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NEW DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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PREFACE

Empowerment is a concept that has become popular in recent times to describe an enabling process for socially marginalized persons and groups to gain advantage and opportunities otherwise non-available to them. By means of empowerment people do get control over their lives by way of awareness which helps in exercising greater control. The Empowerment renders people in a position where they can do what they want to do. It also energizes people psychologically to accomplish their goals. From institutional point of view the right environment is set through the process of empowerment and such circumstances are created as help people use their faculties and potential. In order to achieve empowerment the women should have access to those modes and mediums by means of which they can express their self actualization.

The empowerment of women means their all round development that is, physical, emotional, social and economical. For that purpose the women should have enough access to all this to meet their needs, their own survival, as well as survival of their family and the community at large so that they can live with dignity and work in a safe and caring environment which allows their growth and holistic development. The empowerment of women means that they should be in a position to take decisions about their lives themselves, their children and family and must also have a role in community decisions so that there is respect for women's right to personhood, bodily integrity, their reproductive rights, social, economic and political rights and respect for their work and contribution to the family and society: and that there should be no fear of social and sexual violence against women so that the women should feel a sense of acceptance and belonging and their right to home and children as guardian is respected.

Women in India have always had a raw deal in social economic, political and educational opportunities. In order to achieve sustainable development and build a balanced society, we have to make gender equality a national agenda. While the Indian constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and guarantees equal rights for men and women, Indian women are still waiting anxiously for their dreams of equality to be translated into reality. Political power is perhaps the strongest tool to eradicate inequality. The

pending constitution amendment bill that ensure 33% reservation for women in all the legislative bodies including the Lok Sabha, has resulted in a unique situation while the reservation at panchayat level is implemented in all states.

Empowerment would become more relevant, if women are educated, better informed and can take rational decisions. Education is the foundation of women's empowerment. The greatest single factor that can incredibly improve the status of women in any society is education. It enables them not only to gain knowledge about the world outside their hearth and home, but also helps them to get status, positive self-esteem and self-confidence, necessary courage and strength to face the challenges in life. It also facilitates them to procure jobs and supplement the income of the family and achieve social status. Educated women can play an equally important role as men in nation building. The education of a woman is the education of a family and the nation and without education of women the development of country cannot reach its zenith.

Chapter 1 gives an introduction about women education and its related concepts and women education. Chapter 2 talks about how education could leave an impact on women's empowerment. Chapter 3 Supports the role of higher education in women Empowerment. Chapter 4 is showing role of women education in women entrepreneurship. Chapter 5 Conclusion of whole book with summary notes.

Dr. Hetal J. Mehta

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1

INTRODUCTION

Education is believed to be the most powerful and dynamic instrument for social, economic, political scientific and technological development of nations. As emphasized by **Woodhall (1970)** education is universally recognized as form of investment in human capital, which in turn yields economic benefits and contributes to a country's future wealth by increasing the productive capacity of its people. The Higher institutions had historically been a place where the society looked up to for ideas and visions for meeting its perennial need for change. The expected changes should focus on both the political, social and economic life of man. The history of female participation in education during the past decades has been of general interest to the society. **Adegbesan (2007)** Stressed that education influences the lives of participants by increasing their options, enlarging their aspirations and self concepts and even expressing their views about what is just and equitable. Education is supposed to improve the socio-economic positions and enhance earnings of individual and the entire society. **Obanya (2002)** Stressed that education in all its forms and at all levels is expected to enrich the individuals through enculturation, acculturation, intellectual skills, acquisition, affective traits development manipulative and psychomotor skills development as well as inculcation of lifelong learning skills. Thesis supported by **Onokala and Onah (1998)** while **Duyilemi (2007)** noted that the percentage of female in the academic sector is still very low. The co- existence of male and female has been observed to witness inequalities and discrimination against females. **Okiyi (2005)** for example emphasized that females are marginalized, subjugated and discriminated against in the areas of decision making, the economy, politics, and employment and so on.

The **Millennium Development Goals (2000)**, the Education for All (**EFA 1990**), **Dakar (2000)** and the **Beijing platform** have consistently placed emphasis on the importance of education in promoting gender equality and advancement. Educating women is one of the most powerful tools for women's empowerment. Education provides women with knowledge, Skills and self- confidence they need to seek out economic opportunities. While the benefits of educating girls and women for societies, in general, and their families, more specifically, are well-understood, the case for education serving as a catalyst in reducing gender inequality, or benefiting women themselves, is less clearly established. It is often assumed that education enhances women's wellbeing and gives them a greater voice in household decisions, greater autonomy to determine the conditions of their lives. Access to education for females at this junction is very vital so as to attain a higher status that will enable them to occupy higher positions of leadership. A saying goes thus "**educate a female and you educate a nation and if you educate a man you educate only an individual**". The higher the educational background of an individual is: the higher the status, earnings, participation in public activities as well as the efficiency. There is no doubt that the University and colleges will provide access to female education, increase the efficiency of female and build them up as part of national human resources.

Empowerment of women as a basic human right has been recognized through many regional, national and International conferences. Empowerment has been defined in so many ways. **Obanya (2004)** defined empowerment as a continuous and life long process and therefore should be in the form of a systematic set of continuous, continued, sustained, never ending (but ever improving) goal directed efforts. While **Duyilemi (2007)** defined it as a process through which people or communities increase their power or control over their own lives, which may be economic, political or educational. This is because the women are the pivot of their families. Empowerment is a drive towards realization of the innate potentials found in an individual. Thus, the potentials found in the female youth could be enhanced if empowered. It can be concluded that education can serve as a veritable tool for female empowerment and national development. The placement of females in leadership positions has been and will continue to be based on their level of education. Hence, if more females are encouraged to acquire education, the more females we shall have in leadership position in future.

In economic field so long as women remain backward and economically dependent on men, the helpless condition of women cannot be changed. Economic empowerment and independence will only come through proper education and employment of women. Paid employment has always been the main key for upliftment of women. Every working woman deserves fair pay, respectful working conditions, and opportunities to advance. So that, both women and men should be able to share work and family responsibilities with each other. Freedom from discrimination is fundamental. Ensuring workplace fairness is not only the right thing to do, it's good for families, communities, and our economy and Nation. Women need education and training programs which enable them to boost earnings and achieve their aspirations. It's important to ensure that women, especially low earners, can increase their skills in order to get better jobs where they can be paid with family-supporting wages. But once we start analyzing the empowerment issue we need to understand the need of

empowerment especially in developing country like India and for that we need to examine truth, fact and figures related to the pathetic status of women in both ancient and modern India. There are different perceptions towards education. Its definition also varies from person to person. In this study the word education means knowledge, learning or what one has learnt which expand his/ her awareness and change perception toward oneself, family and society. Women can have knowledge in various ways. Yes, academic skills are necessary and have their importance in its own ways. But a person cannot learn without academic skills, it is not mandatory. Again in this research, education is altogether learning either learning by academic skills or learning through experience or guidance. With the help of this learning women's dependency on others might get reduce or they can be self dependent. Learning makes them more confident which is followed by clear awareness or clarity in perception, further followed by better decision making in their day to day matters whether economic, social, political matters or general awareness. Women should have confidence, clarity and awareness in order to know their worth to make their life better which develops their families too. Government is also doing campaigning through Padhega India to Badhega India and Skill India which shows that education and vocational trainings is significant tool. No matter women are literate or not still they can be educated in different ways. Training is an important tactic to educate both literates and illiterates. It is a useful weapon to make women skilled and financially independent. Training brings development. In this research, training means any organized vocational training programs either by local government bodies or NGOS/ SHGs.

Today, it is globally recognized that fulfilling the rights of women and girls is central to development. But if one were to trace the origins of this realization, many threads would lead back to Cairo in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development, here development organizations agreed that important development outcome targets can only be addressed once women's empowerment takes place properly: The empowerment and autonomy of women show us a way for better world in the form of improvement in political, social, economic and health status. All these are important because they constitute an important end in themselves and one that is essential for achieving sustainable development. Gender equalities is key in Empowering women and is not only the right thing to do: It's also smart economics and vital to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity as well as women's empowerment is key for the improvement of women and men's well-being, social justice, and for the achievement of development goals. Over the past decade, gender equality and women's empowerment have been explicitly recognized as key not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development. Since gender inequality and women's disempowerment occur in all the different domains in which women and men interact and function, both concepts are multidimensional; consequently, they give rise to a large number of potential indicators. Indicators of gender equality/inequality are typically designed to compare the status of women and men on particular characteristics of interest; whereas, by definition, indicators of empowerment/ disempowerment tend not to be relative. Instead, indicators of empowerment are designed to measure roles, attitudes, and rights of women and sometimes men. There has always been assumption that there is a connection between

employment and women's empowerment, both in terms of economics and gender relations. This assumption is widely accepted and supported by NGOs, multi-bilateral organizations, by academicians and development workers around the globe.

Economic empowerment constitutes one of the fundamental building blocks in efforts towards the overall empowerment of women. Participation in formal economic activities on terms and conditions which reflect the productive capacity of women, and their control over their own incomes, are some of the important dimensions of economic empowerment. Access to earn income from outside improves women's position within the household substantially, gives them greater control over the distribution of earnings and household resources, and generally improves their status, strength and position in society as well as their own self-esteem. The ability to earn income from outside and to engage in activities other than household oriented ones can lead to significant social change in the long run. Where women are generally denied the ownership of property and control over assets, the ability to earn outside income can become an important instrument for the transformation of gender relations and challenge many traditional modes of social and economic relations. Despite the widespread support for the above assumption that employment leads to women's empowerment, there is very little research that empirically examine the relationship and looking deeper into the employment experience and considering a broader range of empowerment indicators is important to developing a better understanding of the complex relationship between employment and empowerment. This research is set to tests this assumption by looking deeper into these connections and analyze between various aspects of work and indicators of women's empowerment. This study asks the question, what implications does employment have for Indian women's?

A GLANCE AT THE INDIAN WOMEN

There is a common saying in Indian society: '**Chhoriko Janma, Hareko Karma**' (to become a daughter is to have an ill fate). This popular saying indicates the general perception of women by Indian people. The concept of fate, what **Bista (1991)** calls fatalism, is embodied in Indian society and has become a powerful tool for domination and suppression of a particular group of people over others. The Holy Scriptures assert that people's disadvantaged position is due to their bad deeds in their previous life, and that they would have a good fate in their next life if they perform their duties, obediently and honestly. Women are, therefore, expected to perform their assigned duties as effectively and honestly as they can, in order to have a good fate in the next life.

Status of Women in India in Ancient and Modern Era

- **In Ancient India:** The cultural history of India reveals that in India theoretically women enjoyed the status of devi (goddess) as described in many religious texts of Hindus, the majority community in India. Though woman enjoyed the theoretical importance which these texts outline for the wife who was defined as ardhagini (better-half), but in practice she had a subservient position than man. She was regarded as a corporal moveable property with no rights. It was generally seen and believed that women had lower status with reference to power and influence than men in all spheres of life i.e. family, community, religion and politics. Till recently, it was held that up to marriage,

she is protected by her parents, during married life, she is looked after by her husband, and after the death of her husband, she was used to spend remaining years of her life under the roof of her children without any will or desire and rights in the family. Medieval society had been very traditional. Women had little or no role to play within the country at large. Within towns, society would have effectively dictated what jobs a woman could do and her role in a medieval village would have been to support her husband. As well as doing her daily work, whether in a town or village, a woman would have had many responsibilities with regards to her family.

Along-with the invasion of the country by the Muslims, the position of women declined further. The Muslim period witnessed several indicators of low status of women, particularly the Hindu women. As polygamy was a normal practice for these invaders they used to pick up any woman of their choice and kept them in their "harems". . In order to protect them Native Indian men made their women started using 'Purdah', (a veil), which covers the body and even eye contact cannot be established with strangers. The child marriage became a rule to safeguard the chastity and honor of the girls. In many cases the Hindu girls were given in marriage before the age of nine or ten. This clearly indicated that the Hindu girls were denied education. Polygamy and purdah system were practiced during the Muslim period. Women were restrained through the purdah system and the movement outside the home was checked. Thus the purdah system affected their education. It also made women dependent on men for external work India experienced the breakdown of social institutions, the upsetting of traditional political structure and economic depression. All these had effect on the social life, especially among women. Women were not allowed to move freely on their own and which lead to the further deterioration of their status in society. These customs related with women resulted in changed mindset of society and they began to consider a girl as misery and a burden. Thus a vicious circle started for women where they were at the receiving end. All these activities and acts gave rise to some new evils such as Child Marriage, Sati, Jauhar and restriction on girl education.

- **Sati:** Historically, the practice of sati was to be found among many castes and at every social level, chosen by or for both uneducated and the highest ranking women of the times. The common deciding factor was often ownership of wealth or property, since all possessions of the widow devolved to the husband's family upon her death. In a country that shunned widows, sati was considered the highest expression of wifely devotion to a dead husband. It was deemed an act of peerless piety and was said to purge her of all her sins, release her from the cycle of birth and rebirth and ensure salvation for her dead husband and the seven generations that followed her Sati literally means 'a pure and virtuous woman'. It was an obsolete Indian funeral custom where a widow immolated herself on pyre of her husband. A widow was burned either with her tacit consent or most of the times forcefully by her in-laws after the death of her husband. This practice shows a dark and evil side of Hindu society, especially of ancient and medieval India. The practice of Sati or self-immolation by the widow was associated with a kind of virtue. The virtue of this practice was defined by a religious logic that it was inauspicious for widow to live after the death of her husband. It is little wonder that women growing

up in a culture in which they were so little valued as individuals considered it the only way for a good wife to behave. The alternative, anyway, was not appealing. After the death of a husband an Hindi widow was expected to live the life of an ascetic, renouncing all social activities, shaving her head, eating only boiled rice and sleeping on thin coarse matting. A widow who agreed to self-immolate herself at the funeral pyre of her husband was considered to be very virtuous and go straight to heaven and it was also believed she attained to the status of Sati Mata or Sati Goddess. So it was considered good to practice such ritual. We can still find Temples of Sati Mata in some States of India such as in Rajasthan and M P. The unfortunate women who could not commit or were prevented from Sati were doomed to lead the most austere life. Their presences at family public functions were totally forbidden. The widows slogged in joint families, died unwept and unsung. Sati was considered to be the better option than living as a widow. As the plight of widows in Hindu society was even worse. Some of the scriptures like 'Medhatiti' had different views it say that Sati is like committing suicide so one should avoid this.

- **Jauhar:** It is Similar to the custom of Sati but it was a mass suicide. Jauhar was originally the voluntary death on a funeral pyre of the queens and royal womenfolk of defeated Rajput castles in order to avoid capture and consequent molestation. The term is extended to describe the occasional practice of mass suicide carried out in medieval times by Rajput women, or by entire Rajput communities, when the fall of a besieged city was certain. On several occasions when defeat in such an engagement became certain, the Rajput defenders of the fort scripted a final act of heroism that rendered the incident an immortal inspiration and afforded the invaders only an exceedingly hollow, inglorious victory. In such incidents, the ladies of the fort would commit collective self immolation. Wearing their wedding dresses, and holding their young children by the hand, the ladies would commit their chastity to the flames of a massive, collective pyre, thereby escaping molestation and dishonor at the hands of the invading army. As the memorial of their heroic act, the ladies would leave only the imprint of the palm of their right hands on wet clay, which have become objects of veneration.
- **Child Marriage:** Child marriage, known as Bal Vivaha', is believed to have begun during the medieval ages of India. Later child marriage became a widespread cultural practice with various reasons to justify it, and many marriages were performed while the girl was still an infant. After independence, the feudalistic character of the Indian society coupled with caste system gave a major boost to incidences of child marriage, particularly in the rural areas. Castes, which are based on birth and heredity, do not allow two people to marry if they are from different castes. This system was threatened by young people's emotions and desires to marry outside their caste, so out of necessity child marriage was created to ensure the caste system continued. Also parents of a child entering into a child marriage are often poor and use marriage as a way to make their daughter's future better, especially in areas with little economic opportunities. During times of war, parents will often marry off their young child to

protect her from the conflicts raging around her. Some families still use child marriage to build alliances, as they did during the medieval ages. Child marriage created its own share of problems such as increase in birth rate, poor health of women due to repeated child bearing and high mortality rate of women and children.

