

**LEGAL AWARENESS FOR THE IMK MEMBERS IN  
RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT**

**By**

**SANGEETHA T.**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN - DEEMED UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE - 641 043  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION**

**APRIL - 1998**

**LEGAL AWARENESS FOR THE IMK MEMBERS IN RURAL AND URBAN  
AREAS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT**

By

**T. SANGEETHA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN (DEEMED UNIVERSITY), COIMBATORE - 641043**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION**

**APRIL, 1998**

**Certified as Bonafide Research Work**

  
Signature of the  
Head of the  
Department

  
Signature of the  
Guide

# Acknowledgement

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The investigator would like to place on record her sincere thanks to Tmt. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D. (Ohio State), D.Sc. (Madras), Hon D.H.L. (Oregon State), Hon. D.Sc. (Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur), Hon. D.Sc. (University of Ulster Northern Ireland), Chancellor, Avinsahilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Demeed University), Coimbatore, for facilitating the investigator to carry out the study.

The investigator wishes to express her gratitude to Tmt. LAKSHMI SANTA RAJAGOPAL, M.Sc., (Tennessee), Ph.D. (Madras), Vice Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University), Coimbatore, for having consented to carry out the study.

The investigator would be failing in her duty if she did not thank to Tmt. SAROJA PRABHAKARAN, M.A., Dip.Ed. (Madras), Ph.D. (Mother Teresa), Registrar Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Demeed Univeristy), Coimbatore.

The investigator express her prefound sense of gratitude to Tmt. PARVATHY EASWARAN, M.Sc., (Columbia), Ph.D., (Madras), Dean of Faculty of Home Science, Avinashilingam Institute for home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed Univeristy) , Coimbatore, for the help rendered.

The investigator wishes to acknowledge the inspiring guidance extended by (Selvi.) S. SITHALAKSHMI, M.Sc., Ph.D., (Madras), Professor and Head of the Department of Home Science Extension, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, (Deemed University), Coimbatore.

The investigator is deeply indebted to her beloved advisor (Tmt.) R. ALAMELU, M.Sc., M.Phil., (Madras), Lecturer, Home Science Extension Education, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, (Deemed University), Coimbatore, for her constant encouragement, timely constructive suggestions and moral support.

The investigator expresses her thanks to the respondents for their kind hearted co-operation.

The investigator records her deep sense of gratitude to her beloved family members and friends for their consistent help, guidance and moral support to carryout the research work.

# Contents

## LIST OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
	LIST OF TABLES	
	LIST OF FIGURES	
	LIST OF PLATES	
	LIST OF APPENDICES	
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
	A. Status of women	8
	B. Legal problems of women	11
	C. Legal provisions for women	18
III	METHODOLOGY	27
	A. Selection of Area	27
	B. Selection of the Sample	27
	C. Collection of Data	28
	D. Creating Legal Awareness Among the Selected Women	29
	E. Solving the Legal Problems of Women	31
IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	32
	A. Socio-economic Background of the Selected Women	32
	B. Position of Women in the Family and Community	34
	C. Impact of Legal Awareness Campaign Conducted	38
	D. Ascertaining the Legal Needs of the Selected Women	41
V	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	44
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	
	APPENDICES	

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	TITLE	PAGE NO.
I	CONDUCT OF THE LEGAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN	30
II	SOCIO ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE SELECTED WOMEN	32
III	INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILIES OF THE RESPONDENTS	34
IV	ROLE OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING	35
V	EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN	36
VI	OPPRESSIONS FACED BY WOMEN	37
VII	MEANS OF FINDING SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS	38
VIII	LEGAL AWARENESS OF THE RESPONDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE CAMPAIGN	39
IX	TYPES OF CASES UNDER FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE AND FREE LEGAL AID COMMITTEE	42

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
1.	LOCALE OF THE STUDY	
2.	MEANS OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS	

## LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	TITLE	PAGE NO.
I	LEGAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN COUNSELLORS FROM MANOSHANTHI ADDRESSING WOMEN	
II	PARTICIPANT RAISING DOUBTS TO COUNSELLORS	
III	EARLY MARRIAGE - TULSI AT KANARAMPALAYAM	

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX

- I SCHEDULE TO ELICIT THE LEGAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN  
IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS COVERED UNDER INDIRA  
MAHILA YOJANA
  
- II QUESTIONNAIRE TO FIND OUT THE KNOWLEDGE LEVEL  
OF WOMEN BEFORE AND AFTER CAMPAIGN ABOUT LEGAL  
PROBLEMS AND PROVISION TO SOLVE THEM

# Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

The position of women in society is an index of its civilization. Women constitute 50 per cent of population, that is one half of the country's human resources. As citizens, workers and mothers their contribution to economic and social development is crucial. Hence emancipation of women is an essential pre-requisite for economic development and social progress (Ashraf, 1992).

Upadhyay (1990) remarked that women in the past were uneducated, considered on a level with the shudras, married before their characters fully developed, transferred from the loving and sympathetic where an atmosphere of awe prevailed. Women have been vulnerable to acts of violence in the family, in the community and by the state. In the words of Mir (1994) violence against women in different walks of life, be it home, workplace or public place, is fairly widespread and has become a common phenomenon.

Violence according to Stanko (1996) entails inflicting emotional, psychological, sexual, physical and or material danger. It involves the exercise of force or constraints perpetuated by individuals on their own behalf or for a collective or state sanctioned purpose. "It involves acts of physical aggression, psychological abuse or sexual exploitation and acts of omission or neglect.

Primavera (1995) says that though all categories of people in Indian society, particularly weak and vulnerable are victims of violence of one sort or the other, women as a distinct category who are physically weak by nature and who have been the Dasis (Slaves) of men as their swamis for thousands of years mainly because of certain built-in structural characteristic which have imposed the responsibility for performance of certain functions related to child bearing and rearing as the exclusive concern of women, have been the worst victims of violence.

As said by Rajkumar (1997) violence against women has been increasing at an alarming rate. The threat of violence on women manifests right before their life follows in their married life as domestic violence and engenders them as victims of rapes, murder, dowry death, bigamy, divorce, maintenance property, litigation, adultery, prostitution, abortion, female infanticide the list is endless.

Misra (1994) observed that violence, against women is an age old phenomenon. Women were always considered weak, vulnerable and in a position to be exploited. Violence has long been accepted as something that happens to a woman. The changing structure in India has only perpetuated, violence and crime against women.

Ghosh (1993) adds that values of Indian society have undergone radical change in contemporary social set up. The traditional Indian values of honesty, truth, sacrifice, compassion, simplicity, etc., have been replaced by the western values of individualism (in its rugged form), materialism and hedonism; and people today are bothered about deriving maximum pleasure firstly for them selves and then for members of their family out of luxurious living and do not show any concern for those who are weak and vulnerable, irrespective of their gender background. People in contemporary Indians society want to become rich overnight without making any effort and the quest for unearned money which is the root cause behind dowry and corruption has increased manifold.

Violence against women is being deliberately used by males in India to keep women at lower and subordinate level. Women in India are born with the threat of violence looming large over them, they pass their life under male subjugation with reflections of violence writ large on their gloomy faces, and they pass away from this gender discriminating world as a result of violence or its ugly shadow casting its baneful effects on their hearts and minds, (Shoma, 1993).

As observed by Krishan (1990) and Aiyer (1994) "Women are born, as victims and live as victims if they live at all and die as victims forced to quit through sati or gangrape, dowry or suicide thro' in -law family torture and parental abandonment, moral and material".

The report of women's conference at Beijing held in the year 1995 revealed, "it is now widely accepted that violence against women is not an isolated phenomenon much of it is related to societal changes accompanying processes of development and modernization."

According to Joshi (1995) all democratic societies could bring social changes by the instrument of law for economic and legal literacy. The importance of law and legal system in shaping status of women is increasingly evident in modern democratic societies.

The importance of law and legal system in shaping the status of women is increasingly evident in modern democratic societies governed by a written constitution and rule of law.

Religion, custom and age old prejudices have put woman as a class to a subservient and exploited position in most domains of life. The legal system in India, as inherited from the pre-independence period reflected this position both in its substantive and procedural aspects. Low

rates of participation in education, lack of economic independence and value biases operating against women insulated their status and kept them dependent on menfolk and other institution of authority like the family, the neighborhood and the larger society (Bhatia, 1988).

In the year 1971 the Government of India appointed a national committee to investigate the status and situation of women and to make suggestion for realizing the constitutional commitment to equality sexes. Yet as another step towards throwing complacency to oblivion, several other committee were constituted at central as well as state levels to assess the progress made in granting women an honourable position in society. Soon came International Women's Year and the Government made several special efforts towards the cause of women (Joshi, 1995).

Women are not enjoying these rights and suffer from a number of socially inexorable disabilities and inhibitions. The position of women in rural areas is even worse. They usually do not exercise their rights mainly due to ignorance and are unable to achieve the legal equality with men. The other factor which precludes exercise by women of these rights is the nature of social structure. The social norms and values which govern human behaviour in rural areas do not favour women using their rights and create obstacles towards the enforcement of legislations which aim at improving the status of women (Bhatia, 1995).

It is therefore paramount important that every woman should understand her position in the family realise her problems be prepared to approach the appropriate means to solve her problems so that she can equip herself to face the challenges of life (Ghosh, 1984).

As said by Devadas (1988), today there is no dearth of legal measures to safeguard the interest of women. What is required is not more numbers of laws, but education of the women on the legal provisions available. Motivation to avail the same, creating awareness regarding their problems and rights, arousing their consciousness and raising their status are a few among the vast needs of women.

