteemed this place highly. Fifthly, they expected their Moses-like Messiah (Deuteronomy 18:15–19) to come to them at any time. Sixthly, during a night between 6–9 CE, the Samaritans defiled the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by scattering human bones. As a result, the Jews and the Samaritans mutually hatred each other.[788]

In this context of heated hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) makes better sense. Likewise, Jesus also admired, when one of the ten lepers, who was a Samaritan (Luke 17:11–19), thanked him for healing. Additionally, he broke the prevailing cultural taboos by speaking with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well (John 4:4–42). Her questions helped Jesus to explain new theological insights about worshipping God in spirit and truth, not merely in specific temples. His reported discussion discloses his pre-knowledge about peoples. It is admirable that this Samaritan woman became an evangelist for her fellow-Samaritans; many of them believed in Jesus "on the strength of the woman's word"[789]. Thus, in reaching out to the Samaritans, she accomplished, what Jesus' own disciples did not want to do. Probably, the example of this Samaritan woman provided the impetus for his Christ's advice to his disciples to be filled with

[788] J. Jeremias, "Samaria, Samaritans", *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. VII, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, pp. 88–94.

[789] Raymond Brown, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to John*, Vol. 1, I–XII, 1966, rpt. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1978, p. 168.

the Holy Spirit and to be his witnesses first in Judea, then in Samaria and finally to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Later, Philip, the evangelist, preached to the Samaritans (Acts 8:4–8)[790]. Thus, he initiated the first missionary movement to the non-Jewish peoples.

Sixthly, Jesus' interaction with the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21–28 (and it's another portrayal in Mark 7:24–30) needs explanation. His recorded responses to the Syrophoenician women from Cana are harsh indeed. She requested him to heal her daughter who was suffering from a demonic possession. His disciples wanted to send her away. As she insisted, Jesus told that he was sent "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v. 24) and it was not fair for him "to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (v. 26). Finally, seeing her endurance, Jesus commended her "great faith" in him, granted her request and healed her daughter.

This episode raised considerable controversy and still there is no settled opinion among scholars. Dorothy Lee, an Anglican theologian, admits that in "modern sociological and psychological terms, Jesus' reaction to the woman is cruel and unfeeling"[791]; she advises her readers not to approach this narrative from a psychological perspective. The woman herself did not exhibit "any sense of injury or rejection" by tossing back to Jesus his metaphor of food and dogs and requested him to have her the leavings, and not "the children's food"[792]. The deeper faith-related meaning of this narrative is important: this Canaanite woman willingly recognised his lordship, accepted his grace. Her firm faith, sharp wit, deep understanding of the God of Israel, her appropriate response to Jesus' words marked

> a boundary-crossing moment in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus' journey into enemy [Samaritan] territory invites precisely the change of direction which his ministry now takes. Outsiders knock at Israel's door and the door is opened to them; they are now welcome at the table. The Gentiles too belong among the 'lost sheep'"[793]

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[790] Brown, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to John*, p. 175.

[791] Dorothy A. Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2014, pp. 12–19:

[792] Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", p. 17.

[793] Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", p. 20.

Theologically, this Canaanite woman exemplified Jesus' teaching about the poor in spirit and humble and hers was the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3 and 5). Lee contends that the humility of the Canaanite woman remains the Christological focus of this narrative. In this context, a non-Jewish woman became the model teacher for the male disciples of Jesus. They should learn from her the meanings and implications of faith, humility, and trust in Jesus' words[794]. Likewise, she taught them the art of coping with divine silences, rebuffs, human prejudices and social forces leading to marginalisation[795]. Lee concludes her essay with this pertinent observation:

> The Canaanite woman's transformation from outsider to insider, from unclean to clean, from enemy to friend embodies the transformation offered by God from enmity to communion. Her worship of Christ as the source of salvation, and her faith in him – with its struggle, tenacity and depth – outline the shape and form of the Church's life"[796].

Seventhly, Jesus permitted several women disciples not only to follow him, but also to support him. Luke 8:1–3 gives the names of three women disciples and several unnamed women, who sponsored the itinerary ministry of Jesus and his male disciples: one of them was Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus had freed from the torments seven demons. The second named woman was Joanna, the wife of Chuza, who was King Herod's trusted servant[797]. The third named woman was Susanna, of whom nothing more is known. These wealthy women benefactors followed Jesus on his missionary journeys. These and other women followers and travelling companions knew that Jesus had chosen twelve men as apostles and yet supported them all. There is no record that they accused him of patriarchy.

Eighthly, John 8:1–11[798] mentions that Jesus did not permit the men to stone a woman caught in adultery; they did not bring the adulterer, but wanted only to punish the adulteress.

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[794] Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", p. 22.

[795] Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", pp. 24–25.

[796] Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21–28: Narrative, Theology, Ministry", p. 29.

[797] Brown, "Woman", pp. 1059–1061: Brown discusses the identity of these women in different gospel passages and Christian history.

[798] Brown, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to John*, p. 335: Raymond Brown proves that until about 900 CE major Greek and Coptic manuscripts of the Gospel of John (e.g., the Bodmer Papyrus) do not have this passage; by contrast, "Ambrose and Augustine wanted it read as part of the Gospel, and Jerome included it in the Vulgate. It appears in the 5th-century Greco-Latin codex Bezae."