- **Restriction on Widow Remarriage:** A woman who has lost her husband by death and has not remarried is called a widow. Widows are considered to be a marginalized group in India because they occupy a very low social status in society. Consequently they have to face severe social, economic and cultural deprivations. Widows were considered inauspicious and were not permitted to attend festive occasions, despite many of them being young girls whose marriage had not even been consummated. It was very common for the mother-in-law to taunt her as being responsible for her son's death. The death of the husband was only the beginning of a young woman's problems. She was either expected to commit sati or return to her parents. If she stayed with her husband's family, she had to do all the menial work, was ill treated and not allowed to eat properly. They were not treated as equals and were subjected to a lots of restrictions. They were treated a marginalized segment in India and were supposed to live pious life once their husband died. Consequently they had to face severe social, economic and cultural deprivations even they were not allowed to enter in any celebration as it was considered to be a bad omen. In many parts widows also had to have their head shaved off as a mark of mourning. Any widow remarrying was looked down by the society. This cruelty on widows was also one of the key factors which made the large number of widows to opt for Sati and commit suicide on husband's pyre. In medieval India living as a Hindu widow was no short of a curse.
- **Purdah System:** Purdah or veils were practice of female seclusion prevalent among some Muslim communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as upper-caste Hindus in Northern India, such as the Rajputs. The veil or the 'Purdah' system was widely prevalent in medieval Indian society. Muslim rule of northern India during the Mughal Empire influenced the practice of Hinduism, and the purdah spread to the Hindu upper classes of northern India. During the British colonialism period in India, purdah observance was widespread and strictly-adhered to among the Muslim minority.
- **Female Education:** Women in India have been experiencing different status since the inception of the civilization. Though women form half of the population, yet the masculine principles made the women suffer a lot. They were denied equal opportunities and importance as men. Woman in general in ancient and medieval India had various responsibilities to take care of i.e. looking after the comforts of her husband and children, serving elders, showing compassion to the guests and servants, etc. Though an average woman received a little education she had good knowledge of morals, religious rites and rituals to make her an ideal woman in all respects. However, after 500 B.C, the position of women started to decline. The Islamic invasion played a role in restricting freedom and rights of the women to take formal education. A radical change attended and there was a terrific constraint for women education in India. Reform movements such as Jainism also allowed women to get to religious education but by and large women in India faced confinement and

restrictions. Women education in medieval India weakened further and declined severely with the introduction of Purdah system. Different customs and conventions of diverse religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity further deteriorated the state of women. Literacy of women at that time was looked upon as a disgrace. The idea of providing formal education to female children never came into the minds of parents. A superstitious feeling existed in the majority of the Hindu families that a girl taught to read and write will soon become a widow after marriage. It cannot be denied that the picture of formal education for women was the most unsatisfactory and women received practically no formal learning whatever, except for the little domestic instruction that was available to the girls of the upper and higher class families. Many leaders took several initiatives to make education available to the women of India. The ordered form of women education in India was incorporated in the early centuries of the Christian era.

- **Devadasis:** In India, in the past, the devadasis were a very important functionary of Hindu society. The functions of devadasis were a part of religious services in a long history of temple institution. In India the practices originate and developed during the early medieval period. There are a large number of inscriptions which give us a lot of information regarding the existence of the institution of the devadasis. Devadasi system is a religious practice in parts of southern India, whereby parents marry a daughter to a deity or a temple. The marriage usually occurs before the girl reaches puberty. In these system girls were dedicated to temples in the name of gods and goddesses. The girls were meant like servant of God which is termed as 'Devadasis'. The functions of devadasis were a part of religious services in a long history of temple institution. These Devadasis needed to live life of celibacy. Their requirements were managed and fulfilled by the grants received by the temples. Their main duty was to perform worship along with singing and dancing for God. Even Many Rulers used to invite temple devdasis to perform at their court for the pleasure of courtiers and their guests. Thus some Devadasis converted to Rajadasis (Palace Dancers) prevalent in some tribes of South India like the Yellamma cult. During the colonial times, Many social reformers started working towards removal practice of the Devdasi system on the grounds that it supported prostitution.

The Indian social system has strong parallels with the elements of feudalism. Segregation of men and women is based on defining individuals' caste-specific roles and responsibilities, and prescribing and controlling their gender-specific behaviours. Men, historically, are considered socially, as well as spiritually, superior to women, and have maintained their supremacy through control over the economy and politics (**Sangraula, 2002a**). Women's roles are defined in such a way as to always make them subservient to men with their roles changing little from the vedic period. From the vedic period, women were confined within the boundaries of the household and expected to perform assigned household chores, please others, be obedient, honest and faithful, and devote themselves to their husbands (**Bhargava, 1989**). The position of women in India can be reflection of the scripts in Manu smriti itself. For example the Manu smriti, the collection of ancient Hindu codes, refers to women as objects, the sole property of their husbands, required to produce progeny, manage

households, perform domestic activities and please their family members. The following stanzas of Manu smriti prescribe women's duties and dependency in ancient times, which are still prevalent in Indian society:

- Men must make their women dependent day and night and keep under their own control those who are attached to sensory objects.
- Her father guards her in childhood, her husband guards her in youth and her sons guard her in old age if her husband is dead.
- By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house.
- Women are created to bear children and men to keep them in line.
- No man can completely guard women by force but they can be guarded by employing them in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in keeping everything clean, in fulfilment of religious duties, in preparing food and in looking after the household. Such vedic assumptions and laws not only prevented the realisation of women's educational rights but also restricted them from exposure to the outside world and subjected them to a view of what they 'ought to be' rather than developing their own selves (**Subedi, 1997**). The greatest Indian poet Bhanu Bhakta Acharya (1814-1868), for example, writes in his famous creation 'Badhu Shikha' (education for a bride):
- Women should never laugh; only whores do so. Even if they are not whores, they would destroy all the household chores.

Such assumptions lead Indian women to be dominated, helpless and live sad and unfulfilled lives (**Bhusal 2008**). These and similar traditional values are still deeply rooted in Indian society, with women occupying a subordinate place in their households and in the society. In Indian society, women are expected to carry out domestic duties, even if they are educated, and men usually work outside the home. The majority of Indian women are housewives, except a very few, who are engaged in teaching, government service, and private sector jobs. Cooking, cleaning houses and cattle sheds, washing clothes, fetching water, collecting fodder for cattle, collecting firewood etc., are the main responsibilities of women, especially of the daughters-in-law in rural communities. Along with these chores they make a huge contribution to planting and harvesting crops. They have little or no time to rest from their domestic and agricultural duties. Despite this, they are considered economically inactive, because their labour has no immediate monetary benefit. Thus, it is appropriate to say that Indian society is highly patriarchal. Traditional social values strongly favour males over females. Women are less valued and are accorded a subordinate position to their male family members across various cultural, religious, caste and ethnic groups. There have been some positive changes in women's lives, over the last few decades, in terms of their increased educational attainment and social mobility. However, women are still confined within traditionally prescribed and socially accepted domestic roles, and are deprived culturally, economically, legally, politically and educationally. Women usually have poor economic and health status, poor appetite, less freedom to work independently and are not allowed to make decisions on their own behalf. They have limited access to resources, education and

information. Women usually suffer from domination, discrimination and exploitation by their male counterparts. However, the degree of domination and exploitation may vary from one particular caste/ethnic group to the other. Women belonging to janajati-ethnic groups are less restricted than Indo-Aryan Hindu women regarding their mobility, marriage/remarriage options, and, most importantly, income and earning opportunities. The Hindu women, traditionally, have fewer social and economic options and social discrimination against women is felt to be more severe among the Terai women in general.

Marriage is one of the important and almost compulsory events in the life of Indian women, without which they are considered to be incomplete. Marriage patterns and gender relations are influenced by Brahminical ideas and patriarchy. Women traditionally join their husband's households after their marriage, whereas sons are entitled to live with their parents, inheriting land and property. Due to such practices, parental priority goes on the education of their sons, who are entitled to stay with them and look after them during their old age, rather than the daughters who are destined to move from their native homes. Marriage is exogamous, but occurs within the same caste, and parents usually organise their children's marriages. Marriage relations bind the relationship between two families. Therefore, inter-caste marriage is highly discouraged. Women's chastity is an important issue of concern in Indian society, and parents usually prefer to organise their daughters' marriage as soon as they reach puberty, in order to avoid them having premarital sexual affairs (**ADB**). It may be the reason why in most communities, Indian girls are married earlier than the official minimum age requirement (18 years). Their premature marriage may not only prevent them from receiving educational rights, but it also leads to poor maternal and child health.

Educational access and participation of Indian girls and women cannot be studied in isolation from the caste structure, which defines the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in their households and in society. In other words, the gender system, which shapes the particular meanings of male and female actions and behaviours, and allocates their respective places in the social system, is embedded within the caste system. It is, therefore, essential to understand the caste system, as it is the ideological framework underpinning all social relations. Remarriage and widow-marriage is common among the Janajatiethnic groups. In some ethnic groups of the mountain region, the practice of polyandry also exists. But, the Hindus, particularly the 'high castes', have a system of monogamy for women and polygamy for men. Women are highly discouraged from remarriage and widow-marriage is almost unacceptable. There is also a close connection between marriage and women's caste. Brahmin women get their full Brahminism only after they get married. Inter-caste marriage lowers a woman's caste position to her husband's caste if her husband is from a lower caste than her own. However, it does not raise it if her husband's caste is higher. She will retain her own caste position. A Brahmin woman will lose her caste position if she has a second marriage, even if it occurs within the same caste, but a man retains his caste position irrespective of how many times and regardless of their wives' caste. But, he would become an outcast if he marries a Dalit woman. Low-caste women are less restricted in remarriage, and the girls are also allowed to choose their marriage partners. As Indian society is strongly patriarchal, males are highly valued. What is written in Atharva Veda, 'let a female child be born somewhere else; let a male child be born here' is also reflected in Indian society. The

Indian sayings 'dhihohos, chhorohos' (let it be late but let it be born a son); 'daughters are others' property'; 'daughters are guests for a few days', 'a party of mutton goes on a son's birth but a pumpkin on that of a daughter's all show the differential attitudes towards male and female children.

Childbearing is also a compulsion for a married woman. A barren woman is highly ostracised. A woman may have a co-wife if she is unable to bear a child, even if this is due to a weakness on her husband's side. A mother of daughters may also get a co-wife and also be ostracised by family members for being unable to bear a son. A mother of a son is highly regarded in her family and relatives, even among urban elites. Sons are considered to be the 'earning hands' of parents, as well as support during their old age; they are entitled to stay with their parents and inherit their property, while the daughters are sent away in marriage. Moreover, it is only the son who has right to perform funeral rituals for his parents, so the son is usually considered to open the door to the heaven. Indian wives generally continue bearing children until they have a son. Parents do not give preference to their daughters' education, nor are the girls themselves attracted towards it, because their future role of daughters-in-law, wives and mothers, do not require an education at all. Their roles demand only physical strength and tolerance. Thus, girls are taught to perform their domestic duties and are trained to be modest, obedient, faithful, loyal, tolerant and hard working, but also to accept their subordinate roles in the family and in society from an early age. Due to these, and other similar social and cultural values, girls have limited access to, and low participation in, education.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MODERN INDIA

The status of Indian women had been subject to many great changes which took place in the past few millennia. With a severe decline in their status and life from the ancient to medieval times, to the upliftment and promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. There was a time when women were just kitchen keepers and housekeepers in the Indian society. Gradually women began to get educated, even highly educated and a stage came when some of them came out on the social and political field to rub shoulder with the men folk in these fields. The freedom struggle of India was the opening up of the new horizon for womanhood in India. In modern India, women have adorned high offices including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, etc. In the modern time, women are given freedom & right such as freedom of expression & equality as well as the right to be educated. They're enjoying the ladies first facility in different fields. However, some problems such as dowry, domestic violence, sex selective abortion, female infanticide are still prevalent. In the Population Census of 2011 published on <http://www.census2011.co.in> sex ratio was 940 females per 1000 of males. Some Strict measures needs to be brought in to take care of these issues. Development of our country depends on the empowerment of women. A man and a woman are like two wheels of a cart. The cart can move fast and safely too, when both of them pull it in the same direction and with equal strength. Hence no developing country or society can afford to ignore the role of women, if they are to progress. There are many problems which women in India have to go through daily, some of which are:

- **Malnutrition** defined as ill health caused by deficiencies of protein, calories, and minerals and vitamins interacting with infections, other poor health and social conditions, saps the strength and well-being of millions of women. Malnutrition is devastating and the single biggest contributor to women's death. There has unfortunately been no change in women's nutritional status and malnutrition rates remain unacceptably high. Around 46 percent of girls under five are stunted, 21 percent are underweight, and four percent are wasted. One of the major causes of mal nutrition among Indian women is gender inequality. In many parts of India, especially rural India, women are the ones who feed every member of the family first then eat last and least. This also means they get to eat whatever is left over after the men folk are satiated. This becomes one of the causes as most of the times their food intake does not contain required nutritional value for maintaining healthy body. In villages, many times women do not get to eat a whole meal due to poverty. The UNICEF report of 1996 clearly states India and other South Asian countries are doing poorly overall in areas of adequate nutrition. Contributing to this problem is the perceived low status of women and the lack of nutritional knowledge, which adds to the high prevalence of underweight children in the region. There are two major consequences of nutritional deficiency for women first one is to reach at a stage of anemic and secondly they could never achieve their full growth, which leads to an unending cycle of undergrowth as malnourished women generally not able to give birth to healthy child.
- **Poor Health:** Malnutrition is a major health problem, especially in developing countries. Water supply, sanitation and hygiene, given their direct impact on infectious disease, especially diarrhea, are important for preventing malnutrition. Both malnutrition and inadequate water supply and sanitation are linked to poverty. Malnutrition leads to poor health of women. The women of India are prejudiced from birth itself. They are not breastfed for long. For the desire of a Boy Child they get pregnant as soon as possible which decreases the caring period to the girl child, whereas male members always get adequate care and nutrition. Once born, daughters are prone to being fed lesser than boy child and male person, especially when there are multiple girls in a particular house. Women's health in India can be examined in terms of multiple indicators, which vary by geography, socioeconomic standing and culture. To adequately improve the health of women in India multiple dimensions of wellbeing must be analyzed in relation to global health averages and also in comparison to men in India. In most of the areas Women are not given the right for free movement which means they cannot go move outside their home o n their own. If they want some male person would accompany them or at least they have to take permission of male member of the family. This result many times women miss visiting doctors even when they should, which also adds to their poor health.
- **Maternal Mortality:** Maternal Mortality is the death of a woman while she is pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration, from any cause or aggravated by the pregnancy or but not from accidental or incidental causes. India has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. As females are not provided

with proper attention, which results in the malnutrition and then they also get married at an early age which leads to pregnancies at younger age even when her body is not ready to bear the burden of a child. Analysis of the important causes of maternal mortality reveals that most of them are preventable. This makes the persistence of a high MMR for last 50 years more shameful, and indicates that we have not been able to establish appropriate maternal health services especially in the rural areas. An improved, accountable health care system at primary level is essential for decreasing maternal mortality to the desired level. Adolescent mothers are less likely to seek medical attention as a result the rates of infant and maternal mortality are higher in these cases.

- **Lack of Education** There are several deep rooted social, religious and cultural norms that serve to exclude women from receiving an education and thereby, occupying a position of power and authority. Lack of education has an impact throughout a woman's life cycle. Even before birth, female fetuses are killed in countries like India and China where the birth of a baby girl is not preferred. This is because a girl would lead to a greater financial burden on the family to get her married and virtually no income. In the middle years, girls face another type of discrimination. They lack access to education. Many of them have to help out with the household work and take care of their siblings instead of going to school or playing. Although the rates of girls' primary education have improved in most countries, only 43 per cent of girls in the developing nations like India attend secondary school. In India women's education never got its due share of attention. From medieval India women were debarred from the education and remained confined to household work only. Although scenario in urban areas has got changed a lot by time and women are now opting even for higher education but majority of Indian population residing in villages still live with old values of medieval times. The gender gap in education in developing nations is extremely problematic. One of the main reasons for not allowing girls to go to school is the poor economic condition. Another reason is distance of school from home is too far. In Indian society virginity and purity is given utmost importance during marriage and people are afraid to send their girl child to far off schools where male teacher teach them along with boys. So for security purpose people want girl child to remain at house only.