Legal literacy thus is essential for women to conscientise them about their own problems and their due share in the families and society. Hence the investigator took a maiden effort to create legal awareness among the selected members of IMY in Karamadai block of Coimbatore District with the following objectives.

Objectives:

- i) Locating the problems of the selected women in Coimbatore urban and rural area covered by Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY).
- ii) Creating legal awareness among the selected women to solve their problems through appropriate methods.
- iii) Evaluating the knowledge gained by the selected women.

- iv) Helping women to solve their problems through free legal approach.

**Limitations of the study:**

1. The selected area, six villages, Marudhuoor Pungampalayam, Thimmampalayam, Karamadai, Kannarapalayam, Sikarampalayam are situated in Karamadai block are at a distance of 30 to 35 km. from Coimbatore.
2. Since majority of the women are agricultural labourers, they could spare only an hour a day.

# Review of Literature

## II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature pertaining to the study was reviewed under the following heading:

1. Status of the women
2. Legal problems of the women
3. Legal provision for women

### 1. Status of women

Women constitute nearly half of the total population of our country. National development depends on women's development, women is said to be power behind the 'Plough'. The force behind the 'machine'. It is the women who has been the pervasive urge behind the creation. (Gautam 1992).

India is among the four largest countries in the world accounting for 15 per cent of the world's population while its share in the land area is only 2.5per cent. 49per cent of Indian's population are women, among them 80per cent are in villages. The Indian women in the family plays a multiple role primarily her duties centred around her life in the home and in the labour force. As a home maker, woman is a 24 hour multipurpose worker. (Sharma 1994, Ramaseshen,1998).

In every day life and in various crises, woman displays strength and patience in carrying out her responsibilities. Through her hard work and dedication to house keeping, child rearing and assisting in agriculture and

industry, women contribute much to national, economic and social development. Management of resources human and material sending children to school, meeting the needs of adolescent, improving the environment and planning for her daughters future are also among her heavy responsibilities. (Mittal, 1994, Thomas, 1990).

Women is the fulcrum around whom all the occasions and actions of the family revolve. The status of women is associated with various positions which women occupy in society and how they carry out their responsibilities in their roles as daughter's, wives, mother and heads of households.

The important determinants of status within the family are:

Extent of power in decision making in the family, freedom in spending the family income, help received in discharging household responsibilities and the observation of traditional customs and the behaviour which are indication of the subordinate superior status of women. (Nisa 1993).

The women all over the world throughout history and in centuries have been victims of oppression and male dominating because of their powerlessness women are caught in a deprivation trap characterised by vulnerability, physical weakness, poverty and isolation all interlocking as a web to trap women in the deprivation. Powerlessness limits or prevents access to public resources, legal redress and ability to fight for rights. (Ahuja 1992).

The declaration of the year 1975 as the international women's year and the decade 75, 85 as the women's decade by United Nations, has made a turning point by focusing global attention on issues concerning women particularly through four successive world conference on women.

Platform for action which is the out come of the four world conference of women held in September 1995 in Beijing is powerful agenda for the empowerment of women. It causes for integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programs. It is a call for concrete action to protect promote the human rights of women and the girlchild as integral part of universal human rights. (Devadas 1990 & Devendran 1990).

Free India with legal equality to women has opened the doors to achieve top position. Men like Dayananda Saraswathi and Gandhi tried a lot for their status enhancement. Not with standing the equality granted to women in the constitution of India and women specific legislations enacted to make this dejure equality into a defacto one. (Rekha 1992,Alva 1998).

Constitutional and legislative guarantees do not ensure that women will be protected from acts of violence in the family and on the street. The attitude of society and the status which is given to women determine whether they are subjected to violence or not (Rajkumar 1997,Vyas 1996)

## **2. Legal problems of women:**

Sushilan (1994), observed that violence against women both in their homes and outside and directly linking to their unequal position in a patriarchal society and cutting across both class and community. The first categories of violence focussed on them rape and murder of young bride of dowry. It was realised that there were the most brutal expressions of a wide spread phenomenon of domestic violence including wife beating cruelty, torture and humiliation. This experience made the women's group demand that wife abuse be treated as an offense.

Datta (1992) as quoted, after independence the involvement of women in processing agitations, strikes and other such activities increased considerably. Being women they attract sympathy and softness as compared to their male counterparts. Till today many Indian women hesitate to describe the incidents which occur with them.

### **Property litigation:**

In ancient past, dowry comprised a women's share of inheritance from her parents as, according to the Hindu tradition only son's could inherit property. Payment of dowry either in cash or kind does not ensure love and recognition for the bride, in her husband home often it causes collusion of the family members. (Desai 1985,Zaidi 1993)

**Dowry:** The dowry problem is a social problem and every enlightened woman has to meet the challenge deflating her status in the society. This problem is found in every nook and corner of country among all sections. Only middle class women suffer a higher rate of victimization. About 70 per cent of victims belong to 21-24 years age group that they are not mature enough to cause dowry deaths. (Ahuja 1992)

#### **Wife beating:**

According to Gopalan (1994) wife beating is all too common the idea that after all it is his wife and he has every right to beat her is so widespread that personal intervening is seen as the interloper.

"Drums donkeys and women need to be beaten every culture seems to be support wife battering" - Tulsidas.  
Battering does not stop as the husband or wife get older.

Seth (1988) describes, the main cause of battering is due to drunkenness, wanting more dowry, forced sexual intercourse, suspicion of wives infidelity and husband wanting to dominate in his wife affairs.

#### **Child Marriage**

In ancient days it was very common for children to be betrothed or married at a very early age, This performance even as soon as the baby was born promises were given and accepted regarding the future partner of the baby a man thirty should marry a girl of 12 and a man of 24 should

marry a girl of 8 there were many child widows in Tamil Nadu. (Sadasivam 1997)

In the present age when individual freedom has been given an important place. Child marriage finds no place, child marriage is against domestic principle. This practice is closely related to preserving women's virtue and also because of dowry and young widow. (Atray 1988)

#### **Sati:**

In vedic period burning alive of a widow on the pyre of her death of the husband in the post vedic period. It came in to existence, through religious motivation interpreted by the Pandits. Sati existed in Tamil Nadu from early Sangam Period. Sati there by proving herself a faithful wife and achieved mukthi. (Maurya 1988).

Cruel practice like sati are added to the torture of widows by the great social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy .

#### **Destitution:**

Women who are widows and deserted women who have no means of support of themselves or their children they are in the starvation of support. The age group of 20-44 the rank destitutes every year (Madhava Menon - 1995).

#### **Polygamy:**

Polygamy is a type of marriage in which more than one man and woman enter in to a matrimonial alliance each man or woman allowed to have more than one wife or husband. Both

the variants of polygamy, viz polygamy and polyandry are found in India. The most important culturally accepted motivation for polygamy are bareness of the wife, economic advantages occurring from, plural marriage and gain prestige. (Kalbagh 1991).

**Female infanticide:**

In many families births of a daughter was regarded as a curse till 18th century and there were cases when daughters born were put in to death. During the British period the practice of female infanticide was prohibited regarding it as human under the female infanticide this female infanticide has been found in some parts of Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. (Pandey 1992)

**Unequal marriage:**

According to Joshi (1997), Dowry is closely related to the financial position of the parents of the girl, many people who are poor after their young daughter's to every elderly persons. Girls are forced to marry under serving men aged persons or with liquors-adicts as no dowry need to be given to such person.

**Assaults:**

The legal definitions of aggravated assaults, sexual assaults, rape and similar offenses against the person each cover variety forms of conduct personal injury, while having higher percentage of dismissals as malicious mischief (Datta 1992).

**Prostitution:**

Prostitutes have shown that girls or women and also boys were either raped or sexually molested and then sold or lured into the business. They are sexually exploited for commercial purposes and have few alternatives to enable them to be released from the trade (Ghosh 1991)

**Widow hood:**

Since women's status is dependent on the male, the death of the husband pushed the women into economic and social destitution, social stigma attached to widowhood reflected in the way she is isolated from public life prevented from wearing good clothes, jewellery and treated like a criminal of sorts. Even after so much social reform, widow remarriage remains a difficult thing (Alibarg 1990, Aradhya 1987).

**Torture:**

There is a growth of cases of torture and crime rate for the years of 1995-97. What is most disturbing about torture is its highly significant average annual growth at 23.2 per cent during the period of 1994-97 and consistently rising crime rate from 1.9 in 1991 to 2.9 in 1994 (Rajkumar 1997).

**Molestation:**

Molestation is another major crime committed against women. The average growth rate is estimated at 4.9 per cent per annum for the period 1995-97, there has been

wide variation in annual growth ranging from 1.1 per cent in 1995 to 14.9 per cent in 97. The crime rate of 2.4 in 1995 slightly declined to 2.3 in the following year (Batra and nandal 1995).

#### **Kidnaping and Abduction:**

Unlike other, share of cases of kidnaping and abduction has maintained a declining trend. Kidnaping and abduction which accounted for 17.2 per cent of the total cases in 1996 has slowly declined in 1997 and have been varying narrowly between about 11,700 and 13,000 cases during the period 1990-94 growth of 5.1 per cent recorded in 1991 was followed by a decline of 1.8 per cent. (Shoma 1993).