Jesus' response gives a unique insight into his treatment of women. Prostitution was a male problem as much as it is a female challenge. Jesus convinced the men to realise their sinfulness. After they had gone, Jesus asked the woman not to sin anymore. Justice that did not examine the victimiser and the victim together was not justice at all. This story otherwise resembles the five major episodes,

> which feature women and their roles: (1) Mary, Jesus' mother (John 2,19); (2) the Samaritan woman (John 4); (3) Mary and Martha (John 11–12); (4) the mention of the women at the cross (John 19); and (5) the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. Taken together, these tales reveal women on their way to becoming Jesus' disciples, progression in understanding and faith in Jesus.[799]

Ninthly, the gospels underscore the primacy of women, who followed Jesus to the place where he was crucified, buried, and rose again (Matthew 27–28, Mark 16 and Luke 24). These women were "more prominent than the men in their love, care and courage after the crucifixion"[800]. These women seem to have followed him, because his teaching on celibacy for the sake of God's Kingdom (Matthew 19:3–12) opened a new way for single women to get out of traditional Jewish, Roman or Greek moral etiquettes of marriage, childbearing and domestic life and public roles. Additionally, Ben Witherington emphasises another contribution of the women to our understanding of Jesus Christ: despite the disregard and disrespect for the Jewish and Greco-Roman women of that time, Jesus, after resurrection appeared to them and asked them to share this news to his male disciples. Therefore, Jesus' resurrection was a historical event, because "it is improbable that early Christians would have invented the idea of women being the key witnesses to the concluding events in Jesus' earthly career"[801].

In this context, it was important to note that on 3 June 2016, Pope Francis endowed Mary Magdalene with a feast and a special preface to the *Missale Romanum* for 22 June. Thus, he revived the tradition, which Pope Gregory the Great (died 604) had introduced. The Greek Orthodox Church tradition called Mary Magdalena *isapóstolos* ('equal to apostles'). Roman Catholic tradition designates her as the *Apostolorum apostola* ('Apostle to the Apostles')

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[799] Witherington, "Women: New Testament," p. 960.

[800] Brown, "Woman", p. 1059.

[801] Witherington, "Women: New Testament," p. 960.

because she had received her *Apostolatus officium* ('Apostolic Office') directly from the risen Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:17–18) and announced the good news about the risen Lord Jesus Christ to his male disciples. Her renewed place within the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions encourages many Christian women in their ministry[802].

The above-mentioned reasons sufficiently portray Jesus as a reformer of the patriarchal society of his time. What he said about women, marriage, divorce and celibacy and how he enabled the women to join his movement as active contributors, change agents and as the first witnesses of his resurrection were radical in the eyes of the patriarchal Jews, Greeks and Romans of his time[803]. As considered earlier, the Judeo-Christian salvation history began with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1–3). As per this salvation history, Adam represented entire humanity. Eve became the mother of all people. The crucified Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane became the New Adam (Romans 5:15–16). Mother Mary witnessed the salvation-providing death of Jesus[804], whom the Apostle John portrays as the Word (Greek: *logos*) that was God, that was with God and that became flesh and dwelt among human beings (John 1:1–14).

6.6 Paul and women covering their heads as a gender issue

1 Corinthians 11:7 designates the man as "the image and glory of God." Christian women in Corinth should cover their head (1 Corinthians 11:8–12) and remain dependent on the male members of their family for their being, status and teaching. Paul knew the importance of men and women being created in God's image, but he obviously refused to acknowledge women being created in God's image.

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[802] Arthur Roche, "The New Preface of Saint Mary Magdalene", *The Holy See*, available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/il-nuovo-prefazio-maddalena-articolo_en.pdf (accessed on 30 April 2018).

[803] Witherington, "Women: New Testament," p. 959.

[804] Mary L. Coloe, "John's Portrait of Jesus", *The Blackwell Companion to Jesus*, ed. Delbert Burkett, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 64–80:69: The Garden of Gethsemane "will be crux of a new creation in John's resurrection narrative, where the first scenes with the women and the disciples take place at the tomb (John 20:1–18)."

1 Corinthians 11:7–16 probably considered the peculiar socio-cultural and religious characteristics of Corinth, which did not favour women in public places. The process that led to the degradation of women in public places may have started nearly 700 years ago under the Assyrian King Sargon II (765–705 BCE)[805]. His rule excluded women from education, economy, and from public places. One of the Assyrian laws required the married women and widows to veil their heads in public places. By contrast, it allowed the prostitutes to keep their heads uncovered in public places[806]. As time passed by, this practice affected even the goddesses, who lost their civic functions. They merely served as symbols of either fertility or natural forces. The female devotees of the deities Dionysus, Cybele and Isis customarily veiled their heads in public. Corinth was indeed an important centre for Isis worship. If the Christian women of Corinth had used their freedom not to cover their heads in public places, non-Christian onlookers would have understood them to be either prostitutes or worshippers of goddesses[807]. Thus, the veil evolved into "an essential part of feminine appearance"[808].