Lack of education limits many prospects for women, decreases family income, reduces health, puts women and girls at risk of exploitation this also leads to poor economic advancement of entire Nation. Young girls who are exposed to secondary level may be more likely to perceive that they have greater autonomy. They may have a better ability to make decisions, to move around freely, to earn money, and to have control over their expenditure. They might also have a larger role in the decision about the choice of a husband and the marriage timing. Also within marriage, they may have better relation with their husbands, particularly in relation to childbearing decisions. Education is the only way that can break this intergenerational cycle of oppression, abuse, and poverty of women is more aware of their rights. They are likely to have fewer and healthier children. Women education has a great power to transform life of women and societies at large.

- **Mistreatment:** In India violence against women is a common evil not just in remote parts but even in town and metros women bear the brunt. Mistreatment against women is commonplace, often subtle and is perpetrated in many different ways. A man who batters and abuses a woman does it to gain and maintain control over her. Physical violence is not the only form of domestic abuse that battered women experience. An abusive man will also use the following tactics to exert his power over her:
 - (a) **Dominance:** Abusive men need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question.
 - (b) **Humiliation:** An abuser will do everything he can to make you feel bad about yourself, or defective in some way. After all, if you believe you're worthless and that no one else will want you, you're less likely to leave.
 - (c) **Isolation:** In order to increase your dependence on him, an abusive man will cut you off from the outside world. He may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school.
 - (d) **Threats:** Abusive men commonly use threats to keep their victims from leaving or to scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets.
 - (e) **Intimidation:** Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making threatening looks or gestures, violent yelling, smashing things in front of you, destroying property, hurting your pets, or putting weapons on display.
 - (f) **Denial and blame:** Abusers are very good at making excuses for their behaviour. They will blame their abuse and violence on a bad childhood, a bad day, and even on the victims of their abuse. Your abuser may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred.
- **Overworked:** Thinking about doing household chores may not seem like a lot of work because we find it unskilful but if we consider it properly we will find women work for more number of hours than men but their work is hardly recognized as it is an unpaid labour. Let's remember that unpaid labour is work too and we need to give it proper consideration. Not only do women spend many more hours on household chores than men, but they also tend to do the least pleasant tasks, most of which are relentless, obligatory, and performed in isolation.
- **Lack of Power:** In India a most of the women do not have power to take decisions independently not even related to their own life. Women belong to a class which is powerless. Any power they have is simply proxy power given them by a group of men. This is nature, this is reality. Because women are incapable of effective violence, they have no power in their own right any power they may display is simply proxy power given them by men. They have to seek permission of male members for each and every issue. They are not allowed to speak up in any important household matters and not in matters of their own marriage.

- **Marriage:** In India marriages are mostly arranged that to by the liking and decision of family members. The scenario in villages is even worse where girl is not even consulted about groom but is told to marry a groom whom her family chooses. The decision for a young girl to marry is most often made by her parents or the community. Social and gender norms, cultural beliefs and economic situations all contribute to the pressure put on girls to marry at a young age. Some parents believe that, by marrying their daughter at an early age, they are helping her to fulfill her main societal function that of wife and mother. They may also believe that they are providing her with protection by limiting sexual relations to only one partner, and by ensuring some kind of financial stability for both the daughter and the family. There is mainly a bias attitude towards men as they are considered superior in marital relationships. The iniquitous dowry system has been spread to all communities as dowry is sometimes used as a means to climb the social ladder, to achieve economic security, and to accumulate material wealth.
- **Dowry:** One of India's more extreme evidence of abuse is seen through dowry practices, commonly found throughout India amongst Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Dowry transactions go way back in Indian culture. Traditionally, dowry customs were an act of love as parents would gift their daughter with a dowry when she entered marriage. These gifts range from money to real estate and entitled a woman to be a full member of the husband's family, allowing her to enter the marital home with her own wealth. It was seen as a substitute for inheritance, offering some security to the wife and was a gift from her family. It is a custom that is prevalent in all the sections of our society in one form or the other. Courts are flooded with dowry death cases which are caused by dowry harassment by husband and in laws. In ancient times women were given 'Stridhan' when they departed from the house of their parents it was voluntary. These dowry demands do not end at the marriage agreement, they can go on for many years. The birth of children often becomes an occasion for the husband's family to command more money. The inability of the bride's family to comply often leads with the daughter-in-law being abused, killed, or led to commit suicide to make way for a new financial transaction when the husband remarries.
- **Female infanticide feticide:** Female infanticide in India has a long history. Dowry system, Poverty, births to unmarried women, famine, deformed infants, lack of support services and maternal illnesses such as postpartum depression are among the causes. Female infanticide is the intentional killing of infant girls. In addition to the active methods undertaken to eliminate baby girls soon after birth, neglect and discrimination leading to death and sex-selective abortion are also means by which many female children die each year Preference for sons over daughters is cited as the number one reason for sex selective abortions in India. One reason for desiring sons, common to all the patrilineal societies of the world, is the transmission of family name and propertyll (May & Herr, Populations Studies, 1968). It is expected that marrying a son will extend the family lineage. May you be the mother of 100 sonsll is still a common blessing for a pregnant woman. According to the Hindu religion, a son or a male relative must fulfill the last rites for a parent. Most people think it worthwhile to

spend money on a boy who is expected to contribute to the family even after marriage, both financially and emotionally, by supporting aging parents. Women were supposed to be at home and in some areas of India are still considered to be a curse by some strata of society their birth was taken as a burden. Female infanticide is a major cause of concern in India. It has been argued that the "low status" in which women are viewed in patriarchal societies creates a bias against females.

- **Divorce:** The divorce rate in India is not so high compared to western countries that are because in India, there is a cultural, religious, and social stigma associated with divorce. Community disapproval is stronger for divorced women. Studies of divorced and deserted women show that a majority of them experience serious financial problems, and as a result, many of them are unable to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their children. A woman without a husband cannot be accommodated over the long term within the framework of the joint family structure without considerable compromise and tension. In some communities like Muslims women do not have the right to divorce but whatever a woman earns or is given before and during the course of the marriage remains her property if the marriage ends. In Hindu Society woman is entitled to claim permanent alimony and maintenance if the marriage comes to an end.

MEANING AND DEFINITION OF EMPOWERMENT

What is Empowerment? Many use the term empowerment without understanding what it really means. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives the community and society they live in, by acting on issues they define as important. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. At the core of this process there are actions which help to build individual and collective assets that lead to improve the efficiency and betterment of life. Empowerment suggests a sense of control over one's life in personality, self-esteem, and motivation. It expresses itself at the level of feelings, ideas about self worth and at the level of being able to make a difference in the world around us. Empowerment can be best described as a process which will provide advice, counsel and orientation programs. Through this process, individuals, organizations or groups, can become aware of the power dynamics at work, develop skills and the capacity to gain proper control over their lives and support the empowerment of others in their community. The World Bank (2002) defines empowerment as the —expansion of the assets and capabilities to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Kabeer's popular definition adds a layer of complexity to the simple component of control and states that empowerment is the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where the ability was previously denied to them. According to Malhotra et al. (2002), Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment is particularly relevant because it contains both the element of process and the elements of human agency and choice, with empowerment implying choices made from the vantage point of real alternatives and without punishingly at higher costs. Basu and Koolwal (2005) add that choice must be extended to the ability to choose not to do something without fearing the consequences.

There is a heavy reliance in the empowerment literature on the concept of choice and agency. Alsop and Heinsohn's Empowerment that is, enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes is an increasingly familiar term within the World Bank and many other development agencies. Targeting practitioners engaged in the analysis of projects and policies that have empowerment components and provide guidance on how to unpack the concept in order to measure related processes and outcomes.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND ITS DISCONTENT

Although defined in feminist literature in the 1970s, empowerment became popular in the development field in the 1980s. Many feminists bemoan this popularization as they see a concept meant to enable women individually and collectively to transform unequal power relations and unjust structures and institutions, being reduced to an instrumental concept that focuses on individual rights. As women noted at a parallel event at the 54th CSW meetings, empowerment has become "em-ment" a de-politicized notion of empowerment. In particular, feminists are wary of its use in neo-liberal policies and in mainstream development agencies as a way to mobilize women through self-help groups as better economic and social change agents, filling the vacuum left by the retreat of state services and the economic crisis. Empowerment thus becomes about mobilizing grassroots women, encouraging their participation and giving them voice in predetermined development strategies without giving them the power to challenge existing narratives of development and to articulate new alternatives. Given this domestication of the concept, feminists seek to rescue it and bring back the power imbedded in it, so women can collectively seek to transform themselves, their families, communities, state, and international institutions. At the same time, feminists recognize the need to quantify empowerment through measurable indicators so it can be used to demand equality and make state and non-state actors accountable for gender-justice. Hence, as **Malhotra et al. (2002)** note, there is a great deal of consensus around the concept and its measurement.

The Concept of Women Empowerment

Most current definitions of empowerment in the development literature draw upon articulation of "Development as Freedom" where development is about expanding people's choices. For example, **Bennett (2002)** defines empowerment about expanding people's choices. For example, **Bennett (2002)** defines empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." **Sen (1993)** defines empowerment as "altering relations of power...which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and well-being." For **Batliwala (1994)** empowerment is "how much influence people have over external actions that matter to their welfare." **Kabeer (2001)** defines it as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." Hence, **control over resources** (physical, human, intellectual, financial, Kabeer 1994) **and ideology** (values, beliefs, and attitudes, Batliwala 1994) is one of the most important dimensions of most definitions. The second dimension shared by most definitions is **women's agency**, i.e., that women themselves have a right to make choices and should be involved in

determining which choices make the most sense for them and their families (e.g., Kabeer 1999). Third, since empowerment implies a move from being without power to having power, most definitions also imply that it is a **process** that involves change over time. Finally, empowerment is also understood as **outcome**, such as improvement in education, health, and economic and political participation. Very often, however, women's empowerment and gender equality are used interchangeably. While they are related, they are not the same. Gender equality is about women's status relative to men while women's empowerment is about women's ability in an absolute sense - to exercise control, power, and choice over practical and strategic decisions.

Despite this consensus, there are differences in emphasis. Those who draw upon Amartya Sen, highlight capabilities of individuals and the social constraints that prevent them from making the strategic choices that would enhance their freedom. Very often this results in policies and programs that focus on the individual level and emphasize entrepreneurship and self-reliance as opposed to collective efforts to transform power structures. Thinking of empowering women, rather than women's empowerment, to avoid this slippage to the individual level, which recognizes both that women need to be active agents of change but also that for social transformation other actors are necessary beyond those who are disenfranchised and marginalized. Feminists focus on the structural and collective nature of empowerment by conceptualizing empowerment as power within (or consociation), power with others, and power to transform unjust social structures and institutions (e.g. Rowland 1997). This recognizes that women have a right to determine their lives without making them responsible for their own empowerment. It therefore focuses on the collective as well as the structural nature of inequality. Despite these differences, all analysts understand empowerment as a multidimensional and multilevel concept.

Constraints and Policy Measures to Women Empowerment in India

India's total population is about 23 million. Out of this about fifty percent is Women. In India, like other developing countries, the state of women is not satisfactory. Male dominated family system provides very little scope for the female to assert their identity. They are marginalized from economic and social opportunities due to illiteracy, poverty and conservative social taboos. But things are changing slowly but steadily. Women in development have been accepted since the sixth plan as a national policy. After the restoration of multi party system in 1990 policy makers are giving due importance to uplift the status of women. A separate ministry, to look after the welfare of the women, has been established. Especially after the World Women Conference held in Beijing in 1995, the question of women empowerment has been brought into the limelight. His Majesty's Government of India is very much committed to fulfill the commitment made in this Conference. In fact, the ninth five-year plan, which is currently under operation, reflects the government's commitment to bring women force in the development process of the nation as well as empower them. The main focus of the ninth plan is on integrating woman into the development mainstream through gender equality and women's empowerment increasing women's participation in every sector giving a concrete shape to gender concept in the process of formulation, implementation and evaluation of sectoral policies and programs accelerating the process of multi-faceted development of women's empowerment by uplifting

their social, economic, political and legal status protecting and promoting the rights and interests of women gradually eliminating violence, exploitation, injustice and atrocities being committed against women. For the women's empowerment following steps are taken:

1. Efforts are being made for the institutional development and coordination among various sectors along with the adoption of suitable indicators to examine women's participation in national development. Monitoring and evaluation of women's development programs are being made effective.
2. To narrow down social economic discrimination, the measure of special privileges and reservation are taken. Not only is that enough care also given to protect women from violence.
3. Special measures are taken to improve their health as well as to provide them education. Various steps are taken to make them competent for employment and self-reliant in income generation.
4. Efforts are made to reserve certain percentage of seats in the Public Service Examination for the women so as to have their say in the Public Administration.
5. Various efforts are underway to enhance women's role in agricultural sector.
6. Production Credit to women are being expanded through Micro Credit for Women (MCW), Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW), Small Farmer Development Program (SFDP), Grameen Bank, Agricultural Development Bank and other bank.
7. Provisions are being made to expend at least 10% of the grant allocated to each Village Development Committee (VDC) in the education sector for women's education.
8. Various mass awareness programs aimed at improving women's reproductive health through the efforts of various agencies are in operation.
9. Government is formulating a policy which states that at least 25% participants in employment-oriented training programs should be chosen from among women and 20% employment opportunities should be reserved for women.
10. Institutional loan facilities are being made available to women so as to help them engage in self-employment and also conduct various entrepreneurial activities on their own.
11. Efforts are being made for the egalitarian rules and regulations and the establishment of the family court.
12. Public Service Commission, Ministry of General Administration and the sectoral Ministries are being mobilised to reduce economic and social disparities existing between men and women.
13. Time saving machines for household and agricultural works is being marketed and publicized.
14. Local levels Raising consciousness about gender equality at political, administrative and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare is being made capable enough to address their problems.
15. Women's participation in various socio-economic activities are being increased.

At this point, it will be fruitful to evaluate the state of Indian women in twelve areas of Beijing Agenda. On the whole, it provides us with their present status, constraints to their development and policy measures adopted by the Government of India. India is one of the 181 nations, which took part in the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995. Although India is always committed to gender equality and women empowerment, she is still suffering from this problem. Recently concluded one meeting about the status of women disclosed that Indian women stand at 99th position among 106 nations.

Existing Knowledge and Knowledge Gap

Most of the studies in the area of women in Education found that as higher the education of women, as greater their participation in the decision making process and a progressive opinion on different issues. Kantamma (1990), Vasuki (1990), Patil (1998), Fatima (1998) and others have seen the reasons that there is a clear association between education and occupational aspiration, with women viewing their occupation as utilization of education and achievement of economic self dependence. Rajvanshi (1991) suggested that studies in the area of women empowerment were basically concentrated to microcredit participation and women's contribution to household, role in farm management, domestic and resource allocation decisions and women's involvement in market activities funded by loans.

As women's education has become one of the Key development objectives in the nineties, it is crucial to examine the assumptions under which policies, programmes and projects are formulated towards this goal. More recently the concept of empowerment has been tied to the range of activities undertaken by and for women in different areas, education included. There exists a related question with all these areas, i.e., for what and whose perspective are we going to evaluate under such assumptions and its empowering outcomes? Many international seminars and conferences had been conducted precisely to look into these issues by gathering women educators and researchers from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to collectively examine the different education practices and their theoretical implications for empowering women. It was evident from the seminars and conferences that there were similarities in the conditions of Women's education in the different parts of the world e.g., Stereotyping in the formal educational system which further reinforces the traditional gender roles. On the other hand, it was also pointed out that one should not gloss over the differences of the conditions of women as a result of specific economic, Political or socio-Cultural factors. It was clear from the conferences that it is critical that the women's perspective be taken as the reference point for evaluating the effectiveness of educational policies, Programmes and projects. As such a women's perspective is continuously evolving, it is imperative that this be clarified at certain points so that the different agents involved are able to examine and assess activities as well as contribute to the further refining of such a framework through the analysis of different practices.