#### **Rape:**

Rape, a most heinous crime committed against womanhood, accounts for about 13-14 per cent share of crimes. Since 1990 an increasing trend persists in case of all age group of rape victims. At the national level, victims of rape were highest in age group of 16-30 years accounting for 51.6 to 59.9 per cent share of total rape cases during the period 1990-94. It is also unfortunate that girls aged 16 years accounted for 24.8 to 35.8 per cent of total rape. (Ghosh 1993)

#### **Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual Harassment earlier known as eve-teasing accounts for about 10-14 per cent of the crimes committed

against women during the period under review. The growth rate of this category of crime has been uneven characterised by growth rate as high as 19.3 per cent in 1991 to decline of 12.6 per cent in 1994. 5.5 per annum has been observed in the year of 1996. The crime rate has remained constant at 1.2 but for a marginal increase 1.4 recorded in 1997. (Singh 1990).

#### **Dowry Deaths:**

Kumar (1997) reveals that dowry death accounting for 5-7 per cent of crime against women also exhibits uneven growth with occasional decline and spurt. the dowry death is declined by 3.8 per cent in 1992. Over 1991 it rise and 1993 and then fell by 15.2per cent, 1997 A crime rate is 0.6 estimates for 1991 and 92 rose to 0.7 93 but fell to 0.5 in 1994. The fall in dowry deaths is a welcome sign.

The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 applies to all Hindus by religion were amended in 1976 . It also applies to Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists.

- either spouse should not have an earlier living spouse
- should not be afflicted with any mental illness
- minimum age for men is 21 years and for girl it is 18 years.

The parties should both be within the degree of prohibited relationship.

#### **Maintenance and custody of children:**

In maintenance cases we have seen that women with children, who have been deserted and abandoned receive an

insignificant and meager amount which can in no way take care of their basic needs after the women took driven routinely to seek shelter in the parental home with all the attendant suffering (Haris. V.C 1991)

Wife beating is all too common. The idea that after all it is his wife and he has every right to beat her is so widespread that the person intervening is seen as the interloper (Gupta 1995).

Instances of violence against women, wife beating, child beating etc., when husband were drunk greatly increased. Thus when the movement started it got a massive, spontaneous response, from the rural poor, mainly agricultural workers day laborer and poor peasant families. The class composition of the movement was entirely different from the type of pro prohibition movements have been launched. (Iyer 1994).

#### **Women Harassment:**

The problem of violence against women is not new to women in the Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation. For as long as we have written records of social organisation and family life. (Agarwal 1995).

#### **3. Legal provisions for women:**

All Indian Laws get their sanction from the Indian Constitution which guarantees ,justice,liberty and equality to all citizen of India. The preamble speaks of equality of

status of opportunity for all citizens .Article 14 states that "The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law within the territory of India.(Iyer 1994and Haris 1990)

Law not only prohibits discrimination but makes various provisions for the protection of women. Article 14,15 specially 15(3),16,39 and 51(A) deserve special mention in this regard rights guaranteed under. Article 14,15and 16 are fundamental rights and if they are violated by the state,the citizen can move to the high court or even been to the supreme court .There however been relatively few cases in which have asserted their by moving to courts.(Richordson 1993).

The voices of women from different background and experience have demanded the government. world over adopt policies which concretely.Promote and protect women's human rights,after the United Nation Conference on human rights (Vienna 1993)

The Committee on the status of women in India had pointed out certain "Penal provision in the law are definitely influenzed by the established patriarchal system, The dominant position of husband and the social and economic backwardness of women". The future of women status will depend on clearer understanding by larger section of women,of the constitution and their willingness to utilise laws and legal process.(Bhasin and Khan 1988)

### Marriage Laws amendment bill

In 1978 the 71st law commission report was submitted by introduced irretrievable" break down of marriage" as a ground of divorce. A bill was introduced in parliament in febraury 1981 if the bill passed ,would have been a big step forward in reform of Matrimonial Laws . It leads to painless end to a marriage which existed only in form and provided important safeguards for the of women to maintenance.

The bill, therefore providing a civilized method of putting an end to marriages which have broken down, safeguarded the women by empowering the courts to direct the husband to make financial provision for the women .The argument against the bill was that it would benefit only upper class women and would enable unscrupulous husbands to quickly divorce their wives. The women organisations argued that such a provision was not in the interest of the vast majority of Indian women.They argued further that woman was still looked down upon by socity .The bill however protected women against such and eventually by providing that the wife could object to the grant of divorce.

It is often at the insistence of parents and male relatives that woman are compelled to stsy within the frame work of a broken marriage rather than leave and be independent ,that leads to a high incident of violation against woman within matrimonial home. Women's identity wthin the frame work of a marriage such is the ideology that leads

to the state of being detestable institution of dowry which in turn leads to "dowry death" and "suicides" by woman with in the framework of marriage.

#### **Equal Remuneration Act (ERA) 1976**

It was preceded by an ordinance in 1975. The most significant piece of legislation relating to work in the decade was passed in the year 1976. This major piece of legislation dealing with equal rights in employment for women workers was intended to meet the demand for equality in employment voice by working women. Although the constitutions of India guarantees equality and equal opportunity in employment and guarantees that there will be no discrimination based on sex. This constitutional guarantee is available against the state only. \*

The Act also provides for the setting up of an advisory committee to advise the government on the extent to which the employment of women can be increased. The Act can give rise to endless debates and discussion as to whether the work performed by a woman is the same or of a similar nature to the work performed by the man. The employer would be able to justify non payment of equal wages by stating that the work performed by the women is not the same as the work performed by the men. there may be no women employed doing same work as men .United States it is now being argued that would should be given equal pay for comparable work.

### **Family Court Act 1984**

Legislation introduced in the year of 1984. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation providing for the setting up of family court and conferring upon them jurisdiction of a far reaching nature, in dealing with matrimonial disputes. It is also empowers the courts to seek the experts, social worker to recognised institutions, organisations and psychologists in the resolution of disputes. (Srivatsava 1985)

Women are driven back into unwanted marriages in the interest of preserving the institution of marriage for the welfare of children. Preservation of the institution of marriage is achieved at the cost of women who remain a prisoner within it and is subjected to extreme mental and physical cruelty for several women's groups have demanded the setting up of the family courts. (Mishra 1995)

### **Free Legal Aid Committee**

The Free Legal Aid Committee is the torch bearer for weaker sections of the society who are unable to approach the court of law to seek justice because of expansiveness of the system and the time factor and the indefiniteness of litigation involved.

However, measures such as more liberal divorce laws, the legislation of abortion, or the antidowry legislation which were introduced specifically for the liberation of women and give them equal rights with men fail because women

remain unconvinced of their rights of utilising the rights.  
(Chari 1989)

**Family Counselling Centre:**

The family counselling centre is intended to provide preventive to rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and exploitation; to provide counselling services to those having marital maladjustments and family disputes; to create awareness about the prevailing laws relating to women and children and to provide facilities like free legal aid, short stay, medical treatment and vocational training.

Financial assistance to voluntary organisation for setting up family counselling centers to the extent of 80% of the approved expenditure subject to a maximum of Rs.40,000 for a centre for one year. This would include expenditure on salary of counselor, social worker honorarium to consultants, expenditure on transport for field visits and rent. (1995 CSWB).

A Hindu can't contract a second marriage with another till the first marriage with another till the first marriage is dissolved by divorce. If there is violation and it is proved then the person can be imprisoned and also fined. If the spouses can apply divorce under the law.

The grounds on which dissolution of the marriage can be granted by the court are cruelty adultery, unsoundness of mind, desertion, not being alive suffering from disease and mutual consent.

**Hindu Succession Act 1956:**

Confers the right of absolute ownership over property and the woman can make will leaving her share of property to the heirs. Under section 10 of the Act, property of an intestate is divided among heirs in accordance with certain prescribed rules. (Minroth 1997).

**Dowry prohibition Act 1961:**

Dowry means any property or valuable security given organised to be gives either directly or indirectly.

- i. Penalty for giving or taking dowry.
- ii. Giving and taking dowry shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 5 years or not less than Rs. 15,000 as fine.
- iii. Nothing in subsection.
  - a. Price given with demand under Act
  - b. Price given without demand Under Act

**Child Marriage Restraint Act:**

Read with the Indian Majority Act and girl below 18 and boy below 21 cannot marry. There are innumerable instances of such marriages which go undetected. Naturally the parties concurred will not disclose the fact and other members of society canner at it.

**Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956:**

This has brought some changes that relate to the status of the women that ancient laws gave further the

unquestionable power to adopt irrespective of the wishes of the wife. But the Act now makes the wife's consent essential. Under the act the girl can also be adopted further ancient law made no provision for mother's consent while giving away her son in adoption, now under the Act, her consent is compulsory.

A wife is entitled to maintenance for life under the Hindu Adoption and maintenance Act further she can claim separate residence and maintenance from her husband for justifying causes.

#### **Female Infanticide Prevention Act - 1870:**

During British period the practice of female infanticide was prohibited regarding it as inhuman under this Act. In many families births of a daughter was regarded as a curse till 18th century and there were cases when daughter born was put to death.

#### **Bigamy is criminal offense:**

Under Section 494 of the Indian penal code the combined effect of section 17 of the Act with 494 Act.

A complaint of the 1st wife or her authorised representative against the husband for the offense of bigamy punishable under Sec 494 of I.P.C.

The law treats bigamy as an offense in order to secure conjugal happiness among religious community which had recognised monogamy as rule who are allowed to have more than

on wife under the special marriage Act 1954. Bigamy is a criminal offense irrespective of the religion of the spouse.

#### **Sati:**

The law was passed by the parliament in response to a national demand following the burning of young girls in 1887.

Not with standing anything contained in Indian Penal Code, who ever attempts to commit sati and does any Act towards such commission shall be punishable with imprisonment for a terms which may extend to six months with fine.