By contrast, Greek men occupied the public places and their "male gods represented justice and reason" and functioned as "the gods of the civilization"[809]. Paul was aware of this practice. Additionally, as a Jew may have understood the unkempt hair of the women as a

[805] Amanda Foreman, "The Ascent of Woman: Part 1: Civilisation", *Channel Two of the British Broadcasting Corporation*, aired on 2 September 2015, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0693y0j/the-ascent-of-woman-1-civilisation (accessed on 20 September 2015). The daughter of his elder brother was Enheduanna, the priestess of the Moon God in the city of Ur. She expressed her autonomy in the following manner: "I am Enheduanna. I am the brilliant high priestess of Nana". For some reason, Enheduanna's example remained unique and unparalleled.

[806] Foreman, "The Ascent of Woman: Part 1: Civilisation": Amanda Foreman examined the Assyrian Laws kept in the Archaeological Museum in Berlin, Germany. Here, she highlighted the 40th Law, which further divided the women into five categories: "Wives and daughters of the upper class, concubines, temple prostitutes, harlots and slave girls. The punishment for transgression are pitiless. Any man who sees a veiled prostitute should arrest her. She is to receive 50 lashes with a bamboo cane. Any man who sees a veiled slave-girl is to arrest her and bring her to court. Her ears will be cut off and the man who arrested her may take her clothes. […] Of all the legacies handed down to us from the ancient world, the veil was the most symbolic and weighted. It was a mark of civilisation through Greece and Rome and Byzantium, it wold become the nun's habit and the wimple of medieval Europe."

[807] Brendan Byrne, *Paul and the Christian Women*, Homebush/NSW/Australia: St. Paul Publication, 1988, p. Byrne, 1988, p. 37: Byrne summarized her Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's views on Christian women in Corinth wearing a veil.

[808] Byrne, *Paul and the Christian Women*, p. 51.

[809] Foreman, "The Ascent of Woman: Part 1: Civilisation".

symbol of their ritual uncleanliness. He wanted the Christian women of Corinth not to use their freedom in Christ to raise suspicion, but to promote their Christian witness.

Firstly, the Greek word *eikōn* (‘image’) in 1 Corinthians 11:7 is important. It refers to the creation of the individual man and woman in Genesis 2 and supported Paul’s endorsement of “woman’s subordination to man from the temporal sequence of the creation of man and woman and the description of the woman’s function as man’s helper”[810].

Secondly, 1 Corinthians 11:7–16 should be studied in relation to Galatians 3:28: “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. Ben Witherington clearly tells that this verse cannot be considered the “Magna Carta of human equality,” as earlier scholars viewed it. The phrase ‘in Christ’ indicates that it is a baptismal formula. Witherington correctly points out that this verse mentions “‘no male *and* female’ not ‘no male or female’”[811]. In this text, Paul upholds the theological view that neither racial identity nor social status determines a person’s relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians maintain their socio-cultural distinctions as Jews or non-Jews or as married or unmarried people (Romans 9–11; 1 Corinthians 11). These distinctions do not have any inherent salvific value; therefore, they do not determine a person’s position “in Christ.”[812]

Thirdly, 1 Corinthians 11:7–16 cannot be separated from Romans 1:16–17: accordingly, salvation is available to both women and men, who choose to place their trust in Jesus Christ. This good news is God’s power (Greek: *dunamis*, ‘miraculous ability’). Fourthly, 1 Corinthians 11:7–16 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 are closely related. The latter verse teaches that a woman or a man in Christ is a new creation and constitutes a new humanity.

Fifthly, 1 Corinthians 11:7–16 must be understood with reference to Paul’s female co-workers such as the business lady Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:14–15). In Romans 16, Paul greets the deaconess Phoebe (vs. 1–2), Prisca/Pricilla (vs. 3) who along with her husband had

[810] Khuli, “*eikon* image, likeness, architype”, p. 390.

[811] Ben Witherington, “Women: New Testament,” p. 959.

[812] Witherington, “Women: New Testament,” p. 959.

instructed Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:26), Mary (v. 6), Andronicus and Junia (v. 7), Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), and Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2–3). These textual evidences show Paul's attitudes towards women and the value in Christian ministry.

Sixthly, it is worth exploring Ben Witherington's detailed analysis of Paul's views and treatment of women. He contends that Paul closely followed the teachings and the example of Jesus Christ at least in five ways[813]. Firstly, like Jesus, Paul supported marriage (I Corinthians 11:3–15; Matthew 19:3–13). Secondly, Paul did not encourage Christian couples to get divorced (I Corinthians 7:10–11; Mark 10:11). Thirdly, Paul preferred celibacy to marital state (I Corinthians 7:7; Matthew 19:11–12). Several women and men found celibacy as God's empowering gift. They were convinced that they as celibates would achieve more in God's kingdom than in a married status. Fourthly, Paul promoted families and communities of faith, in which both Christian women and men had their specific function-related roles and places. Finally, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 7, entertained a healthier view of marriage, namely it was more than a *remedium concupiscentiae* (a 'remedy for sexual lust'). At the end, Witherington concluded that Paul was neither a male chauvinist nor a radical feminist. He "walked a difficult line between reaffirmation and reformation of the good that was part of the creation order on the one hand, and the affirmation of new possibilities in Christ on the other"[814].