In the context, where the governments and the development agencies are emphasizing to increase the literacy rates, and also presume that literacy and education has an empowering affect on women, this study challenges the argument that the enrolment of Women in education can help in capacity building, employability conditions, better control over their lives and overall empower the women learners. The attainment of Education has

potential to make transformative effects in the lives of women learners. This study measures the changes in perspectives of Women in education in India towards women empowerment after attaining education. The lack of studies on literacy and empowerment in India, and also the study of Women empowerment from the perspectives of Women themselves make this study interesting, and also important. The break of age old hierarchy is not only a political strand but also has a strong socio-cultural interface. It speaks of a new India with broader footings standing on the pillars of equality, liberty and fraternity. India is now at a crossroads and is drafting a new constitution. There are some core issues and concerns of women that require constitutional guarantee. The right of the mother to confer citizenship on her children, equal ownership of property rights, and equal participation of women at all decision-making levels and special provisions to eliminate all forms of violence against women should be incorporated and ensured in the new constitution.

It is but obvious that when a revolution sets in the intelligentsia plays a vital role in the transformation that comes as an aftermath to the change in power. Thus in this path breaking changes the women specially those in education will both be affected and at the same time affect the decisions that will change the outlook of Indian women and present a transformed picture to the world compared to its former suffocated subdued bleak one. The changing time provides a rare opportunity to the researcher to capitulate on the changing matrix of the country and to study the changing perspective of women in education towards women empowerment. Hence, the researcher decided to conduct this study.

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

There are Innumerable benefits of women empowerment. It improves the educational level of our country. Only if is equally implemented among the women of rural areas also. With the improvement of educational level literacy rate strengthen simultaneously. It creates an educational society as well as encourages employment rate. In this era 50% population of the country are women but their contribution at work places are 16-18 % only. Empowerment of women promotes the reduction of discrepancy and brings equality between the two genders and society. It has been found women can go far ahead of men in socio - economic activities. In reference to talent and skills a woman is equally talented as a man but owing to discrepancies they are allowed to explore their skills. Nowadays, due to encouraging the awareness of women empowerment, women are also becoming and proving themselves as a strong pillar of society. Therefore, it is beneficial for the globe. Empowerment of the women brings overall development in the society. The financial earning made by women not only encourages her and family but providing aid in changing the status of developing countries like India. As she become of all her rights, the crime against women in the society also reduces. It has also seen some time in family that a man is only bread earner and money earns by him is not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the family. In these cases also money or salary get by women gives a good support and satisfaction to the man as well as family tends to overcome from poverty. Finally women can become part of National Development.

PRINCIPLES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

A set of principles has been provided by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) ant the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) which can be act as

guidelines for the agencies those are working in the sector. The interest of government has also been reflected to enhance the position of women. The efforts to evolve the standard of women by reducing the social intricacies also indicate towards the sense of urgency towards women empowerment.

1. **Establish high level corporate leadership for gender equality:** It leads to orient gender sensitive policies vary from men and women which can include women at top management level. Leadership by women at high level reduces the gender differences and bring s equality which brings respect for both the gender. Participation of women at top management work as an epitome for others and amplify the other women also that provide aid at individual, social and economic level of women.
2. **Treat all women and men fairly at work respect and support human rights and non discrimination:** This principle offers aid at work place to women. It includes flexible working options; share the responsibility of kids through establishing crèches. The principle also opens the door of equal opportunities to women at promotions and assuring at least 30 % of greater participation in the process of decision making at all the levels. This principle also includes equal pay and equal benefits to both men and women for equal work.
3. **Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers:** Under this principle consideration of physical difference of women have taken under care i.e. physical weakness of women and provide safe working conditions and offers insurance also. This principle provides zero tolerance policies against harassment, exploitation and all sort of violence at work place. Various sorts of securities including travelling from work to home and training to identify the indicators of violence is introduced under this principle.
4. **Education, training and professional development for women:** This principle support educational programs that includes different work related trainings, literacy classes, IT trainings and vocational training which can help women to be financially independent and explore their knowledge. Formal and informal mentoring equality also brought under this principle. In short, this principle leads towards all sort of required education that can beef up the position of women in society.
5. **Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women:** Training and other related aid to develop small scale business have been introduced under this principle. Orientation of training programs which expand the knowledge of marketing under which women can extend their business and establishing entrepreneurship. Easy credit policies for women and respect of the dignity of women and their business policies have been taken into consideration in this principle.
6. **Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy:** Philanthropical programs either alone or in partnership with multiple communities brings under this policy. In order to motivate the equality through recognizing women leadership introduced under this principle.

7. **Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality:**
Transparency regarding the equality policies which promote gender equality with the public brought under this principle. It also leads towards establish benchmark by introducing women at all level before public. Reports and measures over the progress at external and internal level using statistics incorporate in it.

TOOLS OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. Some of the tools which will help in empowerment are below mentioned:

1. **Education:** There are different perceptions towards education. Its definition also varies from person to person. In this study the word education means knowledge, learning or what one has learnt which expand his/ her awareness and change perception toward oneself, family and society. Women can have knowledge in various ways. Yes, academic skills are necessary and have their importance in its own ways. But a person cannot learn without academic skills it is not mandatory. Again in this research, educations can either academic skills, learning through experience or guidance. With the help of this learning women's dependency on others might get reduce or they can be self dependent. Learning makes them more confident which is followed by clear awareness or clarity in perception, further followed by better decision making in their day to day matters whether economic, social, political matters or general awareness. Women should have confidence, clarity and awareness in order to now their worth to make their life better which d evelops their families too. Government is also doing campaigning through Padhega India to Badhega India and Skill Indiall which shows that education and vocational trainings are significant tool. No matter women are literate or not still they can be educated in different ways. Training is an important tactic to educate both literates and illiterates. It is a useful weapon to make women skilled and financially independent. Training brings development. In this research training means any organized vocational training programs either by local government bodies or NGOS/ SHGs. Education play a significant role in Women's Economic Empowerment. It actually takes the center stage, but for long, most women especially in the rural areas have been denied this right and have been subjected to very degrading practices and responsibilities. Education empowers girls to achieve more in their social, career, economic and family lives. To women education can mean going to class or being trained on capacity building and skills development or better yet being mentored on very essential of development. Education is a very broad concept school curriculum, life skills training, special courses, adult education etc. Education helps a woman to be more self confident and take decisions for family and self. Education makes women aware of people and places outside our community also broaden her thinking and perceptions and exposes her to a world which might be different from hers. Education also gives her an opportunity to explore employment opportunities or become self employed and also plan a better future for her kids. Hence to think harmonious development without educating women is impossible.

Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. Education is the most powerful tool of change of position of women in society. Education is the basic tool which leads to the reduction in inequalities and it functions as a means of improving their status within the family and society.

Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of empowerment as it enables women to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The growth level of women education in rural areas is currently very slow. This obviously means that large numbers of women in our country are still illiterate, weak, backward and exploited. Despite various efforts made in the direction to improve educational status of female literacy rates, a major gap still exists between boys and girls in the area of enrolment, retention and academic achievement levels. The low literacy rate of women and their low participation in school create a need for reinforcement of better strategies to promote girls' education. At the same time it is need of the hour for more specific and focused strategies to be implemented so as to increase girls' participation in education.

Equalization of educational opportunity recognizes that Education of women should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice but also to accelerates social transformation and overall development of the country. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. The present study explores the role of education in women empowerment and the status of women education in rural India. In this study, how important education is for women empowerment has been felt, when it is not there!! It has been found that the women should continue education and career by strategizing and acknowledging the support of their family members. Murtaza (2012) examined the current status of women in higher education in Gilgit Baltistan. Education among women is the most powerful tool of attaining power i n the society. It helps in reducing inequalities and functions as a means for improving their status within the family. As we all know that education is must for everyone but unfortunately, in this male dominating society, the education of women has been neglected for a long time. Empowering women is an important end in itself and as women acquire the same status, opportunities and social, economic and legal rights as men, as they acquire the right to health and gender based violence, human well-being will be enhanced. The present study explores the role of education in women empowerment and the status of women education in India. It shows that the education is most important part in the life of every woman.

2. **Training:** Training for gender equality and women's empowerment is an essential component for Women's commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Training for gender equality is a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviour. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create inclusive societies that recognize the need to promote gender equality. Training is a tool, strategy, and means to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality by raising awareness and

encouraging learning, knowledge -building and skills development. It helps women and men to understand the role gender plays and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for advancing gender equality in their daily lives and work. Training for gender equality is part and parcel of delivering our commitments to equal human rights for all. Skills development is a key to improving rural productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities, enhancing food security and promoting environmentally sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Despite rural women's major role in agriculture and other rural activities, higher barriers in education and training limit their participation in more productive and remunerative work, perform managerial and leadership roles and participate fully in the development of their communities. Targeted action is needed to dismantle these barriers. Despite significant problems in a male dominated society, Indian women have found their way out for growth and empowerment through various self-help groups, NGOs, banks, government assistance, and micro finance institutions. In the coming years the role of women will be of immense importance for competing with the developed world as they are man power source as well as diverse consumer group. It serves the cause of education for women indirectly by changing attitudes, challenging social stereotypes, and redefining women's role providing the way to empower the women through education. Need of the hour is many more such organizations along with the government's involvement in promoting Vocational Education and Training for the rural women.

3. **Legal Provisions & Women Rights in India:** The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Following are constitutional privileges which are guaranteed to women in India for their empowerment. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Constitution guarantees to women the fundamental right to equality and is firmly grounded in the principles of fraternity, liberty, equality and justice, and accordingly it contains number of provisions for the empowerment of women. It not only grants equality to women but also empowers them.

VARIOUS LAWS TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA

Parliament of India, including state legislatures have taken several initiatives and launched various schemes for promotion of Women's Rights in India. These laws inter alias include Special Marriage Act 1954, Hindu Marriage Act

1. **Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856:** The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, enacted in July 1856, legalized the remarriage of Hindu widows in all jurisdictions of India under East India Company rule. Marriage of a widow was prohibited among

certain sects of Hindus and life of a widow was in miserable state. In order to safeguard their status, The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 was passed to legalize the marriage of Hindu Widows in certain cases.

2. **Indian Penal Code, 1860:** Various sections have been incorporated in Indian Penal Code with a view to prevent and curb evils like cruelty against women, dowry death, sexual harassment etc.
3. **The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872:** This Act deals with the law relating to the solemnization in India of the Marriages of persons professing the Christian religion.
4. **The Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939:** This Act deals with the suits of dissolution of marriage by women married under Muslim Law.
5. **Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (later Amended in 2005):** According to latest amendment, daughters have equal share, rights and liabilities in the partition of family property and guardianship in a Hindu family.
6. **Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956:** This act aims to deal with the problem of prostitution and to promote the welfare of fallen woman.
7. **Hindu Marriage Act, 1956:** This act has recognized the equal rights of man and woman in the matters of marriage and divorce.
8. **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:** This Act provides for maternity benefits to women.
9. **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** The main objective of this Act is to abolish giving and taking of dowry at the time of marriage.
10. **Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (Amended in 2005):** This Act deals with provisions like arrest of women by female police, search and seizure of goods and maintenance etc. No women should be arrested before sunrise and after sunset. Whenever, it is necessary to cause a female to be searched, the search shall be made by another female with strict regard to decency. The husband of the wife should give maintenance to his wife, children and parents.
11. **The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978:** This act has altered the marriageable age of bridegroom to 21 years and bride to 18 years.
12. **Family Court Act, 1984:** According to this Act, the state government after consultation with High Court shall establish for every area in the state comprising a city or town whose population exceeds one million a family court, and may establish family court for such other areas in the state as it may deem necessary.
13. **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** Indecent representation of women means the depiction in any, in manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have effect of being indecent, or derogatory to or denigrating, women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals; This Act aims to deal with the prohibition of indecent representation of women.

14. **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987:** This Act has declared the custom of Sati as illegal in our country.
15. **Legal Service Authorities Act, 1987:** It has provision for free legal aid to women.
16. **Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994 (Amendment Act, 2002):** This Act seeks to prohibit pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of sex of the foetus leading to female foeticide.
17. **Domestic Violence Act, (Prevention) 2005:** The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 is enacted to protect women from domestic violence. It provides for the first time in Indian law a definition of "domestic violence", with this definition being broad and including not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse. Domestic violence is defined by Section 3 of the Act as , any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it:
 - (a) Harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or wellbeing, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or
 - (b) Harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or
 - (c) Has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or
 - (d) Otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person. The Act goes on, through the section Explanation 1, to define "physical abuse", "sexual abuse", "verbal and emotional abuse" and "economic abuse".

ABUSE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women's rights means to promote a position of legal and social equality of women with men. Women constituting nearly 50 percentage of the population are regularly subjected to torture, starvation, terrorism, humiliation, mutilation and even murder. One of the biggest human rights abuses was accepted and kept quiet: violence against women.

Violence against Women is a Violation of Human Rights Violence against Women is a Violation of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of women. Violence against women is an obstacle towards gender equality. Women are entitled to equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms that include among others:

- The right to life,
- The right to equality,
- The right to liberty and security of person
- The right to equal protection under the law,
- The right to be free from all forms of discrimination,

- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,
- The right to just and favourable conditions of work,
- The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Women's human rights are violated in a variety of ways. Of course, women sometimes suffer abuses such as political repression that are similar to abuses suffered by male counterpart. In such situations females victims are not much visible because the dominant image of the political actors in today world are male. However, in many violations of human rights the victims are women. Violence is in many cases behavior learned within families, from relationships with other people, at school, and from media. Decrease of violence in society is a long term aim, achievable through individual daily efforts for nonviolent behavior and peaceful resolving of conflicts, and by sharing necessary and appropriate knowledge with the community. That way one can stop harmful (abusive) patterns of behaviour being handed down from generation to generation. It should be assured for girls and boys to receive upbringing and education which neither encourage traditional society and cultural patterns about the role of girls and boys, nor foster prejudice or stereotypes about each gender. It is important to strive towards creation of social climate with no tolerance for violence against women or any other form of violence. The conviction that violence against women is not acceptable should become generally accepted norm. It is necessary to provide women with effective protection from violence, and to give clear message to perpetrators of violence that they will be punished according to the law for causing violence. There are many kinds of violence which vitiate the rights of women are discussed below:

- (a) **Domestic Violence:** In our society, violence is bursting. It is present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another. This form of domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. Though women today have proved themselves in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against them are much larger in number than against men. The possible reasons are many and are diversified over the length and breadth of the country. According to United Nation Population Fund Report, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 per cent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. In India, more than 55 percent of the women suffer from domestic violence, especially in the states of Bihar, U.P., M.P. and other northern states. The most common causes for women stalking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of it, arguing with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children, going out of home without telling the partner, not

cooking properly or on time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in-laws etc. In some cases infertility in females also leads to their assault by the family members. The greed for dowry, desire for a male child and alcoholism of the spouse are major factors of domestic violence against women in rural areas. There have been gruesome reports of young bride being burnt alive or subjected to continuous harassment for not bringing home the amount of demanded dowry. Women in India also admit to hitting or beating because of their suspicion about the husband's sexual involvement with other women.