#### **Prostitution:**

The 64th law commission stated that prostitution could be banned total.....:Law in every country has tried to regulate it so that it may be kept within its legitimate bounds without unduly en crouching up on the institution marriage and family".

However all studies of prostitutes have shown that girls or women and also boys were either raped or sexually molested and then sold or lured, into business. They are sexually exploited for commercial purposes and have few allinatives to enable them to be released from the trade.

# Methodology

### III METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study entitled " Legal Awareness for the Indira Mahila Kendra (IMK) Members in Rural and Urban Area as in Coimbatore District" consisted of the following steps:

- A. Selection of the Area
- B. Selection of the Sample
- C. Collection of Data
- D. Creating Legal Awareness Among the Selected Women
- E. Solving the Legal Problems of Women

#### A. Selection of the Area:

There are 40 Indira Mahila Kendras (IMK) in the Corporation of Coimbatore and 20 Indira Mahila Kendras in Karamadai Block. There are two hundred women are in each of the IMKs. Six IMK from Karamadai Block and two IMK from Coimbatore Corporation were selected at random for the study. The six IMK's were at Karamadai, Pungampalayam, Thimmampalayam, Maruthur, Sikkarampalayam and Kannarampalayam from Karamadai Block and Venkitapuram, and Rajunagar of Coimbatore Corporation were selected at random for the study.

# MAP OF KARAMADAI PANCHAYAT UNION COIMBATORE DISTRICT

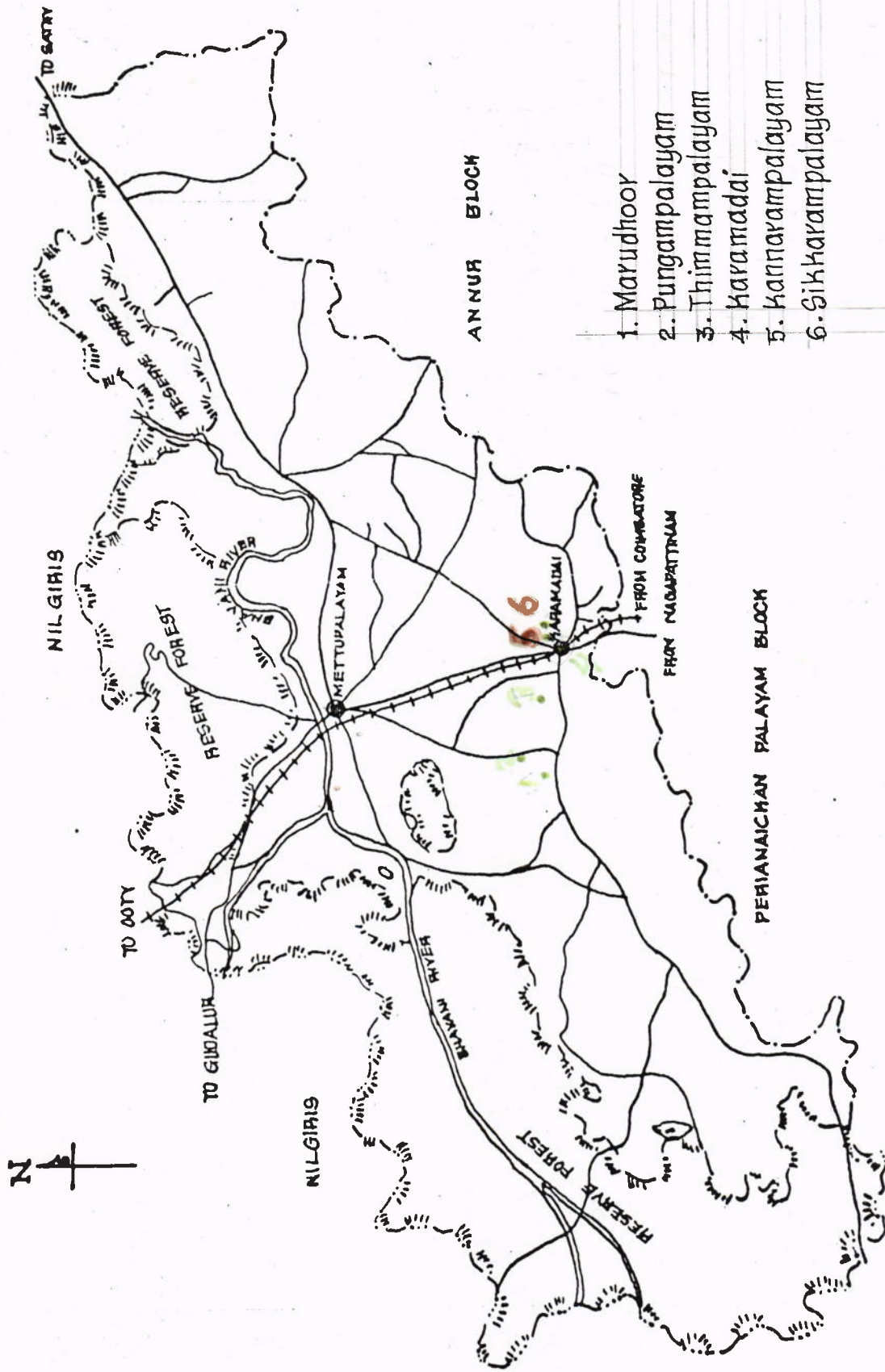


Figure. A. LOCALE OF THE STUDY

## B. Selection of the Sample:

One hundred and fifty women, 25 from each of the selected six kendras at random from Karamadai Block were selected to conduct Legal Awareness Campaign. Five legal cases identified, two at Rajunagar and three at Venkitapuram of Coimbatore Corporation were also included for the study.\*

## C. Collection of Data:

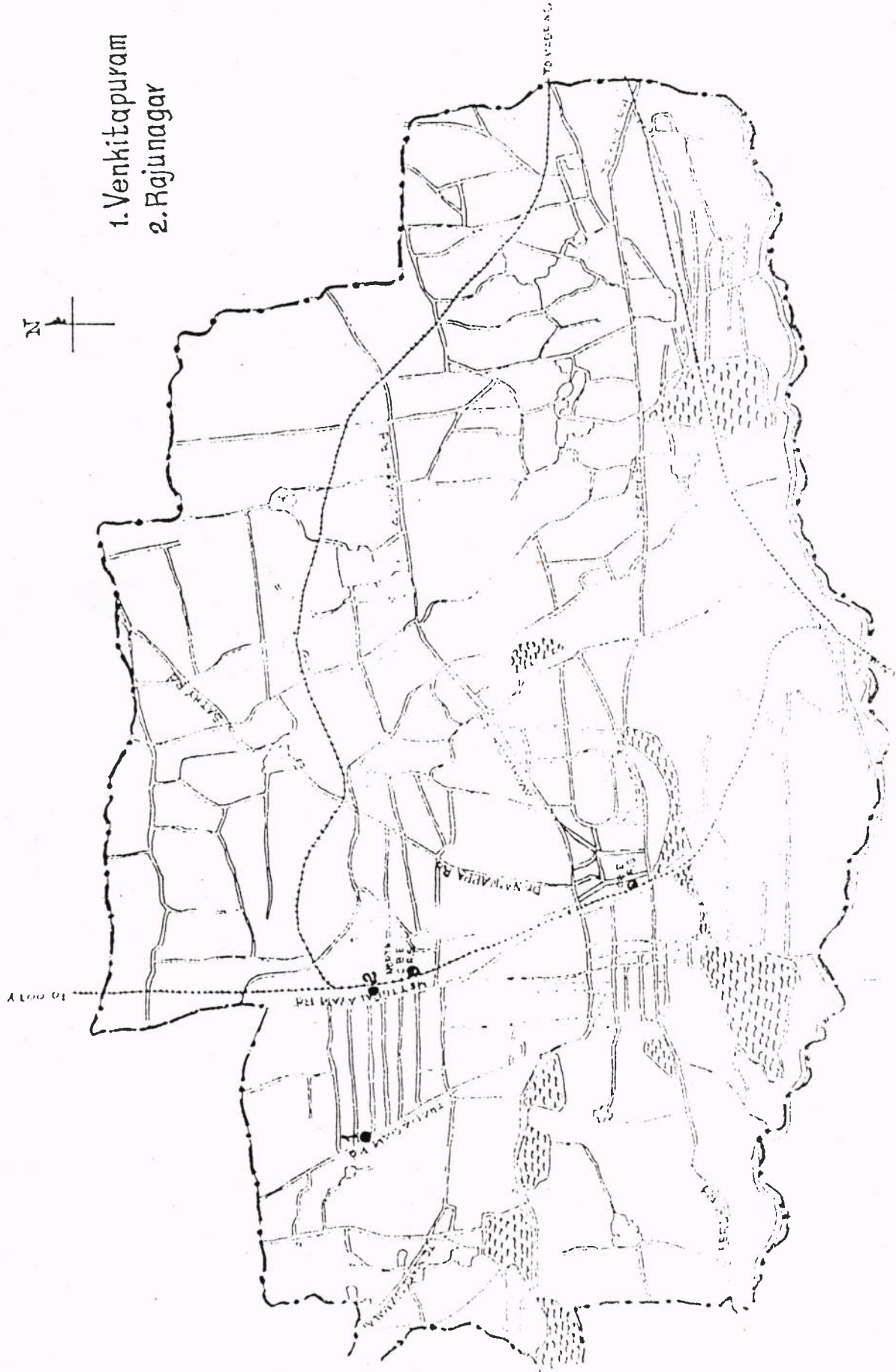
A schedule (Appendix I) was administered for every selected woman calling for details such as background information about respondents, legal problems that they face, methods of finding solution for their problems and the need for legal awareness to be created among them. The investigator with great difficulty was able to collect the information from selected women since they were very conservative. Case study method was also the undertaken to collect detailed information from each of the woman who had legal problems.