6.7 Paul and women's subordination as a gender issue

People who claim the subordination of Christian women to Christian men tend to quote three passages from the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, Ephesians 5:21–25 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15. Their brief analysis shows, how they do not agree with Paul's teachings about women and his female co-workers.

Firstly, 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 poses several problems: while he had several Christian women as co-workers, he asked the Christian women in Corinth to be silent in their congregations and subordinate. He even called on the tradition of the saints and the Jewish law to support his prohibition. He advised these women to consult their husbands at home and

[813] Witherington, "Women: New Testament," p. 959.

[814] Witherington, "Women: New Testament," p. 959.

clarify their doubts. Verse 35 reads that it was *aischros* ('shameful, disgraceful') for a woman even to speak in a church. The *New Revised Standard Version* places these two verses into a bracket suggesting that they are later interpolations by an unknown editor. Its footnote suggests that

> [1 Corinthians 14:] 33b–36: Many scholars regard this passage as a later non-Pauline addition, because it disrupts the flow of the argument from v[erse] 33a to v[erse] 37. It contradicts the assumptions of [1 Corinthians] 11.5 that women will pray and prophesy in the assembly; it resembles the viewpoint of the Deutro-Pauline letters (see 1. Tim[othy] 2.9–15); it exhibits non-Pauline sentiments, e.g., [1 Corinthians 14] v[erse] 34b, *as the law also says*; and vv. [i.e., verses] 34–35 appear after 14.40 in some manuscripts.[815]

At the same time, scholars like D.W. Odell-Scott have a different view of this theory of interpolation[816]. Odell-Scott mentions that Paul's concern in this passage was "decency and order." The unnamed editors of the three Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88 "removed verses 34 and 35 from their canonical location at 33/36 and inserted them after verse 40 in order to shelter the silencing and subordination of women from the critique of verse 36"[817]. The older Tamil translations of the Bible do not consider the existing variations in the manuscripts. As a result, these verses have the same canonical value as all other passages of 1 Corinthians and serve as a source for subordinating women in worship settings.

Secondly, Ephesians 5: 21–25 ask Christian wives to remain subordinate to their husbands at home: in verse 21 Paul admonishes both husbands and wives to submit to each other for Christ's sake; in this mutual submission, the wife views her husband as her *kyrios* ('lord'). Just as Jesus Christ is the *kephalē* ('head') of the church, the husband is the head of his wife and the wife should be obedient (*hypotassó,* 'place under, subject to') to her husband. In turn, the husband must demonstrate his self-sacrificing *agape*-love to his wife and do everything to promote her welfare and joy.

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[815] Laurence L. Welborn, "The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians", *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with The Apocrypha–An Ecumenical Study Bible, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 1999–2023:2019.

[816] D.W. Odel-Scott, "Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Cor 14:34–35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88", *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture*, 2000, pp. 68–74.

[817] Odel-Scott, "Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Cor 14:34–35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88", p. 68.

Obviously, this passage with an inherent and demanding gender hierarchy has become contentious. One argument places this contention within the larger context of Christ's lordship over his church and self-giving love relationship with it; both women and men are its full members; just as he came to serve and give up his life for the church (Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 and), they should practise mutual subordination and love; ultimately, they should disallow any form of fixed unilateral gender-hierarchy. In this case, Ephesians 5:23–24 should be understood within the "cumulative witness" of the canonical Bible and not with reference scattered verses here and there. The passages of the entire Bible involve "concrete and dialogical activities of teaching, reproof, correction, and training in which the meaning of the text—and thus the particular shape of its authority—is in play"[818].

A feminist reading of Ephesians 5:21–33 poses more questions than answers: for example, Eileen R. Campbell-Reed wonders how the theological statement that women and men are created in God's image can accept this hierarchal ordering of genders. She also asks, whether Paul's admonition to the women and wives in the Christian congregation at Ephesus should be applied to all people in all places. Further she notes that women's subordination to men might involve gender violence and abuse at home; ultimately, women suffer more than men[819]. She proposes to understand Ephesians as an encyclical to be read in several churches. First, it talks about breaking down the walls of separation between Jews and non-Jews (Ephesians 2:14). Secondly, it seeks to create a balance between Christian freedom (Galatians 3:28) and order in the society. To strike this balance, this it uses the *Domestic Code* (along with Colossians 3:18–4:1, 1 Timothy 6:1–2 and 1 Peter 2:13–3:7)[820]. Fortunately, both women and men, wives and husbands learned to submit to each other graciously[821].

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[818] Ian A. McFarland: "A Canonical Reading of Ephesians 5:21–33: Theological Gleanings", *Theology Today*, Vol.57, No. 3, pp. 344–356:356.

[819] Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, "Should Wives 'Submit Graciously'? A Feminist Approach to Interpreting Ephesians 5:21–33", *Review and Expositor,* Vol. 98, 2001, pp. 263–276:264.

[820] Campbell-Reed, "Should Wives 'Submit Graciously'? A Feminist Approach to Interpreting Ephesians 5:21–33", p. 268.