- (b) **Dowry Harassment and Bride Burning:** Dowry is a transfer of property from the bride's family to that of the bridegroom, at the time of marriage. In 1995, Time Magazine reported that dowry murders in India increased from around 400 a year in the early 1980s to around 5,800 a year by the middle of the 1990s. A year later CNN ran a story saying that every year police receive more than 2,500 reports of bride burning. The Indian National Crime Records Bureau reports that there were about 8172 dowry death cases registered in India in 2008.' According to the present practice, dowry usually subsumes material gifts and cash paid to the bridegroom and his kin. This practice continues even after marriage (Paul: 1993). This process leads to a crime that is prevalent only in India, where greedy husbands and his relatives harass the newlywed bride for getting more dowries, and often kill her in the process and most of the time she is burnt alive. This horror is therefore called bride-burning. Bride burning is linked to the custom of dowry, the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings to her husband in marriage. Thousands of young married women in India are routinely tortured and murdered by husband and in-laws who want more dowries from the bride's parents. After burning the bride to death, the husband is free to remarry and get new dowry again from new bride. In India, in every one hour and 40 minutes a woman is killed by husband or in -laws who are consumed by greed. More than 5000 women get killed for dowry each year. In 2004, Amnesty International said, 'at least 15000 women are murdered in dowry related cases each year in India.' Some women's organizations in India said, the number is much higher. Dowry Prohibition Act in India bans paying and receiving dowries but the tradition continues to exist. As long as patriarchy and misogyny exist, women will continue to pay dowry and will continue to be harassed, humiliated, oppressed, suppressed, beaten, and threatened. They will continue to be burned to death by beloved husband if they are unable to give them more money, more gold, all house furniture, a house, a car, a motorcycle, AC, a branded wrist watch, a set of clothes, anything expensive.
- (c) **Sexual Harassment at work:** Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person's sex. Harassment can include sexual harassment or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. According to Mac Kinnos (1979) sexual harassment at work is primarily a problem faced by women that men rarely face. Therefore it should be considered a form of sex discrimination. The Indian Penal Code 1860 defined sexual harassment

as: Such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as physical contact and advances. In cases where the accused sexually harasses or insults the modesty of a woman by way of either- obscene acts or songs or- by means of words, gesture, or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman, he shall be punished under Sections.294 and 509 respectively.

- (d) **Eve Teasing:** We know, the term eve teasing is an Indian origin. The term itself has some demerits. Eve represents temptress and the term actually signifies that eves (women) tempt or provoke males for vulgar comments and behaviours. Ironically, that also means women cause the problem and are also a victim to it. But that is almost like blaming the victims for their sufferings. It also depicts an element of male chauvinism prevalent in India. Eve teasing is a huge issue in India. A large number of Indian women have faced or are facing this menace. Whether it is a public transport system or public places or shopping malls women find themselves vulnerable to the threat of eve teasing everywhere. Eve teasing is complex problem and it requires more attention that what it has actually got. The harsh reality in India, it is going on in most of its towns and cities with more and more women going out for education and work independently, this problem grew to an alarming proportion. It has become an inseparable part of a girl's life, causing her irreparable mental agony. Cheap gestures, hurling lewd comments, a seemingly casual touch, bumping in or staring, humming a song or even a sly whistle are all instances of eve teasing. The ways a woman can be abused are endless; and if unchecked could lead to public humiliation in broad daylight. This happens at auto/bus terminals, theatres, restaurants, parks and at an alarming rate on the roads. The most disgusting fact is that even small children aren't spared by these eve teasers because of their high vulnerability.
- (e) **Rape and Sexual Violence:** The term "sexual violence" refers to a specific constellation of crimes including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. The perpetrator may be a stranger, acquaintance, friend, family member, or intimate partner. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers agree that all forms of sexual violence harm the individual, the family unit, and society and that much work remains to be done to enhance the criminal justice response to these crimes. Rape definitions vary by state and in response to legislative advocacy. Most statutes currently define rape as non consensual oral, anal, or vaginal penetration of the victim by body parts or objects using force, threats of bodily harm, or by taking advantage of a victim who is incapacitated or otherwise incapable of giving consent. Incapacitation may include mental or cognitive disability, self-induced or forced intoxication, status as minor, or any other condition defined by law that voids an individual's ability to give consent. Rape is a weapon that distorts a woman's sexuality, restricts her freedom of movement and violates her human rights. It leaves a woman feeling exposed, humiliated and traumatized. A rapist not only violates the victim's privacy and personal integrity, but also causes serious physical and psychological damage.
- (f) **Reproductive Rights:** Reproductive rights were clarified and endorsed internationally in the Cairo Consensus that emerged from the 1994 International Conference on

Population and Development. This constellation of rights, embracing fundamental human rights established by earlier treaties, was reaffirmed at the Beijing Conference and various international and regional agreements since, as well as in many national laws. They include the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of children, the right to voluntarily marry and establish a family, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health, among others.

- **Out Line - Reproductive Rights:** Attaining the goals of sustainable, equitable development requires that individuals are able to exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives. This includes the rights to:
 - Reproductive health as a component of overall health, throughout the life cycle, for both men and women
 - Reproductive decision-making, including voluntary choice in marriage, family formation and determination of the number, timing and spacing of one's children and the right to have access to the information and means needed to exercise voluntary choice
 - Equality and equity for men and women, to enable individuals to make free and informed choices in all spheres of life, free from discrimination based on gender
 - Sexual and reproductive security, including freedom from sexual violence and coercion, and the right to privacy.

Reproductive Rights and International Development Goals

The importance of reproductive rights in terms of meeting international development goals has increasingly been recognized by the international community. In the September 2005 World Summit, the goal of universal access to reproductive health was endorsed at the highest level. Reproductive rights are recognized as valuable ends in themselves, and essential to the enjoyment of other fundamental rights. Special emphasis has been given to the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls, and to the importance of sex education and reproductive health programs.

- (a) **Abortion:** Abortion is the ending of pregnancy by removing a fetus or embryo from the womb before it can survive on its own. Women's access to have safe and legal abortions is restricted in law and in practice in most countries in the world. Even Countries where abortion is permitted by law, women only have limited access to safe abortion services. Only a small number of countries prohibit abortion in all cases. Abortion in India is legal only up to twenty weeks of pregnancy under specific conditions and situations which are broadly defined as:
- The continuance of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman or of grave injury of physical or mental health, or
 - There is a substantial risk that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

An adult woman requires no other person's consent except her own. In many parts of India, daughters are not preferred and hence sex - selective abortion is commonly practiced, resulting in an unnatural male to female population sex ratio due to millions of developing girls

selectively being targeted for termination before birth. In most countries and jurisdictions abortion is allowed to save the pregnant woman's life, or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. Some internationally famous Human Rights Groups, such as Human Rights Watch, consider abortion will be permitted within the context of human rights in exceptional circumstances. However safe abortion services are first and foremost a human right. Approximately 13 percentages of maternal deaths worldwide are attributable to unsafe abortion which leads to about 68,000 and 78,000 deaths annually.

- **Custodial Violence Against Women:** Violence against women by the people who are supposed to protect them (State-owned institutions typically include police, military, prisons and jails, but can also include nursing homes, hospitals, and institutions for the mentally ill) is widespread. Although torture is employed against both men and women, some forms of custodial violence and torture are clearly gender-specific. Violence perpetrated by the state against women is, in many cases, indistinguishable from that which is perpetrated by the state against men, states often use gender-specific forms of violence, most notably rape and other forms of sexual violence, to persecute women. Women are physically or verbally abused and molested. They also suffer sexual abuse and physical torture. According to Amnesty International, thousands of women held in custody are routinely raped in police detention centers worldwide. The report of the Amnesty International underlines the necessity for states to prosecute those accused of abusing women in detention and to hold them accountable for their actions. The most particularized element in custodial violence against women is the secularization of torture. Although the sexual anatomy of men as well as women is targeted in the physical stages of torture, rape and the threat of rape, as well as other forms of sexual violence such as sexual harassment, forced impregnation, virginity testing, forced abortion, forced prostitution and forced miscarriage, are perpetrated more consistently against women detainees.



2

EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

INTRODUCTION

Women are the most important and powerful organ of the entire mechanism of the system called Universe. They are simply an extra ordinary gift to the world , however sad, they are totally neglected or taken for granted by the school of old thoughts where superstitions and false beliefs prevail which treat women as mere source of bearing and rearing of kids. The society has become a tough male dominating one so women are always sealed in the four walls of the house.

In this whole study we are going to see the other side of the women who not only bear and rear the family but can powerfully spin the economy towards development and steady growth with a bang on healthy environment. Women are very subtle yet mentally strong beings. When they are biologically fit to bear the future, they are equally fit to handle any given situation. With this positive note we are going to have an insight of what is women empowerment and what can a woman achieve if good education is imparted to her. Time is history, where women have shown their valour and brains in all spheres of life, be it battle field, or space, she is fully into it. Here we will throw some light of the concept of women empowerment through education, problems, obstacles and measures and suggestions to improve the subject which is definitely going to have an impact on women. Before we start the study let us clearly bring out the objectives of this topic. Women are no longer a weaker or a deprived section of the society. They have to be treated equally. Women are stronger mentally and physically, it's just they are very subtle and patient. They have to be respected equally.

When they are strong and equal, they are subject to a healthy diet and provided all necessary medical facilities. Women are subject to the right of the best education they can attain at par equal to men. The day when every person in our country believes in the strength of woman, we will achieve the desired heights of economic and social development of the entire nation. Women Empowerment is my chosen topic which should be reiterated again and again till women do not achieve equal ratios in all the aspects such as health, education, employment and so on. India produces as many strong ladies like Indira Gandhi, Kalpana Chawla, Mary Com but they are very few which can be easily counted who shine in different fields, whereas a majority of women fall prey to the mishaps of socio-cultural trauma. As per the latest Census in the year 2011, the total female sex ratio in India is 940 per 1000 males, which is to an extent bearable though not equal. The census- 2011 also indicated a 2001-2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2 per cent, which is slower than the growth seen during the previous decade. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14 per cent for men and 65.46 per cent for women, is disheartening and non- acceptable. Why is there a difference between men and women? Women should be considered as the key components in many areas like family, society and a nation. So women have to be looked up and join them in their steps when we want our nation to grow. Nation is nothing but the combination of male and female and their thoughts. In a country like India where women cover nearly half of the population, no real development is possible neglecting women. Therefore, it is evident that to ignore women's role is to harm not just women but the entire communities and a nation because women, after all are half of the human race. And when we talk about development of the nation there is no other option except for educating women.

ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND EDUCATION

An economic system is the structure of production, allocation of economic inputs, distribution of economic outputs, and consumption of goods and services in an economy. It is a set of institutions and their social relations. Or we can put it as a set of principles led down for carrying out the economic activities bearing in view the problems of scarcity and demand, production and the availability of resources. It really studies what people need and the resources available at their disposal. In simple terms buying and selling which every common man does is an economic activity as we understand the need (demand), check where it is sold (supply) ,at it must be cheap and best(bargaining). Various countries follow various types of economic system such as mixed economy, socialist economy, capitalist economy and contemporary economic for which education makes us understand how the market works. The world is moving at a vast speed and so do the economies are trying to compete in terms of skilled and sophisticated labour and technology which are working towards economic development and education is the knowledge provider making human resource more resourceful.

1. **Capitalist Economic System:** Countries like United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Australia are some of the few countries adopting a free market economy. This is known as Capitalist economy where there are very less force and intervention from the Government bodies. The government regulates the contracts and policies and holds properties and imposes taxes on the incomes earned by the

capitalists. The production of goods and services, pricing, and their distribution is completely managed by the private sector. It is a free market where all the economic activities are carried out independently without any state or central intervention. Here education acts as a catalyst to the entrepreneurs to study the functioning of the free market, do research about products, customers, profit maximization and a lot of elements involved in business. It is a mechanism of free trade without any strong force acting upon them. The capitalist economy covers a wide range of businesses from factories, industries, agriculture, technology and education. The private businessmen or entrepreneurs enter and try to sustain, then grow with the motive of profit making. As it is free market every firm tries to make profit and act in their self interest with not much of welfare orientation standards. It is a win win situation giving room for competition from other firms and industries. It paves a lot of opportunities for employment, creating money, better infrastructure, good medical facilities, high standard of education, reduces unemployment and poverty thus increasing the standard of living of the people. This helps the economy to flourish at a faster pace. As it is a matter of survival the owners of the companies vest most of the decision making powers to their management who takes in charge and is held responsible to study the market and individual behavior and implement schemes that can run their business without any obstacle. They play their trumps in such a way that it attracts their customers and also give them satisfaction from their products and services. Even though capitalist economy is in education from long ago it has brought tremendous changes in the structure and pattern of education, different far ahead in terms of what was followed earlier. Business firms in the field of school and higher education are focusing on more research work to students and giving them stimulators and tools, instruments and equipments providing the students practical knowledge and ideas for inventions and innovations. The vision of world has changed and now people are educating their children in different streams such as music, arts, sports and mind building games, eg; chess, as it brings awards and accolades along with dignity to women especially who are restricted to the four walls of the house once upon a time.

- 2. Communist Economic System:** Planned economy is an economic system in which the state or workers' councils control the economic activities such as production, pricing, distribution, labour and capital, land, are involved in the process producing goods and services. Mostly the centre makes all the decisions and instructions to be followed with no interference from public. The major industries and services are undertaken by the state and it ensures extensive utilization of human capital and resources. It commands the economy right from production till consumption. That is why it is called command economy, centrally planned economy, or command and control economy. These economies also play major on subsidized level of prices and fixing tax rates. It ensures that all the people enjoy the benefit of the products and services. The decision making authorities plan the production process right from raw materials and supply of end products, after which they select the low level entrepreneurs for carrying out production with the regulations from the state. In this type of economies the motive is welfare of the people and nation. Although profits

earned are not shared among the employees, neither there is any incentive to reward for their hard work. This is the reason for lack of boiling ideas and innovations from the work force. The birth of planned or command economy was when the few capitalists were reaping the benefits and profit maximization was on peak and the common man was exploited. The market economy was decentralized as there was free trade. Then a few people showed strong dislike and worked to form a central body who can force and manage regulations in the process of production of goods, carrying out trade and creating socio-economic welfare of the people. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were the originators of this system as they realized the need for centrally planned economic system. They felt accumulation of wealth in few hands was unfair while the common people were not suffering from lack of basic necessities and insisted to have one government who can own the resources and provide employment, good education, health and infrastructure, etc, to all the masses of the nation. However, due to corrupt politics again a few heads in the communist economy laid rules and regulations and governed in the favour of capitalists where small business firms started deviating resources and vested their interest towards industrialization or the military, and this step deprived the minimum consumption products and services, example, there was non availability of toilet papers even. This was the downfall of this economy. So education plays a major role here. Knowledge is a powerful weapon which gives the sources and means of living and provides the platform for the economic development.

3. **Socialist Economic System:** Socialist economic system as the name suggests works towards the welfare of the society. The capitalist economy decides what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce, as well as owns the factors of production and works freely and independently towards profit. Socialist economies are a better version of communist economies where social welfare is the key function of production and consumption along with harmony.
4. **Mixed Economic System:** A mixed economy is the combination of private and public sector working with their norms of social welfare of the people along with profit making. The Government imposes rules and regulations for the private business to run and ensures the end product and services benefit the public. However, the private sectors are given freedom to demonstrate the production, employment of skilled and knowledgeable personnel, pricing, distribution and consumption, without any harm or loss to general masses. Along with this the Government undertakes under centralization most of the agricultural and industrial products and services that are required by the public on a larger basis, and very frequently in daily life. While government allows the private sector to work freely and encourages them to bring about economic development at the same time tries to give the basic commodities such as transport by roads, safety, consumption products, infrastructure, education, and other basic commodities such as food grains at a subsidized rates for the welfare of general masses.
5. **Relationship between Economic Systems and Education:** There is a very common goal of the economics systems and education as they are related in terms of good

quality of education. Capitalist or private business trusts establish schools with better standard of education to students, aims at welfare of the society and also money making as the objectives. Whereas on the other hand social or mixed economies try to educate the students on ideology, secularism as to bring about unity among students and building a very strong foundation for future with ideas of development of the nation. Here welfare and development are the objectives of government education institutions.