Case study is an important tool of social investigation. It has been used for tracing the evolution and growth of a social problem. A particular unit can be investigated intensively and thoroughly studied. (Thanulingam, 1985).

---

\* The two IMK's selected for the study from Coimbatore Corporation was already covered for the Legal Literacy Campaign conducted by one of the senior student of Extension Education in the year of 1996-97. As a follow up some of the legal cases were taken into account and necessary legal measures ascertained undertaken is detailed in case studies (Chapter IV).

MAP OF COIMBATORE CORPORATION



- 1. Venkitapuram
- 2. Rajunagar

Figure. B LOCALE OF THE STUDY

#### D. Creating Legal Awareness Among the Selected Women:

Creating legal awareness of selected women consisted of the following steps.

1. Planning the programme
2. Conducting legal awareness campaign
3. Evaluating the impact of legal awareness campaign

##### 1. Planning the programme

The suggestions given by selected women were organising legal awareness campaign and free legal approach. Three legal awareness campaign were conducted at Marudhoor, Karamadai, Kannarampalayam of Karamadai Block . Involving the expertise, Miss. S. Girija, M.A. M.Phil., (Social work), Mr. Senthil Kumar, M.A. (Psy) from Family Counselling Centre, under the sponsorship of central social welfare board, Coimbatore.

##### 2. Conducting the Legal Awareness Campaign:-

A schedule was prepared and administered by investigator to the selected women to find out their problems and legal rights and provisions available to solve them before the campaign. The awareness programme was conducted using available infrastructure and appropriate methods and aids (Table I).

**TABLE I**  
**CONDUCT OF LEGAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

S.No.	Topic	Method	Resource Person
1.	Status of women at present and their legal rights to combat their problems	Lecture discussion	Miss. S. Girija M.A. M.Phil. Counsellor Manosanthi Y.W.C.A. Coimbatore
2.	Family counselling concept need counselling for whom and how ?	Lecture	Mr. N. Senthil Kumar M.A.(Psy) Counsellor Manosanthi, Family Counselling Centre
		Role play discussion	Miss. S. Girija M.A. M.Phil. Mr. N. Senthil Kumar Family Counselling Centre

The lecture on status of women and legal rights to combat their problems was centered around the willingness of women to face the challenges of life. This would help to achieve greater position like the late Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi eventhough there are constitutional laws for prohibition of dowry, maintenance, property litigation, child marriage and widow remarriage to protect them.

The lecture on family counselling "concept and need for counselling for whom? and how?" The emphasis was on how best the professional counsellors can guide the life partners to adjust and with family members. Of both sides This is because as per Indian Culture and tradition marriage

between two members of the society is not only to unite both a male and the female members but such marriage is to build up relation between two families together.

The social worker also stressed that legal awareness of the women and proper utilisation of rights can only help them to overcome their problems.

### 3. Evaluating the impact of legal awareness campaign

At the end of the legal awareness campaign the same schedule was administered to find out the difference in response of the members before and after the campaign in terms of gain in knowledge by women about the legal provision for each problem that a women face.

### E. Solving the Legal Problems of the Women

From the survey conducted it was found out that the majority of women 90 per cent are below poverty line of the 150 women, 32 women had specific legal problems, such as property inheritance, divorce, dowry maintenance, adjustment problems within husband and wife, wife beating and desertion. Guidance was given to the women for appropriate legal assistance, the details of the legal needs ascertained are discussed in the next chapter.

## Results and Discussion

## IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are discussed under the following heading.

- A. Socio-economic Background of the Selected Women
- B. Position of Women in the Family and Community
- C. Impact of Legal Awareness Campaign Conducted
- D. Ascertaining the Legal Needs of the Selected Women

### A. Socio-economic Background of the Selected Women:

The socio-economic background of the selected women is illustrated in Table II.

TABLE II

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE SELECTED WOMEN

S. No.	Aspects	Respondents N = 150	Percentage
1.	Age		
	11 - 20	25	17
	21 - 30	85	57
	31 - 40	35	23
	Above 40 years	5	3
2.	Religion		
	Hindu	149	99.3
	Christian	1	0.6
3.	Caste		
	Forward Community	2	1.33
	Backward community	39	26
	Scheduled caste	43	28.7
	MBC	66	44

S. No.	Aspects	Respondents N = 150	Percentage
4.	Type of family		
	Nuclear family	136	91
	Joint family	14	9
5.	Education		
	Illiterate	69	46
	Primary	27	18
	Secondary	49	32.7
	Higher secondary	5	3.3
6.	Occupation		
	Coolie	136	91
	Self employed	2	1
	Housewife	12	8
7.	Marital status		
	Married	143	95
	Single	3	2
	Widow	3	2
	Destitute	1	0.6

Majority of the respondents (96.5 %) were below 40 years. Except one all the respondents were (99.3%) were Hindus.

Forty four per cent of the respondents belonged to most backward community and 28.7 per cent of respondents belonged to schedule caste.

Ninety one (91) per cent of the respondents were from nuclear families.

Forty five per cent of the respondents were illiterate.

As for as the occupation of selected women was concerned, 90 per cent of them were coolies engaged in agriculture and allied activities, building construction works. Only 2 per cent of them were self employed (snack centre). Except three respondents (2%) all were married.

Table III depicts the monthly income of the families of the respondents.

**TABLE III**  
**INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILIES OF THE RESPONDENTS**

S. No.	Aspects	Respondents N = 150	Percentage
1.	Monthly income		
	Below 500	85	57
	500 - 1000	45	30
	1000 - 2000	18	12
	Above 2000	2	1

Majority, 60 per cent of the families had income below Rs. 500/month (Below poverty line) owing to the reason that all of them were working in unorganised sector.

#### **B. Position of women in the Family and Community**

The position of the selected women in the family, and community is dealt under the following aspects:

1. Decision making role of women in the family
2. Equality of opportunities for women in the family  
and
3. Oppressions faced by women

1. Decision making role of women in the family

The decision making role of women in the family of the respondents is depicted in Table IV.

**TABLE IV**  
**ROLE OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING**

S. No.	Aspects	Percentage of respondents N = 150*		
		Head of the family	Wife alone	Joint
1.	Budgetting	63	17	20
2.	Deciding daily menu	12	50	38
3.	Buying new clothes	38	30	32
4.	Actual purchase of provision and other material	50	16	34
5.	Celebrating function	52	19	29
6.	Planning for leisure	45	25	30
7.	Educating the children	44	24	32
8.	Fulfilling the social obligation	55	16	29

\*Multiple response.

Women could decide independently only the daily menu for her family as reported by 50 per cent of respondents. The joint venture in decision making over the family budgetting were found to be minimum.

## 2. Equality of opportunities for women in the family

The perception of the selected women in equal opportunities for the matter relating to personal and family life are revealed in Table V.

**TABLE V**  
**EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN**

S. No.	Aspects	Percentage stating * N = 150
1.	Giving medical care	62
2.	Offering educational opportunities	35
3.	Giving importance in family functions	56
4.	Fulfilling the individual needs	48
5.	Getting equal share in clothing	45
6.	Getting equal share in family food	50
7.	Undertaking gainful employment	51

\* Multiple response

It was interesting to note that 62 per cent of the respondents felt the need for medical care to both male and female members of the family. However equal share in family food and clothing was not considered, essential for female

members, further a majority of women still did not understand the need for gainful employment.

### 3. Oppressions faced by women

The oppressions faced by the selected women were mainly financial and social in nature. Table VI gives the characteristics of the oppressions that the women were subjected requiring legal interventions as mentioned by IMY group leaders and women under study.

**TABLE VI**  
**OPPRESSIONS FACED BY WOMEN**

S. No.	Aspects	Number of stating N = 150	Percentage
1.	Quarrel between husband and wife	1	3
2.	Wife beating	5	16
3.	Property litigation	2	6.3
4.	Divorce	1	3
5.	Desertion	20	63
6.	Dowry	2	6.3
7.	Adjustment problem with in-laws	1	3
Total		32	

Of the 32 women who were subjected to different types of oppressions , 20 (63 percent) had been deserted by their husbands.

Table VII gives the details of ways and means of solving the problems oppressions which has expressed by women in practice.