[821] Campbell-Reed, "Should Wives 'Submit Graciously'? A Feminist Approach to Interpreting Ephesians 5:21–33", p. 274.

Thirdly, 1 Timothy 2:11–15 has become another source for women's subordination not only in worship contexts, but also in their private homes. It asks the Christian women to learn from men calmly (Greek: *hésuchia*, 'stillness, quietness') and obediently (Greek: *hupotagé*, 'submission'). She should not govern (Greek: *authenteó*, 'to control') a man (Greek: *andros*, 'man, husband'), because according to Genesis 1–2 the man was created first and then the was created. According to Genesis 3, the woman was deceived first. If she remained devoted her to childbearing, should could have salvation (Greek: *sózó*, 'to heal, preserve, rescue'). Joanna Dewey assumes that the Greek word *anthropos* ('man') in 1 Timothy 2:1–7 includes women and men. God wants all people, including women, to accept Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and humans, as their saviour. I Timothy 2:8–15 deals with the public prayer, in which the women were active and vocal. Dewey believes that an unknown editor, who did not appreciate women's active role in the church, may have added the prohibitions and tried to restrict their influence over men[822] and to distort the meaning and dignity of women having been created in God's image (Genesis 1:27).

A review of the main arguments of this chapter shows the Jewish understandings of women and men created in God's image as equal persons with complementary qualities; both were endowed with God's life; both derived their individuality and interdependence from God and each other. The creation of the first man and the first woman became a symbol for the humanity. However, Jewish history did not always recognise the equality of women; they placed undue importance on boys, men, fathers, grandfathers, sons and grandsons. The Greco-Roman world of Jesus' time was not different. Women were treated as second-class citizens. Jesus, the perfect image of God, offers salvation to all women and men, who trust in him. His dealings with non-Jewish women in cross-cultural contexts are portrayed as harsh; yet, they opened new opportunities for their inclusion into God's providence. Apostle Paul had several women as his co-workers; for the sake of public order and patterned worship, he wanted the

[822] Joanna Dewey, "1 Timothy", *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, London: SPCK, 1992, 353–358:355: "Quite possibly the interpolation was made by the author of the Pastorals, to strengthen the case for restricting women's leadership. Thus, the command for silence in church is not a command from Paul valid for all time; rather, it is the view of one author (not Paul) or one Christian group on how they would like to see women behave. The historical practice of early Christian women, confirmed by other New Testament passages, suggests different and more active roles for women (see I Corinthians 11 and Romans 16).

women of the Christian congregations in Corinth and Ephesus to be ‘submissive’. At the same time, in Christ there was no difference between a woman and a man. His ambiguous legacy – recognising and refusing to recognise the public teaching and leadership role of Christian women – had lasting impact on various Christian denominations. Despite these limitations, Christianity had positively transformed the life of countless women. The theological convictions underlying this chapter can add a new theological perspective to our ongoing discussions on women and gender in India.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has identified five theological reasons for gender injustice: Firstly, Sanskrit sources, which this thesis has examined, do not say anything about the creation of the first women as an individual endowed with dignity and worth. Secondly, the Sanskrit sources teach that sons alone deliver their fathers from the *Put*-hell (The *Law of Manu* 9:137–138, discussed in 2.1.4). Thirdly, the Sanskrit sources insist that the son alone extends and completes the father in this world. Fourthly, son effectively fulfils the *anteyeṣṭi* ('last sacrifice') by kindling the funeral pyre of his father and sending his soul up into the world of the celestials. Then, the son can maintain the memorial *śrāddha* ceremonies on full moon days (*amāvāsya*). Fifthly, the *Law of Manu* (3:67–70)[823] stipulates that a male householder should pay his debt to 1) the Brahman by studying the *Veda*s, 2) to his ancestors (*pitṛs*) by begetting sons and performing the *śrāddha*; 3) to his deities (*deva*) by making fire offerings; 4) to guests (*atiti*) by offering hospitality and 5) to the spirits (*hhūtas*) by throwing out grains. Particularly, the debt to the male ancestors falls on the shoulders of sons.

These theological causes lie hidden beneath the male-centred temporal and eschatological life and contribute to gender injustice. Temporally, Indian fathers long for sons to perpetuate their social, genealogical and economic legacy. Eschatologically, those fathers, who stand under the influence of certain Sanskrit and Tamil sources, need sons to free their souls from the Put-hell, to send them to the world of ancestors through the last rite of *anteyeṣṭi* and to maintain their memory by observing *śrāddha* ceremonies at periodical intervals. This eschatological need has shaped the socio-religious traditions and institutions of most Indians. The introductory chapter clearly set out specific parameters, scope and limitation of this research: after defining the research problem and objectives, it has defined basic concepts such as gender, gender imbalance, gender injustice, justice and the like. Then, it has discussed the social relevance of theological inquiry. It proceeded to support the examples of gender injustice with reliable data. To identify the root theological problem, this thesis has engaged

[823] Doniger, *The Law of Manu with an Introduction and Notes*, p. 49. For example, the verse 70 reads as follows: "The study (of the Veda) is the sacrifice to ultimate reality, and the refreshing libation is the sacrifice to the ancestors; the offering into the fire is for the gods, the propitiatory portions of food is for the disembodied spirits, and the revering of guests is the sacrifice to men."

with reliable English translations of the specified Sanskrit scriptures. Its engagement, however, is limited to the creation narratives of the primal woman and man. This thesis argues that there is no single dependable account of the creation of the primal woman either in Sanskrit or in Tamil sources. This theological absence has negatively affected gender issues related to female equality and dignity. Again, its discussion on the creation and role of women in the Bible is also limited. To keep this research project manageable, it adopted the methods of textual exegesis, self-narratives and not-only-but-also approach.