- 6. Role of Economic System in financing of Education and absorbing the Educated Manpower:** Different attributes of each economy such as social, capitalist and communist economies play a unique role in the education system and absorbing the educated manpower in the required fields. Social or mixed economies where state or central education system focus on school and higher education for the welfare of the public in all aspects. The institutions set up a framework of subjects which throws light on the events in the past and the inventions, along with educating moral values and discipline, so that after basic education students are able to choose their higher education in their interested stream. The government funds the institutions to set up and organize education activities along with basic facilities to the students. Due to this reason the government fees or charges are very nominal to ensure that education is made affordable by the lower sections of the society. On the other hand, the capitalist economies direct their funds and invest in higher education with their indirect motive of profit making. The capital is used to build the institutes with all amenities and best or world class teaching techniques are adopted to attract more number of students. This promising factor attracts higher class sector in order to attain best employment opportunities soon after completion of their academics. The private sector acts freely in setting up good framework and mostly the educated and trained students get absorbed under their chain of network of industries and business set up. When we look at the communist economy the choices of education are organized after studying the market pattern of demand and supply. The central body owns and regulates the education system where the necessary skills and education is provided in relation to the jobs available. Soon as the candidate completes his or her education is absorbed in their created work environment. This way the manpower gets absorbed by having the required skill and education which is actually demanded. However, whatever be the differences between the different economies the purpose of education is simple. The individuals are more disciplined and attain knowledge and are transformed into the human capital which is resourceful to the development of the entire economy.
- 7. Education as an Investment:** The economic view of education traditionally has employed the human capital framework developed by Becker (1964). In this framework, education is viewed primarily as an investment wherein individuals forgo current labour market earnings and incur direct costs in return for higher future wages. As it is said education is the medicine for all cures in the economy which eliminates the factors troubling the people. In backward or underdeveloped countries education was considered as a time consuming process and money spent was considered as

cost. In modern times each and every individual has understood the value of education and converted the concept of cost as investments as it builds various positive attributes to the individual behavior which not only benefits one, but the entire society. Developed nations around the world invest an average of 6% of their gross domestic product (GDP) in systems of public schooling. Various measures have been taken by UNESCO and each every country in order to attain higher literacy rates and increase the level of education. Education right from the early stages of children help them build good intra personal skills, improving their mental ability, with better aptitude and attitude towards the society and surrounding wherever they go. Education instills confidence while growing up leading to a high range of presence of mind making them pro active. The importance of investment on education is really essential as one gets the right knowledge, skills, talent which enables them to choose the career by choice and not by chance. But this investment does not guaranty immediate returns as it may take some time or years for students to acquire knowledge and skills before getting employed. It helps not only the individual but the entire society if a person is educated and employed. It reduces the poverty levels, increases the standards of living of people, and also the generates tax revenue to the government which in turn leads to better infrastructure and health facilities in general. This has a positive impact as it reduces unemployment, and reducing crime rates, and eliminating the unsocial elements from the society and brings peace and harmony among people without any barriers of caste, creed and social status. So investment is the most important criteria from the students point of view and the institutions point of view as it helps in laying down strong foundation for the generations to come and improvising the standard of the economy on the whole in the near future.

8. **Education as Consumption:** Consumption also stands as an indication for the choice of education. The highly desired and consumed products and services provide a lot of scope for upbringing of more skills and technology which requires a highly knowledgeable manpower. This paves way for many educational institutes and training centers that educate and help the students to demonstrate the techniques and building the software for various goods and services. Consumption. Indeed, many economists have discussed the consumption value of education. For example, Schultz (1963) identifies current consumption as one of three benefits of education, along with investment and future consumption. For the most part, however, consumption aspects of education have received relatively little attention in the literature. Several trends suggest that consumption may be becoming an increasingly important part of the choice of whether, where, and how to attend college. Education also gives us the ability to think what to buy, when to buy or spend and from where and how to buy.
9. **Five Year Planning:** India has an old heritage of education but it was largely based on caste and social status rather than being equally available to all. India has emerged as a secular democracy with a state-led command economy after Independence. Since the set-up of the government India felt the necessity for planning for five years as to what are the roles of the state and centre to protect the individual interest and breaking the viscous circle of poverty through different

means and to achieve development. As our country was invaded several times and our natural resources were attacked, people realized the importance of education. Indians were exploited easily by retrenchments and harsh forces acting on them by various elements, and it brought prominent cracks in the name of caste, religion, culture, classes between the rich and the poor which lead to accumulation of wealth in a few hands. The rich became strong and powerful in terms of capital and politics whereas the poor became poorer as they were deprived of even the basic necessities required for survival. This was the dawn for originating planning commission who kept in view each and every single problem to be addressed and solved in the next five years to eradicate the clashes of the classes and bring equality, peace and unity among the nation. Educated people were very few who and education was not afforded by the common people as it was a costly affair. So this plan brought about a gentle breeze of education to all where it was provided for all irrespective of the differences in society.

- 10. Priority for Education in the various Five Year Plans:** No one can stop an individual or the economy from tremendous and fast development, who understands the value of education. It is education that facilitates freedom, confidence and brings about equality and changes the thinking of the people from a narrower end to a broader perspective. It is the only tool that can equip the society in eliminating evils and providing social justice to all, in a common way and tends people to work and dream big. The five year plans was set up to address all the problems such as employment, health, equality, tapping the resources for agricultural and industrial growth and education for all without any gender or class differences. It becomes necessary for all to know what is planned and outlined in the five year plans and understand and claim for the rights of every individual.
- **First five year plan (1951 -1956)** emphasis was given on elementary education and also technical education seeing a bright future in the youth of the country as it also provided youth camps and labor services for students.
 - **Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)** This was a period of rapid industrialization of the public sector and economic growth, under the planning of Prasanth Chandra Mahalanobis the Indian statistician who developed the Mahalanobis model for economic development in the long run. This model emphasized on adopting state of art techniques of production and research along with the modern intensive use of industrial machinery and techniques. Technical and skilled education became an important factor of employment. Setting up of Hydroelectric power projects and five steel plants, increased rail routes and production of coal for this purpose absorbed a huge manpower which urged the training of students and talent search and scholarship programs specially set up to train for these projects increased the opportunities for education and the educated people.
 - **Third Five Year Plan (1961-66)** In this period due to the war with Pakistan and Sino-Indian war our economy was weak and resources were directed towards defence management. However emphasis was given to primary schools in rural areas and a

state education board was formed. The importance also shifted from industrialization to agriculture led the set up of many schools in the villages and state which gave importance to elementary education and secondary education to all.

- There were three One-Year plans (1966-69).
- **Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74)** took into account the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the Resolution on National Policy on Education (1966) passed by the Government of India. The chapter on education was entitled 'Education and Manpower'. As Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister at this time she gave importance of education to women and other skills for the women to make a decent living.
- **Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79)** provided modest outlays for education during the first three years of the Plan. The rule of the two Governments by different political parties, i.e., the Congress up to 1977 and thereafter the Janata Government running in different directions was not very conducive to development.
- **Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)** It is learnt that this plan perceived education, broadly as a seamless continuum of life-long learning and essential for human resource development. The emphasis in the development of education in the Sixth Plan was on the optimum utilization of existing facilities, qualitative improvement of system and making available the educational services to the socially deprived sections of the community. While it was recognized that financial outputs were important and necessary to create additional infrastructure, it was equally important to bring about changes and improvements in the system through increased attention to non-monetary inputs. As family planning was introduced to reduce over population women got and edge in taking up jobs and also increased their educational status.
- **Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)** the development of education during this period was marked by the formulation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) and the Programme of Action (POA) (1986). The Seventh Plan provided for reorientation of the education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Launching of Operation Black Board (OB) for the improvement of elementary education and opening of Navodaya Vidyalayas at the secondary stage of education in the rural areas providing free education were the two important characteristics of the development programmes in the field of education during the Seventh Five Year Plan. Vocationalisation of education, especially at the senior secondary stage, was yet another thrust area.
- **Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)** Quite a large number of educational plans like plans in other sectors could not be implemented in the way as envisaged by its formulators on account of rapid changes in the Central Government. The formulation of Eighth Five Year Plan was also delayed. The main objectives in the Eighth Plan, according to available indications, would be universalisation of elementary education and complete eradication of illiteracy among the 15-35 age-group.

- **Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)** The Ninth Plan treats education as the most crucial investment in human development. The Prime Minister's Special Action Plan(SAP) has stressed the need for expansion and improvement of social infrastructure in the field of education. This goal has been further elaborated in the National Agenda for Government (NAG) which states: "We are committed to total eradication of illiteracy. We will formulate and implement plans to gradually increase the governmental and non-governmental spending on education up to 6% of GDP; this to provide education for all. We will implement the constitutional provision of making primary education free and compulsory up to 5th standard. Our aim is move towards equal access to and opportunity of educational standards up to the school leaving stage. We shall strive to improve the quality of education at all levels.
- **Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)** – the tenth five year plan focuses on the human and social development programs through education at various levels such as elementary education, Secondary education, Vocational education, higher and technical education and adult literacy and continuing education.
- **Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)** - The Eleventh Plan places the highest priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth. The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well recognized. It opens up opportunities leading to both individual and group entitlements. It sees the education in the broader sense of receiving knowledge and skills in order to grab the employment opportunities ahead. This helps the youth to work in India and abroad which ultimately leads to socio economic welfare. This pays attention to the problems in secondary level of education and the need to expand the present system of education in modern times and also bridging the gap in social, regional and gender at all levels of education.
- **Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012- 2017)** – The twelfth five year plan targets on gender gap of literacy rate and has vested interest in maximizing female literacy rate targeting 60 million women. The illiteracy rate has declined to an extent. However under the RTE the primary education is made free and mandatory for all, the elementary and the upper elementary levels also have been focused under the fundamental rights act. The standard of education and the subjects have wisely been chosen for increased knowledge and higher intelligence quotient of the younger and modern generation. The teachers are been fully trained and the pupil – teacher ratio is also commended to 31:1, just to ensure the students are given more individual attention. Twelfth Plan Focuses on
 - Learning Outcomes and Continuous Comprehension Evaluation
 - Ensuring Residual Access & Equity- Regional, Social & Gender
 - Pre-primary Education for school preparedness
 - Teacher Education on a Mission mode
 - School Leadership Development
 - Integration of Sports & Physical Education

The twelfth five year plan is also working on setting up of more number of schools and other educational institutions in order to increase the educational level of the country. With the above reference to the so far five year planning we conclude that all plans have understood the value of education and want to strengthen the roots and branches of education that population of India becomes stronger and eliminates all the challenges of economic growth and social welfare.

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Education is the creative and smartest platform for women which can guarantee the positive changes in the life of especially illiterate, unskilled, disabled, and uninformed women. Education gives women entrance to the world's enormous store of knowledge. The procedure of learning develops thought capacity and enhances creativeness, awakens women to the value of their own humanity and enables them to strive for distinction denied by patriarchal cultural norms and backward traditions. When women become aware and empowered of their rights and position, the remaining half part of the sky according to population will also be clear which ultimately brings positive effect to every sectors of a nation, so let's start from Chennai as the area and spread the fire of Women Empowerment throughout the nation rapidly.

EMPOWERMENT: CONCEPT AND ITS MEANING

Now the women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve the present positions. as a commodity. History is a witness that women was made to dance both in private and public places to please the man. Secondly, in Indian society, a female was always dependent on male members of the family even last few years ago. Thirdly, a female was not allowed to speak with loud voice in the presence of elder members of her in-laws. In the family, every fault had gone to her and responsible. Forth, as a widower dependence on male members of the family still more increase. Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. Empowerment includes control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). It is not merely a feel of greater extrinsic control, but also grows intrinsic capacity, greater self-confidence and an internal transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. As per the United National Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the term women's empowerment means-

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.

- Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
- Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change.
- To create more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community.
- International, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect
- Critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

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EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION

Education as the means of empowerment of women can bring about a confident attitudinal change of women in the society. It is considered as the justice to protect women's right against all the violence's that take place in today's world right from the time she is in the fetus.

To define Education as Empowerment for Women

Education is the eye opener for every woman, to the practical challenges faced by the society and serves as a weapon to overcome them in a more dignified procedure until she chooses the way that matters to her, and her decisions are accepted and respected by her surroundings. It is therefore, crucial for the socio-economic and political progress of India and an open challenge which can appeal the world, what not a woman can achieve towards the positive growth of development. The Constitution of India empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. Education significantly makes difference in the lives of women. These can be direct or indirect. Education

increases the economic, social and political opportunities available to women. It leads to direct economic benefits in the form of higher lifetime earnings for women. The society and community also benefit from the higher productivity of its labour force. Besides improving human capital and increasing economic growth, female education also reduces the fertility rate. The lowering in the number of dependents is referred to as the "demographic gift".

Keeping women illiterate clearly retards economic growth. Societies that do not invest in girls' education pays a price for it in terms of slower growth and reduced incomes. Investments in female education start a virtuous cycle that leads to improved levels of income, growth and gender equality. Inequality in education is like a distortionary tax that misallocates resources, thereby reducing economic growth.

Perspectives on Women's Empowerment

In recent debates on women's empowerment through adult learning different perspectives on women's advancement have been expressed. One perspective advocates improving women's position and equity without radically altering the existing structure of gender relations. This perspective includes the so-called self-reliant model of empowerment. In this context self-reliance means achieving the best one can for oneself within the present system. From this point of view, a woman is "empowered" when she is literate, educated, and has productive skills, has access to capital and self-confidence. This view of empowerment as individual self-reliance is considered not to recognize nor question how a woman can gain increased access to resources if the hurdles of gender discrimination remain in place. It leaves out the political and ideological dimensions of women's struggle. The other perspective sees women's advancement as necessarily involving the transformation of an excessively male-dominated society. This involves collective action and working as a team towards the goal of ending discriminatory practices and gender inequality. Advocates of this view use the term "gender equity" to denote their ambition for a new form of gender justice within an egalitarian society and are interested in structural transformation to create more justice. They hold the view that women can achieve an equal footing with men only if there is equality of opportunity, which is not the case, as women continue to face systematic discrimination.

The term empowerment pre-supposes primacy of power over other dimensions. We speak of women's sharing of political power and participation in government. An important issue related to women's empowerment is the reservation of seats for them in the state legislature and union parliament. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 has provided 33 percent seats for women in Panchayats and municipal bodies. Though the experience of the Indian Panchayat Raj Institutions, one million women have actively entered political life in India. Since the creation of the quota system, local women-the vast majority of the illiterates and poor- have come to occupy as much as 43 percent of seats-spurring the election of increasing numbers of women at the district, provincial and national level. Since the onset of PRI, the percentages of women in various levels of political activity have risen from 4-5 percent to 25-40 percent.

According to an Indian writer and activist Devaki Jain, "the positive discrimination of Panchayat Raj Institutions has initiated a momentum of change. Women's entry into local government in such large numbers often more than the required 33 percent, and their

success in campaigning, including the defeat of male candidates, has shattered the myth that women are not interested in politics, and have no time to meetings or to undertake all the other work that is required in political party processes. Panchayat Raj Institutions reminds us of central truth: power is not something people give away, it has to be negotiated, and some time wrested from the powerful. In India, the participation of women in politics has actually been declined since the days of freedom movement (10percent). It reached a high of 8 percent in 1984 elections. This figure has not crossed since then.

The account of measures taken for women's empowerment in India clearly shows that there is a deep concern in the country to uplift their social and economic conditions, so that they may plan an active role in the task of national developments. Government is not serious for the political participation of women; the data shows that they are lagging behind in political sphere.

History of Women Education in India

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22percent of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16 percent female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is

14.87 percent as compared to 11.72 percent of that of male literacy rate. As per the latest Census in the year 2011, the total female sex ratio in India is 940 per 1000 males. The census- 2011 also indicated a 2001-2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2 per cent, which is slower than the growth seen during the previous decade. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14 per cent for men and 65.46 per cent for women.

Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

Women Empowerment through Education

Women Empowerment is although global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect

the importance of education in reference to women empowerment in India is poised to becoming a superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 is fast approaching; it is just 3 year away. This can become reality only when the women of this nation become empowered. India presently accounts for the largest number of illiterates in the world. Literacy rate in India have risen sharply from 18.3 percent in 1951 to 64.8 percent in 2001 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen sharply 7 per cent to 54.16 percent . Despite the importance of women education unfortunately only 39 percent of women are literate among 64 per cent of the man. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. From the fifth five year plan (1974 – 78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level.