**TABLE VII**  
**MEANS OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS**

S. No.	Methods	Percentage
1.	Consulting elderly relative	58
2.	Filing cases in court	1
3.	Mobile court	-
4.	Referring police	2
5.	Local Nyaya Panchayat	39

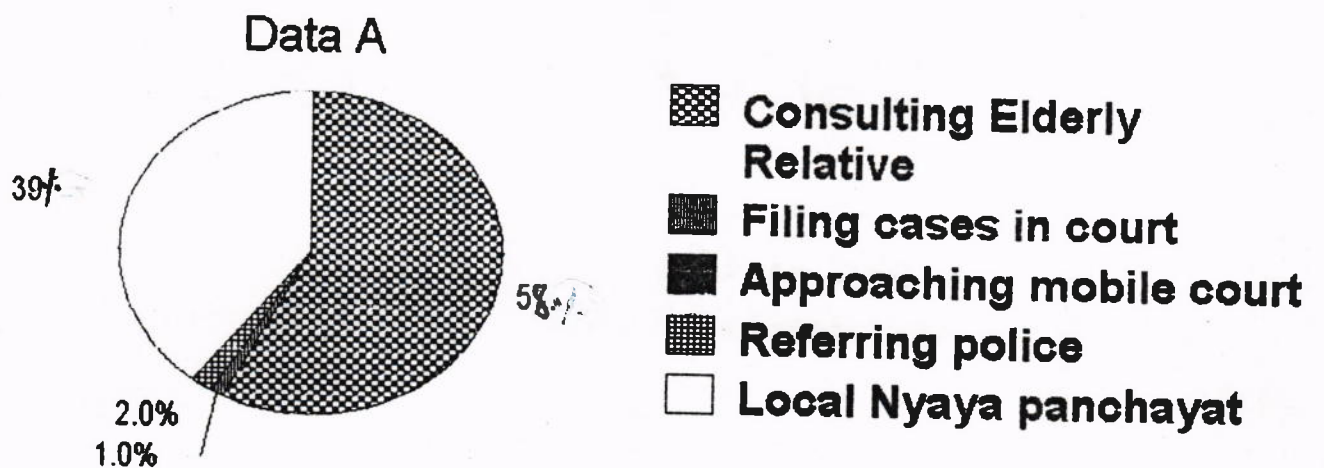
Fifty eight per cent of respondents consulted their elderly relatives to solve the legal problems whereas 39 per cent of the respondents use to refer Local Nyaya Panchayat.

#### **C. Impact of Legal Awareness Campaign Conducted**

The impact of legal awareness campaign conducted is described in terms of

1. Knowledge gained by the respondents through legal awareness campaign and
2. Response of the women in terms of their willingness to make use of legal provisions

## MEANS OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS



1. Knowledge gained by the respondents through legal awareness campaign.

Table VIII illustrates the legal awareness of the respondents before and after campaign.

**TABLE VIII**  
**LEGAL AWARENESS OF THE RESPONDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER**  
**THE CAMPAIGN IN RURAL AREAS**

S. No.	Aspects	Legal awareness through campaign	
		Before Percentage of respondents N=150	After Percentage of respondents N=150
1.	Women do not receive equal wages for equal work	37	93
2.	Women can acquire leadership position	26	72
3.	Getting dowry as well as giving dowry is illegal	20	58
4.	Girls should get married only after 20 years	32	69
5.	Government provisions exists for the economic independence	35	75
6.	Child marriage is offensive according to Indian marriage	25	82
7.	Widow remarriage act exist to give new life to the affected	20	61.5
8.	Rape is legally punishable	20	82.7
9.	Free legal aid committee for the poor	20	76.15
10.	Family counselling centre	10	72

**PLATE I**



**I LEGAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN COUNSELLORS FROM MANOSHANTHI ADDRESSING WOMEN**

**PLATE II**



**II PARTICIPANT RAISING DOUBTS TO COUNSELLORS**

On the outset the awareness campaign had helped the women to learn more about their rights and provisions for them to solve the problems particularly the campaign was an eye opener for the women in certain aspects, such as provision of free legal aid committee for the poor, widow remarriage act to give new life to the affected and family counselling centre.

## 2. Response of the women in terms of the willingness to make use of legal provision

It was found out that out of 150 women attended the awareness campaign only 32 women reported that they had some legal problems or other out of 32 women only 7 women expressed their willingness to approach the family counselling centre for their problems. Table X depicts the distribution of the respondents according to their legal problems. The investigator approached individually all the seven women at Karamadai Block and collected necessary information through case study method. The investigator also approached five women three from Venkitapuram and two from Raju nagar who had legal problems in Coimbatore corporation area and collected the required information through case study method.

#### **D. Ascertaining the legal needs of the selected women**

The case studies paved the way to approach the appropriate means of solving the problems. The legal needs of their affected women were ascertained with the help family counselling centre and free legal aid committee, the details of them are presented in Table IX.

TABLE IX

LEGAL PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED/ MEASURES UNDERTAKEN

S.No.	Place	Name	Legal problem	Approach	Efforts are in progress
<b>Rural</b>					
1.	Karamadai	Gomathi	Deserted	---	Family counselling centre Small industries & service institutions Family counselling centre Free legal aid Training of rural youth for self employment Family counselling centre
2.	Kanarampalayam	Kokila	- do -	---	
3.	Karamadai	Nilavarnisha	Property litigation	---	
4.	Marudhoor	Chitra	- do -	---	
5.	Kanarampalayam	Padmini	destitute	---	
6.	Kanarampalayam	Tulsi	Adjustment problem with inlaws and husband	---	
7.	Thimmampalayam	Nagarathinam	Young widow	---	
<b>Urban</b>					
1.	Venkitapuram	Prema	deserted	Family counselling Centre	
2.	Raju Nagar	Shanathi	- do -	- do -	---
3.	Venkitapuram	Amsaveni	Adjustment problem	- do -	---
4.	Rajunagar	Rathinammal	Property litigation	Free legal aid	---
5.	Venkitapuram	Manickam	Divorce	---	Free legal aid

It is evident that family counselling centre and free legal aid committee had helped the women who were under stress and needs to a great extent in solving their legal problems within a couple of days on free of cost. For those person the legal problems out wit the economic needs ,they were guided to start some income generating activity.

## CASE STUDIES

RURAL:

DESERTED

1. Gomathi aged 35 years, Hindu, MBC in Karamadai. She married since 9 years. She is deserted by her husband four years back, even though she got married to her own cousin. Having two children (sons) she find it difficult to bring up the sons with a little income from the snack centre (Idli making) started with a very small capital. Her husband is living in the same locality with his second wife and two daughters. He is a car driver (tourist car). Gomathy needs some economic support as Jeevanamsam from her husband.

Both the children malnourished and hence stunted growth, the elder son 8 years old is going to school, the next one is 5 year old who is not healthy to be sent to Balwadi even. Gomathi would like to leave his first son in a residential charity school. Efforts are being taken to put him in the Mettupalayam Badrakaliyamman Trust Institute by the investigator.

2. Mrs. Kokila, aged 29 years, Hindu, MBC in Kannarampalayam. She married since 13 years. She was illtreated by her husband even from the beginning. As she could not pull on with him, she landed at her mother's home itself after 1 1/2 years of married life. She has got no issue also. She is dependent on

PLATE III



III EARLY MARRIAGE - TULSI AT KANARAMPALAYAM

her brother who had recently married. She is average earner in private weaving centre since two years. She would like to invest money in a weaving unit with the help of her brother and even her livelihood. So she wants some guidance in this regard, so Kokila is advised to join in Small Industries and Service Institute (SISI) to training and financial support. Efforts are being taken by the investigator.

#### **Destitute**

3. Padmini aged 28 years, Hindu, SC from Kannarampalayam married before 8 years. She does not know her husband where about since two years. She has got two girl children, one is 3 years and the other is 1 1/2 year. She is an agricultural labourer, leaving the children at the care of neighbours. She is going for work. She is not healthy and she is not able to go for work even in the available season. She is willing to take up any income generating activity on her own. Padmini is included as a beneficiary under Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) Project. The investigator approached the Block Development Officer programmes at Karamadai Block.

#### **4. Adjustment problem**

Tulsi, aged 15 years old, Hindu, MBC in Kannarampalayam, married at the age of 14 years and her husband is also only 19 years old. As per law the marriage is valid. Tulsi's mother has got a share in the property of her father but her brother was not willing to give her share.

Instead without getting dowry Tulsi was married to his son. She had to drop from the school. She could not adjust with her husband and in-laws, she has come back to her parents. But the in-laws threatening her, saying if she does not turn up they look for another girl. Tulsi does not want to go back to husband house but willing to continue her studies somewhere outside Karamadai. Arrangements were also made by the investigator for both the parties for counselling with Manoshanthy Nilayam.

#### 5. Property litigation

Mrs. Chitra, W/o Vellingiri in Marudhoor. She was jointly doing real estate business with her sister. They used to occupy porampoku lands and pay nominal charge as tax and sell it for good profit to some other parties. This business was carried out since 5 years in course of time. Chitra bought a land of 10 cents for herself buy paying 75,000 on gentleman agreement to a party the site is not yet registered. But her younger sister occupied the place and claiming possession of the site. The matter was taken to police station and local Nyaya Panchayat but could not come to an agreement. Hence efforts was taken by the investigator through Manoshanthy Nilayam to approach free legal aid committee at Coimbatore and they taken to free legal aid committee.

6. Nilavarnisha 36 years - Married since 15 years she is having two girl children. Her father was government employee his profident fund amount Rs.60,000 was given to her mother. But her mother still she did not claim the amount. Nilavarnisha have two younger sister they both are well developed in their life. But Nilavarnisha she want to claim her share for the future of her children. Nilavarnisha's husband working as watchman with low income. She says she needy because her busband is not earning much to maintain family since Nilavarnisha and other daughter married on their own and also the youngest son is only 16 years old. The mother is not willing to give the share to Nilavarnisha the matter was taken to family counselling centre. Nilavaarnisha guide to convince her mother and reavert reasonable amount from her mother taken in the consideration the youngest unsettled brother and the mother.

**Young widow:**

Nagarathinam 33 years Hindu, B.C. from Thimmampalayam married since 16 years. She is having a daughter , husband death occured with in one year after their marriage. She felt very difficult to bring up her child. She doesnot have anybody to help her financially. At present she is working in Trysem group on temprory basis. She underwent a skill training in soft toy making at Karamadai conducted by the Home Science Extension Department Avinashilingam Deemed University. Efforts taken by the

investigator to help her plan to utilise the skill for income generation.