The first chapter reviewed representative gender-related works produced by responsible academic scholars, government authorities and non-governmental activists. These works explored the demographic, legal, social, economic and pedagogic reasons for the persistence of gender injustice in India. As remedies, they have proposed certain preventive, therapeutic and reformatory solutions, which have produced partial success; they have raised the consciousness of harmful practices that adversely affect women, injure their dignity and wellbeing. On the other hand, the most recent surveys, conducted by the *Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner*, India, other government and non-government agencies, document the prevalence of gender injustice in different forms. Gender injustice persists because male-centred attitudes and lifestyles of most fathers, husbands and sons either consciously or unconsciously support it. They recognize the individuality, identity, dignity and modesty of women in relation to male values and ultimately to themselves. This one-sided approach to gender issues has unhealthy theological roots that nourish them.

The second chapter investigated the place of women in the creation narratives of the foundational Sanskrit religious writings, namely *Ṛgveda*, the *Law of Manu*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and *Śivapurāṇa*. It is surprising that when the Primal Man came into being, there was no mention of a woman. She was an afterthought of this Primal Man and resided in him. As a result, he had no independence existence. Sanskrit religious writings locate both the woman (*śaktī*) and the man within the same God, of which *Ardhanārīśvara* (‘the lord, whose half is a woman’) offers a representative example. This indicates the woman’s dependent existence. However, *Law of Manu* 9:137–138 provides the most illuminating theological reason for the existence of gender injustice: a son is indispensable to pull the soul of his father from the *Put*-hell; additionally, by performing *anteyeṣṭi* (the ‘last sacrifice’), a son sends his

father's soul off to the world of deities. Finally, the *śrāddha* ceremony, validly conducted by a biological son, keeps the memories of his father alive. Sanskrit religious writings elevate some women to the level of goddesses; *Sarasvatī*, *Lakṣmī* and *Pārvatī* are indeed the respective celestial consorts of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. *Lakṣmī* and *Pārvatī* occupy preeminent place among goddesses; they are mothers of sons and not daughters. This subtle difference in the divine world has theological consequences for daughters and women in the material world. Women tend to request these goddesses to grant them sons.

Despite the restrictions that forced women to depend on their fathers, husbands and sons (Law of Manu 5:144–148 and 9:2), Sanskrit religious writings refreshingly document the existence of independently thinking women such as Gārgī Vīcaknavī and Maitreyī. Their examples remained silent especially for male-centred authors such as Tryambakarāyamakhin (1665–1750). His portrayal of the 'Perfect Wife' (*Stridharmapaddhati*) denied the independence of wives in the 18th century cultural city of *Tañcāvūr* in Tamil India.

The third chapter explored the place of women in the representative, most authoritative Tamil writings. For example *Tolkāppiyam*, which is the grammar not merely for the Tamil language, but to a great extent of Tamil society, teaches that women should exhibit the four qualities of *accam*, *nāṇam*, *maṭam* and *muntuṟutal*, namely fear, shyness, ignorance and childishness. At the same time, other Tamil writings of the *Caṅkam* Period (c. 500 BCE–100 CE) affirm the equal social position of women with men; especially, they could engage in private love affairs; if everything went well, they would marry and establish their families. Nevertheless, the society considered the menstruating women, women who had just given birth to a child and widows as ritually impure. Men abused the concept of *kaṟpu* ('marital fidelity) by applying it only to women and sought to subjugate them. Epics such as *Cilappatikākaram* believed in the dominance of karma and turned heroic wife such as *Kaṇṇaki* into subservient to their non-exemplary husband *Kōvalaṉ*. *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, which enjoys the reputation of being the 'Scripture of the Tamil' extolls the joys of a mother with sons; but it does not exhort the husbands to listen to the advice of capable wives.

Likewise, other didactic works in Tamil do not affirm the dignity of women as individuals. When *bhakti* movement broke out (600–900 CE) in Tamil India, women like

Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār (‘the mother of *Kāraikkāl*’) and *Āṇṭāḷ* (the ‘mistress’) counted themselves among male poets. The arrival of the Christian missionaries in Tamil India since 16th century opened a new chapter for the Tamil women. They allowed both women and women to participate in corporate worship in their churches. They opened schools to educate both boys and girls. As discussed in the in the fourth chapter of this thesis, British laws tried to improve the lot of women in Tamil India. However, the works of the most influential reformers such as Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882–1927), Viruttāccalam Kaliyāṇacuntaraṉār (1883–1953), Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968) and Erode Venkata Ramasamy (1879–1973) produced significant changes in the attitudes and lives of countless Tamil women.