Women's Education Prospects and Challenges

In spite of the forceful intervention by a bastion of female privilege, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes over the last 62 years and above all, the United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the uplift of the plight of women in terms education is still in the state of an enigma in India for several reasons. The 2001 Census report indicates that literacy among women as only 54 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women India is even much lower to national average i.e. 65.38 .The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. Moreover education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 54 percent against 76percent of men as per 2001 Census.

Impact of Education on Women

Education is a process of awareness in different sectors of women which strengthen her socio economic status. In India we find women the feeblest gender which is an unrealistic perspective of the people. Of all the discrimination and denial of opportunity that these women suffer, the most damaging is the denial of the right and opportunity to education. Widespread poverty and discriminatory cultural practices are frequently cited as prime reasons for the persistence of their gender gap in education. Various studies have questioned that if poverty is a major reason for women's low literacy rate ,then how do countries like Kenya, Vietnam and Tajikistan, which have a lower per capita income than India but score much better, with literacy rates of 78 percent, 94 percent and 100 percent compared to 52 percent for India (1995). The corresponding literacy rates for these countries are: Kenya 70 percent, Vietnam 91 percent, Tajikistan 100 percent and India 38 percent.

Poverty is not a matter for depriving women's education but we must put down our heads in shame due to culture that brings out the strong odour of gender differences. However it would be very dangerous to limit the analysis of causation to these factors. Valid as these constraints are, they all too often serve to camouflage the political indifference, bureaucratic inertia and social apathy that lie at the core of the problem. The status quo thus becomes a way of life. Breaking this circle requires new forms of realization and mobilization, not just of resources but also of communities themselves. In a wide range of low-income countries, the hold of poverty and negative cultural factors have been broken by concerted political action, genuine people movements or because of a sustained public demand of education. The dawn of the 1980s and 1990s gave birth to new challenges as the market economy expanded with industrialization and globalization which gave rise to increased inequalities, resulting in loss of livelihoods depending on agriculture, erosion of natural resources and with it decreased women's access to water, fuel, fodder and traditional practices of income. It also brought new forms of exploitation-displacement, tourism, sex trade and retrenchment to mention a few. Due to lack of education women are forced to take up jobs which leave them with meager income but are labourious and time consuming. Less educated women are very easily absorbed by various industries, as they accept all the work pressure without uttering a word. It lays a very easy road for exploitation of women work force, leading to ultimate low incomes to women which is termed as "feminization of poverty". The word empowerment in the context of women in the Indian policy was used in 1986- Educational Policy which is known as the "NPE 1986" and the title of the chapter is "Education for Women's Equality and Empowerment". It has actually two aspects empowerment first means self-empowerment that is women being able to help themselves through whatever knowledge is imparted to them and use them in a productive way leading to high confidence level and channelise financial stability,. It may be education, health or so on and the second is that they should be able to help others to become empowered.

Education is like a complete package, where you can choose what is good and ignore what is not required. It equips the person with the skills to work towards achieving the desired goals. The impact of it is enormous on the society. Education is the torch which throws light on facts and enables women to gain knowledge, giving a strong sense of reasoning and she becomes a powerful decision maker. Education gives a platform to step on and walk towards the path of success and grab self-respect in a male dominated society. Then why is it that they hesitate to come forward? A simple answer to this can be that our government is corrupt and the justice system long drawn is expensive. But there is more to this than putting the blame on "systems". There is an "inherent" reluctance to leave the "comfort zone of self and societal notions" on one hand and the lack of "skill" to handle such situations in real life on the other.

Empowerment of women as a goal of development projects and programs has gained wider acceptance since 1990s. It is not a simple linear process. It has long been argued by various UN agencies that the critical determinant of women's socio-economic status is education, and that education is the key to achieving social development by improving the well-being of the girls and women and thus promoting gender equity. The experience of numerous programs in the government and the NGO sector shows that it is indeed possible. Empowerment of women was one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan (1997-2002)

and every effort was made to create an enabling empowerment where women could freely exercise their rights within and outside their home as equal Partner with men. Education is one of the most critical factors responsible for the development of a human person. Right to education, therefore, is held as a very important human right. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. The international community has realized the importance of education for individual and collective well-being made explicit provisions in several human rights instruments on the rights to education. The Constitution of India was recently amended to provide for the right to compulsory elementary education to children falling between the age group of 6-14 years. Among the world's 900 million literacy people, women outnumber men two to one. Girls constitute the majority of 130 million children without access to primary education (Human Development Report 1995). The illiteracy rate of women is 55.16 percent as against 75.85 percent for men (2001). They can be seen as beggars on road crossing and rag pickers.

Education, in a broad sense, essentially involves penning the mind, enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence, building a sense of positive self-worth, accessing information and tools of knowledge and acquiring the ability to negotiate this unequal and unjust world from a position of strength. No society has ever liberated itself - economically, politically or socially – without a sound base of educated women. Many countries experience around the world have demonstrated that investment in educating women is the most precious investment a society can ever make.

According to the Country Report of the Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power". Education of women in the education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in mainstream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for the hostilities midday meals, scholarships, free circles and so on.

IMPACT OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION ON WOMEN MARRIAGE

Historically, women with more education have been the least likely to marry and have children, but because of education the marriage gap and the outlook towards marriage has changed. Marriage and remarriage rate have risen for women with a college degree relative to women with fewer years of education. However, the patterns of marriage have changed. College educated women marry later, have fewer children, are less likely to view marriage as "financial security", are happier in their marriage and with their life, and are not only the least likely to divorce. It is said that marriages are made in heaven and celebrated on earth. The popular belief is true to some extent, because it is a special bond shared between two souls

who tie the wedding knot after promising to be companions for a lifetime. It is the physical, mental and spiritual union of two souls. It brings significant stability and substance to human relationships, which is otherwise incomplete. It plays a crucial role in transferring the culture and civilization from one generation to the other so that the human race is prospered. The institution of marriage is beneficial to the society as a whole, because it is the foundation of the family which in turn is the fundamental building block of the society.

Female education directly affects the marriage age of females. While education of female emerges as an important factor in delaying marriage prospect and difficulty in marriage also affect female literacy and education. Among the urban middle and upper classes, there is a strong pressure to educate girls for securing a better employed bridegroom. Even the top sections of rural areas which were reluctant to educate their girls, are now sending their females to schools and colleges because they think they will otherwise suffer from a handicap in matrimonial matchmaking. The pressure to educate girls in order to secure a better employed son-in-law is due to the fact that many young people are employed in the modern sector who insists on a bride with education suitable to their educational level. It has been pointed out that such bridegrooms cannot be trapped only through large dowry unless they are satisfied with the educational level of brides. Hence, we see that matrimonial prospects are strong force behind spreading female education among better off sections of society. Schools and colleges provide for many of them respectable waiting places till their marriage.

Every individual has to play a number of roles in his life, or we may say life consists of a combination of roles played in various institutional settings. Of the various roles one plays, two roles have great significance: one is the economic role and the other is the marital or the family role. Marriage is a dividing line between the family of orientation and family of procreation in terms of the nature of roles one performs in two families. The roles in the family of orientation vary in infancy, childhood and adolescence and carry responsibilities and obligations, but the roles one performs in the family of procreation after the marriage as a husband, a father, a wage-earner, as a grandfather, a retired person, etc., have different expectations and obligations.

Free and equal access to education for both sexes seems to have been available during the early Vedic period. Women then enjoyed equality with men in pursuing their interests freely and had the right to participate in academic discourses in the fields such as astronomy, philosophy, logic, mathematics and geography. Love marriages and remarriages of widows were permitted. In this period, both husband and wife were joint owners of the property. An educated Vedic woman had a voice in the selection of their husbands. The unmarried person was not eligible to participate in Vedic sacrifices. The matrimony was not compulsory for a woman and there was no limitation on the age of marriage.

The Indian women's position in the society further deteriorated during the medieval period. Sati, child marriages and ban on widow remarriages became part of social life. The Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent brought purdah practice in the Indian society. Polygamy was widely practiced especially among Muslim and Hindu Kshatriya rulers. In some parts of India, the Devadasis or the temple women were sexually exploited. Among the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Jauhar (practice of the voluntary immolation of all the wives and

daughters of defeated warriors) was practiced in order to avoid capture and consequent molestation by the enemy. The negligence of education and lowering of the marriage age brought disastrous consequences upon the position and status of women. Remarriage of women was stopped and they were asked to devote themselves to ascetic life at home. In South India many women administered villages, towns, divisions and heralded social and religious institutions. Guru Nanak, the first guru of Sikhs preached the message of equality between men and women. He advocated that women be allowed to lead religious assemblies, to perform and lead congregational hymn singing called Kirtan (Bhajan), to become members of religious management committees, to lead armies on the battlefield, and to have equality in marriage and equality in Amrit (Baptism), etc.

During this period (19th and 20th centuries) the status of women was improved by the untiring efforts of different social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Maharishi Karve, and Sister Nivedita etc. According to the Charter Act of 1813, the East India Company was entrusted with the responsibility of the education of the Indian people. But its efforts were restricted to the education of boys and no effort was made for the education of girls. The famous social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy argued for the abolition of Sati and in 1829 Sati was abolished and came to be regarded as a crime. He established Brahma Samaj and advocated the principle of freedom of women and equality of sexes.

The untiring efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar led to the promulgation of the Widow Remarriage Act (1856) and thus it became legal. In 1872 Civil Marriage Act was passed. This Act made the registration of the marriage compulsory and age of marriage of girls was raised to 14 years. It also permitted widow remarriage and its most remarkable feature is the enforcement of monogamy. Even though the Civil Marriage Act was passed in 1872, the Hindu society accepted the practice of monogamy and inter-cast marriage only in 1956. The education of women became slow, but it made steady progress during the period 1882-1902. In the last decade of the 18th century, Swami Vivekananda (1863- 1902) gave a great impetus for the liberation of women from seclusion and bondage. A major land mark of this period was the establishment of the first women's university at Poona which was started as a college for young widows by Karve in 1896 and grew into a multi-faculty university. Later in 1916, it was renamed as Srimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDP) University. By the end of the 19th century women entered in the field of different professions. Mahatma Gandhi was also a strong advocate of equality of men and women.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) made certain recommendations regarding women's education. But the most important development in the field of women's education after independence was the setting up of a National Committee for Women's Education in 1958 under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. This committee recommended special measures to bridge the gap between girl's education and boy's education at the primary and secondary levels. The Union Ministry of Education set up the National Council for Women's Education in 1959. Most of the state governments have established state councils for women's education. Smt. Hansa Mehta Committee was appointed in 1961 by the National Council for Women's Education to examine the problems of curricula for girls at all stages of education.

EDUCATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH WOMEN

Education has been regarded as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in the society. It not only develops the personality and rationality of individuals, but qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status. One of the direct expectations from educational development in a society is the reduction in the inequality among individuals and that is why education was included as the basic right of every human being in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Constitution of UNESCO also directs its efforts to achieve this goal. The ideal of equal educational opportunity will be achieved without regard to race, sex or any distinction, economic or social. Domestic Violence (sometimes referred to as domestic abuse or spousal abuse) occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate another. Domestic violence often refers to violence between spouses, or spousal abuse but can also include cohabitants and non-married intimate sexes and classes who can be the perpetrators of domestic violence. Domestic violence is perpetrated by both men and women, occurring in both the same and opposite- sex relationships. Domestic violence is controlling behaviour and includes all kinds of physical, sexual, economic, psychological and emotional abuse within all kinds of intimate relationships. The perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse are usually men and the victims or survivors are usually women and children that they know.

Violence is a tool that men use constantly to control women as a result of patriarchal conditions which give men the right to beat their wives. The practice of husband assaulting his wife is socially traditional but not legally legitimized. Domestic violence is not directly associated with a particular section of society, low, middle or high income group. Violence is persistent at all levels, only the degree varies. Physical violence aims at the intention of causing injury, harm, disability or death. Psychological violence is mostly in the form of verbal abuse, threats, humiliation, which makes the victim embarrassed and isolated. Physical and psychological violence or both can destabilize women and induce her to hitting back, running away, attempt suicide, retaliate and become mentally deranged and mars their dignity. Most often the women remain silent about domestic violence. They do not report to authorities for fear of social disgrace & criticism from parents. Sometimes they remain silent for the fear of more instances of domestic violence. It also tries to control victim's money and other economic resources, preventing victim from seeking friends and relatives, sabotaging victim's social relationships. In the 21st century domestic violence would increase more due to the changed life style, that is increasing use of alcohol, luxuries of life beyond capacity, lust for more money etc. This is, going to be a world phenomenon. Domestic violence is a slow poison which is swallowing the ingredients of family life. Such a situation is causing problems of health to the members of the family and is a source of constant tension.

The women population in India according to 2001 Census in about 500 million, which is nearly 50 percent of India's total population. Despite such a huge margin, the status of Indian women in society is not very pleasant. The question is why? Human beings are born equal but are not treated equally. Unequal treatment to women or the gender bias is not a new phenomenon. Our mythology, if referred to, shows us the gender bias that was prevalent in India. Sita or Draupati both had to bow down before this biased treatment. Even today women

continue to be victimized. Domestic violence is a form of violence which is quite prevalent not only in India but all over the world. Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure or wound someone. Women's education plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate which is a serious problem of a family. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. While the male literacy rate is more than 75% according to the 2001 census, the female literacy rate is just 54.16%. Prevailing prejudices, low enrollment of girl child in the schools, engagements of girl children in domestic works and high dropout rate are major obstacles in the path of making all Indian women educated.

Kumud Sharma of the Centre for Women's Development Studies in New Delhi traced the correlation between education and domestic violence to patriarchal attitude. "Educated women are aware of their rights". She said. They are no longer willing to follow commands blindly. When they ask questions, it causes conflicts, which, in turn, leads to violence. In many Indian states, working women are asked to hand over their paychecks to husbands and have no control over their finances. So, if they stop doing so or start asserting their rights, there is bound to be friction". As education is a very strong agency of planned social change, it can accelerate the process of change in attitudes and thereby in behaviours of males towards females. Formal and informal education along with the frequent appeals of no objectification and non commercialization of women in mass media can play a very important role in decreasing the violence against women in society. Ever since the independence, the constitution of India grants women equal rights with men. But despite the constitutional guarantee of equality and protection to women and passing of various legislations towards this end, they continue to enjoy an unequal status. The constitution has abolished all discrimination against women. International Conventions and Declarations have also denounced it, but gender discrimination from the womb to the tomb continues. While some relate it to prevailing social conditions like customs among women, some attribute it to personal characteristics of women like feeling of helplessness, lack of self-confidence, inferiority complex etc. The urban population which takes so much pride in its 'education' is not far behind their rural counterparts in terms of atrocities against women. If, on one hand, the brutality in rural areas are more grotesque, on the other hand, the tales of female infanticide and dowry deaths in the urban population have been conveniently kept behind the closed doors. The cases of harassment and domestic violence are registered even in urban areas and among married couples. Inflicting violence is not the monopoly of uneducated rustics but the educated ones are also involved in it. The women or the victim is also not always distressed housewife, in many cases she is a financially independent woman. This is not to prove that the education has no role in empowerment. In fact, it does. That is why, more and more cases are being registered these

days. Education can play a prominent role only when the correct values are instilled. In rural areas the girl child often drops out of secondary school because the family can only pay for the education of their male child, the son graduates while the daughter is married off. This is despite the fact that the constitution guarantees free primary schooling for every child up to an age of 14 years. When we, in the cities, read about such cases, we scream about injustice but it also happens in our urban neighborhood where daughters are married off forcibly. Although these are exceptions, yet they cannot be ignored.

Right to Education

The right to education is recognized as a human right and is understood to establish an entitlement to free and compulsory education for all children, an obligation to primary education and to develop secondary education accessible to all children as well as equitable access to higher education, and a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to this access to education, the right to education encompasses also the obligation to eliminate discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been mandated to monitor the implementation of this historic Right. A Special Division within NCPCR will undertake this huge and important task in the coming months and years. A special toll free helpline to register complaints will be set up by NCPCR for this purpose. NCPCR welcomes the formal notification of this Act and looks forward to playing an active role in ensuring its successful implementation. NCPCR also invites all civil society groups, students, teachers, administrators, artists, writers, government personnel, legislators, members of the judiciary and all other stakeholders to join hands and work together to build a movement to ensure that every child of this country is in school and enabled to get at least 8 years of quality education.