## **URBAN**

### **Deserted**

Prema W/o Ravi, 30 years old Hindu SC, from Venkitapuram, she is having two girl children at the age of 12 and 6. Ravi deserted her one and half years back and had some affairs with a girl at Ganapathy. Prema was helped to consult the family counselling centre officials, through family counselling centre a petition of police was submitted to the commission of police regarding the matter by the authorities. With his effect, her husband was warned by the police authorities, not to repeat the problem at present Prema and her husband with children they are settled happily.

### **Adjustment problem:**

Amsaveni, W/o Dhamodharan, aged 24 years and her husband is 29 years, her married since 1 year. The couple are living happily only in the absence of Dhamodharan's mother. In the presence of his mother he hesitates to be in different to her. Amsaveni being affected emotionally has come back with her 4 months infant to her mother's house. The investigator arranged for counselling at Monoshanthi nilayam. By the efficient counselling the matter is settled amicably between the mother, husband and wife.

## Property litigation

Rathinammal aged 48 years, Hindu SC at Rajunagar. Her husband is working as coolie. She has got house at R.S. Puram, which is her forefather's property, got it from her mother. She has left this house for rent since 22 years. Now tenant the house refuses to vacate it. The tenant had given Rs. 1,500 as advance at the time of occupying. Rathinammal was ready to repay the amount with reasonable interest. Since the part was not cooperative. The investigator helped Rathinammal to approach Free Legal Aid Committee on the guidance of "Manoshanthi" with a effect the Lawyer filed the case against the tenant on free of cost and the matter was settled amicably, with the effect the tenant vacated the house so Rathinammal got back her house.

## Dissertation

Shanthy aged, 29 years D/o Rathinammal, Rajunagar is married since 12 years and got 3 children, 10, 8 and 3 years old. Even then she could not have smooth family life. Often battered by her husband and coming back to her mother's house has become her way of life. The matter was taken to the Local Nyaya Panchayat and Police station. But then could not be solved. Neither the girl was prepared to get divorce from her husband. At this juncture the investigator took shanthy to Manoshanthy for counselling. Continuous counselling of affected parties helped a lot and so Shanthy is now settled at her home peacefully with her husband and children.

## Divorce

Manickam, W/o Subramanyam, aged 55 got three children at the age of 25, 23 and 13. The first two sons are independent and yet to get married the third one is studying in t he school. Manickam had very good marital life for a period of 28 years. Manickam came to know the husbands extra marital relationship with some other women recently (1 1/2 years). So left to her brother's house. She got avoid and so the quarrel between the wife and husband went upto extent that the eldest son showed his muscle power against mother. So the mother filed the case against the son at the police station. Later she realised and case was withdrawn by herself. but the husband is vehement and want to divorce the wife all the sons are with the husband and Manickam wants to live with her husband until the youngest son become major. But the husband not willing to live the youngest one with mother and very particular to divorce Manickam. Family counselling was not helpful in this case but the matter is at present with Free Legal Aid Committee.

## Summary and Conclusion

## V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study entitled Legal Awareness of the IMK members in rural and urban areas in Coimbatore District was conducted by selecting six IMKs from Karamadai Block and two IMKs from Coimbatore Corporation.

The six selected IMKs were at Marudhoor, Pungampalayam, Thimmampalayam, Karamadai, Kannarampalayam and Sikarampalayam of Karamadai Block .The two IMKs, Venkitapuram and Rajunagar from Coimbatore Corporation where awareness campaign was already covered by one of the senior students in the previous year and so only follow up measures were undertaken in these areas.

A schedule was administered for every selected women calling for details such as background information legal problems if any and their need for legal awareness to be created among them.

A three days Legal Awareness campaign was conducted by involving the expertise, two counsellors from Manosanthi (Family Counselling Centre, Coimbatore) using appropriate methods and aids. The findings of the study are summarised as below.

Majority of the respondents were Hindus (99 per cent), forty four per cent of the respondents belonged to most backward community.

It is to note that 46 per cent of the respondents were illiterate. Ninety five per cent of the respondents were married and ninety per cent of the respondents were from nuclear families.

As far as the occupation of the selected women was concerned, 90 per cent of them were coolies engaged in agriculture and allied activities and building construction works and only 2 per cent of them were self employed (snack centre). Majority of the women's role in the family was confined only to plan the family menu . The joint venture in decision making over the other family chores were found to be minimum.

Sixty two per cent of the respondents felt the need to give medical attention to both male and female members of the family. Forty eight per cent of the respondents understood , the need for equality in terms of fulfilling individuals needs, educational opportunities and recognition in family functions. However equal share in family, food and clothing was not a felt need for the respondents.

The oppressions faced by the selected women were mainly financial and social in nature , they were marital conflicts characterised by quarrel between husband and wife, wife beating, property litigation, divorce, desertion, dowry and adjustment problem with in-laws.

Out of 150 women in rural areas, 32 women had some legal problems or other. But only seven women came forward to approach the Family Counselling Centre/Free Legal Aid for their problems. Also five cases in urban areas were taken to Family Counselling Centre/Free Legal Aid. The detailed account of the legal problems of seven women in rural areas five women from urban areas was found out through case studies.

Out of seven cases identified in rural areas, three cases had property litigation, desertion and adjustment problem with the in-laws and husband. They were taken to "Manosanthy" Family Counselling Centre, Coimbatore and the cases are under process. One property litigation case was taken in Free Legal Aid Committee which is also under process. The other three cases, one destitute, one deserted and an young widow came forward to equip themselves in such a way that they can earn their livelihood on their own. Hence they were helped to join and benefit under Training of Rural Youth for Self Emploment (TRYSEM), Small Industries Service Institutes (SISI) and one person undertook skill training in soft toy making, arranged by the Home Science Extension Department, Avinashilingam Deemed University, Coimbatore respectively. Three cases identified at Venkitapuram were deserted ,adjustment problem with in-laws and divorce, two cases at Raju nagar were deserted and property litigation were solved through Family Counselling Centre and Free Legal Aid Committee depending on the intensity of the problems.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Awareness about family counselling centre and free legal aid committee should be given to the women especially in rural areas through wider publicity.
2. Central Social Welfare Board should come forward to set up Family Counselling Centre in every taluk, so that women in rural areas can be benefitted.
3. Legal Literacy for women should be given through mass media such as television, radio, drama and other cultural programmes.

**CONCLUSION:**

Every woman should come forward to equip herself through education, and participation in all the developmental programmes meant for her. By doing so she can elevate herself to compete with her counterpart to the extent of social expectations.

# Bibliography

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahuja, (1992), "Social problems in India", New Delhi, Rawat Publication, Pp. 213-228.
- Alibarg, (1990), "Women in India", Government of India, Broadcasting Publication, Pp. 72-88.
- Alva, (1998-2000 AD), "National perspective plan for women", Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Pp. 135-149.
- Aradhya, S. (1987), "What is meant to be a widow", Social Welfare, Vol.34, No.9, Pp. 1-8.
- Ashraf, N. (1992), Social Welfare, "Drums, Donkeys and Women", Vol.48, No.3, Pp..10-11.
- Atray, J.P. (1988), "Crimes Against Women", New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Pp. 81-83.
- Batra and D.S. Nandal, (1995), "Nurturing peace in the family", Family Counselling Centres, Social Welfare, Vol.41, No. 1-12, P.11.
- Bhasin and Khan (1988), "Feminism", New Delhi, Panchsila Park Publishers, Pp. 1-21.
- Bhatia, (1988), "Social Audit of Dowry Legislation", University of Delhi, Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, Pp. 11-14.
- Chadially (1988), "Women in Indian Society", New Delhi, Sage Publication, P.7.
- Chari, L. (1988), "Criminal Law Provisions", Tamil Nadu Welfare Board, Madras, Pp. 1-12.
- Chaudhuri (1993), -"Indian Women Movement", Reform and Revival, New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, P.55.
- Datta, (1992), Crime against women - Crime in India, CBI Bulletin, New Delhi, P.28.
- Devadas, 1990 and Devendra, 1990, Strategies for Empowering Women for Development 'Endowment Lecture on Women Studies, P.6.
- Gautam, 1992, Women participation in farming of Himachal Pradesh, Kurukshetra, Vol.XL, No.6, Pp. 17-18.

Ghosh, (1991), "Women and Violence", New Delhi, Discovery Publication, P.43, Pp. 56-57.

Ghosh, (1993), "Indian Women through the Ages", New Delhi, Ashish Publication, P.111.

Gopalan, S. (1994), "Women's Equality Quarterly Bulletin of AIDWA, Vol.VII, No.34, Rafi Marg, New Delhi, P.41, 11 Pp. 39-40.

Gulah (1985), Women and Society Northern Indian 11th and 12th Centuries, New Delhi, Chanakya Publication, P.117, Pp. 143-160.

Gupta (1995), "Violence against Women", Stem the Rising Tide Social Welfare, Vol.41, No.1-12, P.5.

Haris, V.C. (1991), "Women's Struggle for Equality and Emancipation" New Delhi, Discovery Publication, Pp.1-14.

Indian Express, (1998), Law to curb domestic violence - Southt 15.3.98.

Indian Express, 1998, Equal rights for women stressed, 16.3.98, Coimbatore.

Iyer, (1994), "Crime Against Women", A saga of victimology Sanspenology, New Delhi, Ashish Publication, P.31.

Joshi, (1997), "Rural Women", Kurukshetra, Pp. 94-95.

Julia and Smart (1985), Women in Law, London, Fricester Square Publishers, Pp. 50-69.