The fourth chapters examined how the introduction of British laws concerned with girls, women, female infanticide, child marriage, widow remarriage, self-immolation of widows with the dead bodies of their husbands, and property rights changed the general opinions and practices of Indian men. First, the British began enacting these laws in the Bengal Presidency, which at that extended from modern State of Bengal in the east to Gujarat in the west. British civil servants such as Charles Grant (1746–1823), Jonathan Duncan (1756–1811) and Alexander Walker (1764–1831), who were also evangelical Christians of their time, wanted to promote the welfare of female children. Ardent followers of Sanskrit traditions opposed them. When the British East India Company revised its charters in 1813, 1833 and 1853, it allowed Christian missionaries of diverse Protestant traditions to work in different parts of India. Missionaries such as William Carey (1761–1834), Indian reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) and Governor General William Bentinck (1828–1835) were determined to abolish injustice towards women. They admitted girls in schools and educated them in a formal manner. Queen *Victoria’s Declaration* (1857) turned India into British India. Since that time, British laws applied in India. For example, *The Hindu Widow’s Remarriage Act*, which was introduced one year earlier in 1856 in Bengal, gained more power and validity. The British enacted new laws. These included *The Indian Penal Code* (1860), *The Indian Divorce Act* (1869), *The Act for the Prevention of the murder of Female Infants* (1870), *The Indian Christian Marriage Act* (1872) and the like provided new opportunities to review the impact of Indian indigenous cultural practices on women. Some Indian women and men stood up to the task of reforming the people within the reach of their influence. For example, Savitribai

Phule (1831–1897) and her husband Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–1890) were pioneers in women education in the areas now known as Maharashtra. Krupabai Sattianadhan (1862–1894) wrote about women emancipation. Her writings reached out to women even outside of India. The exemplary reformatory work of Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922) exerts its influence even to our day.

The fifth chapter studied the impact of major laws in independent India from August 1947 to June 2018 (when this thesis was submitted to SHUATS for evaluation). It focused its attention on the major laws that were implemented to safeguard women from various evils such as female feticide and infanticide, child marriages, trafficking of girls, dowry deaths, domestic violence, and the like. The laws stem from the sovereign authority of the Constitution of India, which stipulates justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for all Indians irrespective of their gender, race, religion and other economic or socio-cultural differences. Additionally, India subscribed to *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979), *The Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child* (2006), and the like. Now India has systems and institutions (e.g., The *Ministry of Women and Child Development*) that work improving the lot of female children and women. To increase the wellbeing of girl children and women, India introduced several new laws and policy-based schemes. Several court cases, including the famous ones such as "Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum And Ors on 23 April, 1985" and "Mrs. Mary Roy Etc. Etc vs State Of Kerala & Ors on 24 February, 1986" stimulated gender-related changes and inheritance rights. These laudable efforts are indeed laudable. Yet, several sectors of Indian woman still suffer. For example, the plight of Dalit women is severe. The missing and declining number of girls and women in India, as evidenced by *The India Fact Sheet of the National Family Health Survey-4, 2015–16,* published on 7 February 2018, remains a cause for worry. Child marriages persist. Violence against women at home and in public (e.g., rape) indicates the continuing realities of gender justice. Policymakers have been blaming Indian mindset as the source for this injustice. They have not yet addressed the theological reasons that have contributed to the formation and hardening of this mindset, which seemingly refuses to change for the betterment of girls and women in India.

The sixth and final chapter provides a theological alternative that can change the Indian mindset. It draws it from the creation narratives of the man and woman in Genesis 1 and 2. This chapter also studied how the successive generations of Jews and Christians either followed or failed to follow the ideals these creation narratives. The passage in Genesis 1:26–2:3 explains the creation of the first man and the woman in God's image. Its complementary sequel in Genesis 2:4–24 focuses on the details of the creation of the first woman from the rib of the man. Both narratives about the creation of woman imply dignity, equality and freedom of her individuality and sanctity. She is in fact the man's *ezer* ('helper'). Without her, he would have been helpless in maintaining himself. Earlier he was aware of his loneliness. Without her, he would have had no way of reproducing life. In other words, in relation to the woman he learned who he actually was.

The rest of the books of the Hebrew Bible occasionally speaks about the image of God and do not compromise on the dignity women. Depending on the socio-political situation of the time, when each book of the Hebrew Bible was written and became canonical, the equality of women is presented differently. For example, available written records reveal that the Jewish women during the time of the Lord Jesus Christ had lost their public voice; mixed views of the Hellenist Greeks and Romans prevailed. In this context, the Lord Jesus Christ set an example: at first, he appeared to be harsh towards non-Jewish women such as the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21–28. Yet, his interactions with the Samaritan woman, Mary and Martha in the Gospel of John provided new approaches to engage with women as dignified followers of the way that Lord Jesus Christ was teaching and living.

After the Lord Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Apostle Paul had powerful impact on Christians. He viewed the man as the image and glory of God (I Corinthians 11:7) and asked women to cover their heads (1 Corinthians 11:8–12) and serve men (1 Corinthians 14:34–35, Ephesians 5:21–25 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15). Improper male-centred understandings of these difficult passages caused successive generations of Christian women. Understanding them in within the larger body of Paul's teachings and his cooperation with his female co-workers, we gain a different picture. Despite misinterpretations and misapplications of the words and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul, Christianity had positively transformed the life of countless Christian and non-Christian women in India. It emphasised that the

salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ offers is available equally to both women and men, who choose to claim it in faith and shape their life accordingly. Thus, a holistic understanding of the biblical concepts of women from the time of her creation and their salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ can challenge and positively transform the Indian mindset about women and gender injustice.

During the time between the submission of this thesis for evaluation in June and its successful defence on 9 November 2018, the Supreme Court of India delivered three landmark judgements that would affect the lives of women in India in a profound manner. They have overturned the contemporary notions of morality pertaining to same sex marriages, adultery and entry of women into all temples for worship. On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India upheld the human rights and "constitutional guarantee of right to life with liberty and dignity"[824] and removed discriminations based on their sexual orientations and practices. People decide their own concept of identity. They can reject the "external views with a clear conscience that is in accord with constitutional norms and values or principles that are, to put in a capsule, 'constitutionally permissible'"[825]. This judgement removed the Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code that until that time had criminalised homosexual relationships. It reiterated the basic principle of Indian constitutional democracy that Indian society should remain heterogeneous, progressive and inclusive so that all people can live with dignity and liberty and with equal rights to equality and equality. In this context, this judgement underlined the importance of the sovereign authority of the Constitution of India as follows:

> Our Constitution is a living and organic document capable of expansion with the changing needs and demands of society. The Courts must commemorate that it is the Constitution and its golden principles to which they bear their foremost allegiance and they must robe themselves with the armoury of progressive and pragmatic interpretations to combat the evils of inequality and injustice that try to creep into the society[826].

[824] "Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 76 of 2016: Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. versus Union of India, Thr. Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice […]", Criminal Original Jurisdiction in The Supreme Court of India, published on 6 September 2018, available online at https://www.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2016/14961/14961_2016_Judgement_06-Sep-2018.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2018), p. 156.

[825] "Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 76 of 2016: Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. versus Union of India", p. 156.

[826] "Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 76 of 2016: Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. versus Union of India", p. 157.

Secondly, 27 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India decriminalised adultery by revising the Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code and Section 198 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The third paragraph of the judgement stated clearly that "the Court cannot conceive of women still being treated as a property of men". Its 49th paragraph stipulates that adultery should "be left as a ground for divorce". Criminalising it "will offend the two facets of Article 21 of the Constitution, namely, dignity of husband and wife, as the case may be, and the privacy attached to a relationship between the two"[827]. The Court does not want to regulate the relationship between a consenting woman and a consenting man and understands it as part of their matrimony. This judgement is of monumental importance for conservative women and women in India, who want to uphold their traditional views about matrimony and adultery. It will affect the lives of women and men in India.

Thirdly, on the following day, namely on 28 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India affirmed that women of all ages could enter any temple for worship. The third paragraph of the judgement states that like men women can have relationship with their Creator. Men should not prevent women from entering a sacred space and they should not cite the biological or physiological makeup of women to justify their patriarchal position. The judges stated: "Any rule based on discrimination or segregation of women pertaining to biological characteristics is not only unfounded, indefensible and implausible but can also never pass the muster of constitutionality"[828]. Currently (i.e., in November 2018), massive changes are taking place, for example, in Kerala, where all young women devotees wish to gain entry into a temple, where they could not go earlier. Those protesters, who want to uphold their age-old traditional practices, oppose these women. Only time will tell what would come of these negotiations. In any case, this judgement offers a powerful symbol of change that rejects gender and age-based discrimination of women.

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[827] "Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 194 of 2017: Joseph Shine vs Union Of India on 27 September, 2018": Criminal Original Jurisdiction in the Supreme Court of India, published on 27 September 2018, *Indiancanoon.org*, available online at https://indiankanoon.org/doc/42184625/ (accessed on 12 November 2018).

[828] "Writ Petition (Civil) No. 373 of 2006: Indian Young Lawyers Association & Ors. Versus The State of Kerala & Ors", *Civil Original Jurisdiction in the Supreme Court of India*, published on 28 September 2018, available online at https://www.supremecourtofindia.nic.in/supremecourt/2006/18956/18956_2006_Judgement_28-Sep-2018.pdf (accessed on 12 November 2018), pages 3 and 4.

These judgements and those that might come in future, rightly and solely based on the sovereign authority of the Constitution of India, will influence India new ways that are not yet clear. Yet, these judgements give hope that one day the concerned authorities would address those theological reasons that underpin gender injustice. Consequently, fathers should realise that they no longer need a *putra* (‘son’) either to pull their *ātman* from the *Put*-hell or to light their funeral pyres (*anteyeṣṭi*) or to observe the periodical memorials (*śrāddha*). If necessary, their daughters, wives or granddaughters can also fulfil these needs. Therefore, the call of the hour is a new thinking (*metanoia*) about women as created in God’s image and as companions and helpers of men (*ezer*s). This new thinking and its praxis can transform the patriarchal mindset of Indians. It can turn it into gender-affirming and gender-just attitudes and actions so that both women and men would flourish together.

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