Kalabagh, (1991), Women and Development, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, P.48.

Kapoor (1986), Women and Family Life Education, Jaipur, Printwell Publishers, Pp. 1-25.

Kitchlu, (1991), Women's rights legislative measures, Yojaja, Vol.35, No.20, Pp. 16-18.

Kohil, (1985), Central Social Welfare Board Women awake, Jeevan Deep, Sansad Marg, New Delhi, Pp. 6-18.

Krishna, K.P. (1995), Psychological approaches to criminal behaviour, Social Change, Vol.25, No.4, Pp. 88-90.

Kumari and Nishi (1995), Social awakening needed, Social Welfare, Vol.41, No. 1-12, Pp. 21-26.

Madhava Menon, (1995), Programmes of Assistance Policy and Procedure, Central Social Welfare Board, "Jeevan Deep", Parliament Street, New Delhi, P.28.

Marvin et-al, (1990), The Sociology of crime and - Delinquency, New Delhi, John Wiley and Sons, Pp. 15,22.

Maurya, 1988, Status and position of women in India, New Delhi, Vikas Publication, Pp. 45-50.

Meera Agarwal (1995), Matrimonial Rights of Women, Delhi Legal Aid and Advice Board, New Delhi, Pp. 41-2.

Mittal, L.N. (1992-94), Crime against women, Social Welfare, 39, No.9-21.

Mittal, L.N. (1997), Women's Rights, Social Welfare, Vol.43, No.10, P.27.

Minroth, P.L. (1997), Empowerment of deprived section through Legal Awareness, New Delhi, S.K. Publication, Pp. 20-21.

Mir, (1994) - Crime Against Women, New Delhi, Ashish Publication, P.61.

Misra. (1994), "Women Violence and the Law", New Delhi, Ashish Publication, P.87.

Nehru. (1990), Women of India, New York, Random House Publishers, P.49.

Nisa, M. (1993), Reforms for Women, Oxford SIBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, P.42.

Pandey, 1992, Social reformer in India, New Delhi, Ashish Publication, Pp. 10-11.

Parthasarathy and Ranganathan. (1983), Family makes and mass the individual personality, Social Welfare, Vol.30, No.6, P.7.

Primavera (1995), "Violence in the family", International Encyclopaedia of Sociology, Volume 2, London Dearbon Publishers, P.483.

Rajkumar (1997), Woman - The Battered Half, Social Welfare, Vol.43, No.10, P.3.

Ramaseshan, G. (1998), No legal definition of child rape, Indian Express Publication, Feb. 7, P. 3.

Rau, (1996), India (1995), New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publication, Pp. 5-15.

Richardson (1993), Introducing Women Studies, Hongkong, Macmillan Press Ltd., P.41.

Rekha, 1992, Significance of women labour, Kurukshetra, Vol.XL, No.6, Pp. 12-14.

Report of the National Women's Organisation (1993), Women against communalism, New Delhi, Pp. 10-12.

Report on Fourth World Conference in Beijing, (1995), Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development, Report on Fourth World Conference in Beijing, P.49.

Sadasivam (1997) and Dr.C. Paramarthalingam, Social REform Movement in Tamil Nadu in the 19th century with special REference to St. Ramalingam, Deep and Deep publication. Pp-73-140.

Sapru R.K., 1989 women and Development Ashish publishing house, New Delhi, Pp.1-5.

Sharma (1994) protection to women in Matrimonial Home, New Delhi, Deep & Deep Publication.P.19-20, P.38.

Shoma (1993), The Indian Women in Perspective, New Delhi, Ajanta Publication, P.89.

Sintla. R.P (1984) Women's Rights: Myth and Reality Jaipur print well publishers. Pp.20-22.

Seth, 1988, Women in India, New Delhi, Deep Publication, P.8.

Singh.S. (1997), Violence on Women., A search for social Justice, SocialWelfare. Vol.43. No.10, Pp: 4-11.

Social change (1993). Indian Women's Right, Myth & reality, Vol. 23, No.1. P.20.

Social Welfare (1983) - Dowry Deaths, where is the end. Vol.30, No.6. Pp.4-5.

Social Welfare 1994, Reader's forum, uniform civilcode Need for Referendum-Vol-44, No.2.P.40.

Srivasthava (1985) Women and the law, New Delhi, Intellectual Publication pp.13-18.

Stanko (1996) "Violence" The Social Science, London, Encyclopeadia Routedge. P.896.

The Central Welfare Board (1997), Programmes of Assistance, Madras Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board. Pp.16-20

The Hindu Magazine (1998), Women and the Law "Sleeping with the Enemy", p.5.

Thanulirgom (1985) Research Methodology in Social Science, Rainbow publication, Coimbatore, p.36.

Thomas (1990) Law and the Lawless, A Reader in criminology - Greshan, Indian publication - New Delhi - Dowry & position of women in India. p-44.

Tripathy & Soundamini Das (1991) "Informal Women Labour in India", New Delhi, Discovery publishing House, Pp. 97-105.

Visuvathas (1992-94) Social and Legal aspects, Social Welfare, Vol.39. P.9.

Vyas (1996), Voices of Resistance, Silence of pain, New Delhi, Centre for Women's Development Studies.p-56.

William L-Marshal L. Clark, (1990), Legal Definition of Crime and Criminals.

Zaidi. R. (1992-94) Prostitution, Rheotoric Vs Reality, Social Welfare, Vol-39, No. 9-21. P-15.

# Appendices

APPENDIX - I

SCHEDULE TO ELICIT THE LEGAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN RURAL AND  
URBAN AREAS COVERED UNDER INDIRA MAHILA YOJANA

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of the respondent :  
Name of the investigator :  
Name of the head of the family :  
Address :

Religion : Hindu Christian  
Muslim Others

Caste : FC BC  
MBC SC

Type of the family : Nuclear family :  
Joint family :

II FAMILY BACKGROUND

-----  
S. Name Age Age of Educa- Occupa Income  
No. marriage tion tion  
-----

-----

Will you be liking to get dowry or give dowry to your children?

Yes

No

Whether you have attended any legal campaign already?

Yes

No

If yes, when?

### III ROLE OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

S.No.	Decision	Decision taking by		
		Male	Female	Both
1.	Budgeting			
2.	Deciding daily menu			
3.	Buying new clothes			
4.	Actual purchase of provisions and other materials			
5.	elaborating functions			
6.	Planning for leisure time			
7.	Educating the children			
8.	Fulfilling Sole obligation			

### IV EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

S.No.	Aspects	Decision taking by		
		Male	Female	Both
1.	Getting equal share in family			
2.	Offering educational opportunities			
3.	Undertaking gainful employment			
4.	Getting equal share in family clothing			
5.	Fulfilling individuals need			
6.	Giving importance in the family functions			
7.	Giving medical care			

V Do the female Number's in youth family have any of the following oppression?

1. Quarrel between husband and wife
  2. Desertion
  3. Adjustment problems in joint family
  4. Property litigations
  5. Dowry
  6. Early widowhood
  7. Divorce
  8. Murder
  9. Prostitution
  10. Dependence in old age
  11. Destitution
- 

VI 1. Do you have any family based problem now?

Yes

No

2. What do you think as the reason for this problem?
3. Now, how do you manage the problem?
4. Mention the means of finding collusion for the problem
  1. Consulting elderly relative
  2. Local Nyaya Panchayat
  3. Consulting opinion leaders in the community
  4. Filing cases in courts
  5. Mobile court
  6. Referring to police
  7. Others specify

VII Do you know the legal concessions for women?

Yes No

If yes, what are they?

1. Have you been to court before for any reason?

Yes No

2. What is your opinion regarding "equal rights to women"

a) State factory b) Not satisfactory

c) Essential d) Not needed

VIII 1. What you think the right age for marriage?

For boys:

For girls:

2. Do you know the legal age of marriage for boys and girls?

Female	16	Male	18
	28		30
	20		25

IX 1. Do you know that women have equal rights in the properties?

2. Have you got your share of properties from your parents?

Yes No

If no, reason

X 1. Do you welcome female children?

Yes No

2. Are you treating your male and female children alike?

Yes No

XI 1. Will you liking to get dowry or will be giving dowry to your children?

Yes No

XII 1. What is your opinion about legal awareness?

a) present is satisfactory and useful

b) Not satisfied more knowledge is needed

c) Essential

2. Have you participated in any legal awareness campaign earlier? Who had conducted it?

Yes No

a) Government b) Private institution c) A.D.U

3. Do you think that such legal awareness campaign are useful or not?

Yes No

4. What world you like to know from such legal awareness campaign?

1. Rights of women

2. Property rights

3. Children's custody

4. Laws for better living

APPINDEX II

QUESTIONNAIRE TO FIND OUT THE KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF WOMEN  
BEFORE AND AFTER CAMPAIGN ABOUT LEGAL PROBLEMS  
AND THE PROVISIONS TO SOLVE THEM

1. Women do not receive equal wages for equal work  
Yes                      No
2. Women can acquire leadership position  
Yes                      No
3. Getting dowry as well as giving dowry is illegal  
Yes                      No
4. Girls should get married only after 20 years  
Yes                      No
5. Governmental provisions exists for the economic  
independence of widow  
Yes                      No
6. Child marriage act exists to give new life to the  
affected  
Yes                      No
7. Widow re marriage act exists to give new life to the  
affected  
Yes                      No
8. Rape is legally punishable  
Yes                      No
9. Free legal aid committee is for the poor  
Yes                      No
10. Family counselling centre is for the guidance and  
amicable settlement  
Yes                      No