Any cost that prevents a child from accessing school will be borne by the State which shall have the responsibility of enrolling the child as well as ensuring attendance and completion of 8 years of schooling. No child shall be denied admission for want of documents; no child shall be turned away, if the admission cycle in the school is over and no child shall be asked to take admission test. Children with disabilities will also be educated in the mainstream schools. The Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh has emphasized that it is important for the country that, if we nurture our children and young people with the right education, India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure. All private schools shall be required to enroll children from weaker sections and disadvantaged communities to the extent of 25% of their enrolment, by simple random selection. No seat in this quota can be left vacant. These children will be treated on par with all the other children in the school and subsidized by the State at the rate of average per learner costs in the government schools (unless the per learner cost in the private school is lower). All schools will have to prescribe norms and standards as laid out in the Act and no school that does not fulfill these standards within 3 years will be allowed to function. All private schools will have to apply for recognition, failing which they will be penalized to the tune of Rs 1 lakh and, if they still continue to function, they will be liable to pay Rs 10,000 per day as fine. Norms and standards of teacher qualification and training are also being laid down by an academic authority. Teachers in all schools will have to subscribe to these norms within 5 years. Violence affects the lives of millions of

women worldwide, irrespective of their wealth, race, sexuality and culture. It cuts across cultural, socio-economic educational and religious barriers. Violence against women may take shocking forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. This not only reflects grave violation of the most fundamental human rights but also reaffirms continuity of suffering, deprivation and discrimination of women.

Reasons of Increasing Domestic Violence

1. Joint families disintegrated into nuclear families. Joint family system has disintegrated resulting in the lack of guidance, control, and affection to newly married. Joint family system was a shock absorber.
2. Husband dominates wife causing irritation, which is not acceptable to her. It becomes more serious in the cases where the wife is also employed. There is nobody to help them to sort out differences.
3. Husband and wife start doubting extra marital relations causing quarrels, fights and even suicide. It is very difficult to amicably settle such issues.
4. Interference of the parents of the girl in the husband's family, frequent visit of parents and other family members of girl's side cause tension and disturbance. This makes the husband and his family angry resulting in quarrels and disputes.
5. If the husband is in business or service and is starved of funds, he asks the wife to make arrangements from her parents causing domestic violence. This is not one time activity but a long-term problem. This results in all sorts of domestic violence.
6. Drinking habits of the husband make the life of the wife a hell. The drinking is becoming a common phenomena. This results in wastage of money, poor health and bad habits like beating wife and children causing domestic violence.

Following are the forms of Domestic Violence

1. **Physical Abuse:** Physical Abuse is the most visible form of abuse and most likely (with sexual abuse) to give rise to criminal charges. Injuries include black eyes, hitting, slapping, shoving, miscarriage, deafness, blindness, biting, pinching, hair pulling and injuries to a foetus and death. It can include slaps, bumps and being attacked with weapons such as knives, household objects, firearms etc. internally as well as externally.
2. **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual Abuse in an abusive relationship is another form of violence, control and degradation. It includes rape, sexual assaults (including with implements), enforced prostitution, enforced sexual practices including being forced to watch or engage in pornography.
3. **Psychological Abuse:** Psychological abuse examples include jecky and Hyde behaviour, preventing contracts with friends and families, constant belittling and humiliating things being said, claims that children will be removed, if anyone is told of abuse, controlling behaviour, deliberately enforcing dependency, constant statements that the victim is mentally ill etc.
4. **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is an attack on victim's personality and well being

and is often described as worse than physical violence. It may be referred to as 'mind-games'. It frequently amounts to the abuser assuming a tight and unhealthy control of all members of the family, which may become increasingly isolated in the community. Examples include threats of violence to all members of family, constant criticism of the victim like saying she is ugly, ignorant or worthless, using the children as ammunition, family life and mood being dictated by abuse (abuse-eccentric) continual questioning humiliation in public, playing on community and cultural fears, threats to have the children removed, threats to kill or have deported, threats that the abuser will commit suicide, threats and actual violence to family pets etc.

5. **Financial Abuse:** Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment. Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but also has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large.



3

HIGHER EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

INTRODUCTION

India is enriched with human power resources which can be enlightened and empowered through optimum utilization of education. Education is an important tool for reducing inequalities and poverty. It has a special quality, which gives benefits to the society as a whole. It ensures equitable economic growth. Due to Globalization, knowledge acquired through proper education becomes vital for meeting out international standards. The development of human capabilities and skill depends to a greater extent on quality education. The expenditure on education gives benefits to a Nation for stable economic growth, out space in technology and stability in economy. The technology and the human capital (value of human resources is referred as human capital) are the basic two components of knowledge, which are essential for a competitive economy. Higher education provides out space in technology and development of skills in human resources. Selection of a career or occupation of lifelong may be influenced by several factors such as social characteristics, family income, parental education and occupation, personal interest abilities and higher education.

Promoting gender equality which is one of the main keys of achieving Millennium Development Goals. All the keys of MDGs like eradication of poverty, universalisation of primary education, promotion of gender equality, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and, to develop a global partnership for development are automatically realized when the prime priority is given to the third MDG called Promoting Gender Equality. What are

the ways of promoting gender equality and empower women? The answer is putting resources in to poor women's hands while promoting gender equality in the household and in society and this results in large development pay offs. Expanding women's opportunities in public works, agriculture, finance, and other sectors accelerates economic growth and helps to mitigate the effects of current and future financial crisis. Gender equality is a moral imperative which is about fairness and equity, and includes many political, social and cultural dimensions. It is true that many countries around the world have made significant progress towards gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship in recent decades.

Proper higher education channelizes the acquired education for employment and to entrepreneurial activity. Higher education provides specific knowledge and skills required for a particular job and occupies the position of a key determinant.

EDUCATION

Education is considered to be primary in eradicating poverty by developing countries. Owing to the scope of changes in the global environment, society has become knowledge based. Higher learning and research act as the essential elements of cultural and socio-economic development of individuals and society. According to the world conference of UNESCO on higher education "In the past decade, higher education has undergone "a deep change" that will shape the academic enterprises for decades to come". The human development of a country is measured by three dimensions. These dimensions include the average achievement in education (knowledge), healthy life and decent standard of living. The healthy life and the standard of living are measured in terms of per capita income, GDP and purchasing power. The investments in education enhance the level of human capital which plays a vital role in the growth of the economy. Numerous researches in India and abroad have established that investment in education has resulted in high growth rate, increase in national income and standard of living. Besides, education has also helped in removal of poverty and betterment of health.

Education in India is provided by the State, Central and Local Authorities, and Private institutions. Takshashila was recorded as the earliest center of higher learning during the fifth century BC. The Nalanda University was the oldest university-system of education in the world, having the qualities of a University. Due to British rule, the education system in India became integrated with western system. The Department of School Education and Literacy is dealing with the primary education in India. During the Financial Year 2011-12, the Central Government has allocated Rs 38,957 crores to the department of school education and literacy. Within this allocation, major share of Rs 21,000 crores, 'is for the flagship programme such as 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan' and Mid-Day Meals programmes. The private education market in India during 2012 was US\$68–70 billion. 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was introduced. Lot of measures have been taken up by the Government to ensure providing education to all children. These measures also include increasing the expenditure on education to 6 percent of GDP, making the children in the age group of 6-14, to get education as a fundamental right, imposition of education cess on all central government taxes for lending support to the expenditure on education and improving the quality of education.

A research study conducted by Agiomirgianikis, Asterio and Monastririotis (2004) on "Growth effects of Human Capital and stages of Economic Development" reveals that human capital affects growth positively and higher levels of education are associated with higher rates of economic growth. The study concludes that for achieving economic growth and its sustainability, Government intervention in providing higher education (University level) could be a crucial factor.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is a level of learning for children who finish their higher secondary education at school level. Higher education is an educational level followed by completion of higher secondary education at school level. It consists of teaching, research, applied work training, social services of universities, imparted as under graduation, post-graduation, research and diploma programmes. It also includes trade schools, vocational institutions, career colleges and institutions offering professional courses. It offers one to undertake a study of art, science, engineering, technology, medical and environmental studies. The document of the World Bank on higher education (1994) "The Lessons of Experience" justifies that "Higher education is of permanent importance for economic and social developments" It also adds that higher education is important for economic growth. This indicates that the importance of higher education is recognized in national development.

The higher education system in India is the third largest system in the World, the USA being the first and China being the second. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the main governing body at tertiary level, which stipulates standards and advises government and coordinates between State and central. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) also monitors the functioning of technical education system. UGC reported that as of 2011, India has 42 central and 275 state universities. There are 130 deemed universities and 90 private universities. Further five institutions are established under the State Act and 33 institutions are functioning as national importance also. There are about 33,000 colleges representing government and private degree colleges including of 1,800 women's colleges.

The feature of Indian higher education system is the distance learning and open education system. The Distance Education Council takes care of the function of distance learning programmes and Open University education system. The annual report of 2009-10 of Ministry of Human Resource Development stated that the higher education sector in India was expected to achieve a growth rate of 18 percent (compounded annual growth rate) till 2020.

According to the census of 2011, the statistical department gave the average literacy rate in India as 74 percent with male literacy rate at 82.1 percent and female literacy rate at 65.5 percent. As per the report dt.28.09.2012 of All India Survey on Higher education, the gross enrolment ratio in higher education is 18.8% percent in India. It indicates that the country has still a long way to go in order to achieve the 30 percent target fixed by the Government of India in higher education by 2020. Furthermore, there is a significant disparity of female literacy rates across rural and urban areas in India. Out of the 24 states in India, 6 have female literacy rates of below 60 percent. The rural state Rajasthan has a female literacy rate of less than 12 percent. The distribution level of education in India is not even in inter-states. According to Economic Development Index, there is a weak correlation between the level of

education and economic development. Haryana and Punjab have lower development in education and higher economic development. Kerala has 100percent literacy whereas it has moderate economic development.

The education at secondary and higher level consolidates the gains received from primary education. It provides necessary skills that are useful in job market. It keeps the people not falling back in to poverty line. The higher education ensures sustainable growth and helps people and nation to withstand the shocks created by environmental factors. As observed by the Apex Court (Supreme Court of India) that it is higher education which can ensure the basic human right of the people to live like human beings with dignity. Education has the potential of empowering women in different perspectives. It enables the women to access resources and services, enhance economic independency. It equips women to assess their position and to participate in all socio- economic activities.

EMPOWERMENT

The literal meaning of the term “empowerment” is “becoming powerful”. The concept of empowerment was introduced at the International women’s conference held in 1985 at Nairobi. The conference defined empowerment as “A redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women” Empowerment refers to a social process which challenges the fundamental imbalances of power distribution and relations. It is a process of redistribution of power within and between families, societies, through disempowering some structures, systems and institutions.

Concept of Empowerment

The term “empowerment” is a broader concept and it has been defined by different social scientists in their own perspectives in a different connotation. The “em” is prefixed to the noun “power” to create a verb. In Webster’s New World Dictionary (1982), the prefix “em” is used as verb which means ‘to make’, ‘cause to be’. Thus ‘to empower’ is to make or cause power.

The Social Work Dictionary (Barker, 1991) defines the term “empowerment” as the process of helping a group or community to achieve political influence or relevant legal authority. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “empowerment” as: 1) to invest, legally or formally to power, to license. 2) To bestow power upon, make powerful. Empowerment relates to POWER and it is the process of changing the balance of power in favour of the relatively weak and the powerless. It enables the weaker sections to exercise power of exerting influence over the process of decision making at various levels.

While several researchers have tried to capture the meaning of the word, the definition most relevant to the approach adopted in this study is one provided by Baltiwala (2000). To quote, “empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both controls over resources and over ideology. It includes, in addition to extrinsic control, a growing intrinsic capability, greater self- confidence, with a focus on eliminating the future dependency for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. Empowerment is also defined as a process of awareness and conscientization of and an inner transformation of one’s consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers”.

Two things are discernible from the above definition. First, empowerment is not about power to achieve goals and ends. By conceptualizing empowerment in terms of power to the definition explicitly recognizes that the process of empowerment involves not only changes in access to resources, but also an understanding of one's rights, entitlements and conscience that gender roles can be changed and gender equality is possible. Second, the concept of empowerment is more generally applicable to those who are powerless irrespective of the gender, group, class and caste. Hence the concept of empowerment is not applicable to women alone. Nonetheless, women's empowerment or lack of it is unique in that it cuts across all types of class and caste powerlessness and plays an important role within families and households.

Gender relations in the society define women's position and the degree of empowerment. The gender represents not the biological sex of an individual, but also the different roles, rights and obligations that are attached to individuals. Although sex differentiated roles, rights and obligations vary across class and lifecycle stage, they exist in every sphere of human functioning. This makes gender a fundamental dimension of societal stratification. Moreover, the sex specific roles, rights and obligations are unequal between genders. In every sphere of human functioning, the roles defined for women are subordinated to those defined for men.

Unequal gender relations imply that men not only have and can exercise greater power than women but also have greater access to and control over resources and information. This inequality in gender relation seems to be inherent in various societal institutions being practised in day-to-day life. In this context, several studies have shown that there is a paradigm shift in the social development with greater attention to gender issues at the national and global level. Discrimination and social exclusion have received specific attention for their negative roles in promoting equality and equal partnership.

The Dimensions of Women Empowerment

It is extremely difficult to define the concept of empowerment, as it reflects various aspects of people, which are conditional upon the context in which they live. Women Empowerment is a "western" concept. The question has been raised, not only in micro finance but also in the broader field of international development, whether it is ethical and appropriate for developed institutions to promote women's empowerment. The empowerment or disempowerment of women and other groups in each society is closely linked to the culture of that society. The promotion of women's empowerment implies advocacy for cultural and social change, which is an inappropriate imposition of "Western" values on non-Western societies. Empowerment is defined as 'giving power to', 'creating power within' and 'enabling'. Hence empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable individuals or groups to realize their full potential and powers in all spheres of life. It is a comprehensive process, which includes awareness, confidence building, realization of self-worth, organizing, participating in decision-making and finally having access to control over resources in fair and equal proportion. It thus envisages a greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision-making for self, greater ability to plan one's life to have greater control over the circumstances which influence one's life and greater capacity to free oneself from

shackles, imposed on customs, beliefs and practices. Thus empowerment is a 'process' and not an 'event'. It is therefore, time consuming and may have several phases. Each phase or step may be an effort by itself. It can be built only gradually by constructing each step solidly. The progress of the 'whole' depends on the various environmental factors in a given society in which such a process of empowerment takes place. It can be self-initiated or initiated by others. Empowerment of women is the phenomenon of the 90s. It represents the fourth (according to some, the fifth) phase of policy approach towards involvement of women in the process of development. This is considered the most appropriate approach adopted till date.

Thus Empowerment can be broadly categorized into

- (a) Educational
- (b) Economic
- (c) Psychological
- (d) Social and
- (e) Political empowerment where the women are used as a strategy to achieve the above dimensions.

Educational Empowerment

Education is the prime avenue for empowering women. This process of empowering entails much more than awareness of alternatives, women's rights and the nature of the requirements. It involves the breakdown of powerful sex stereotyping, which prevented women from demanding their rights from men in position of authority. For women, the process of empowerment entails breaking away from the cycle of learned and taught submission to discrimination, learned from one generation of women and passed on to the rest. Thus, educational empowerment indicators stand as the right to learn, gender sensitization, legal understanding, health education, etc. With more education, women have greater access to employment opportunities and increase the ability to secure their own economic resources. Legislation, which protected women from discrimination and promoted gender equality, also needed to be enacted by governments.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment endorse women's sense of work, the right to determine choices, the power to control their own lives within and outside home and their ability to influence the direction of social change and to create a just, social and economic order nationally and internationally. When the right to earning and savings, entrepreneurship skills, marketing ability, managerial capacity and ownership of assets were experienced by women, it could be accepted that they were on the process of empowerment. Economically empowered women contributed to the wealth and well-being not only of their families, but also of their nations. Employment programmes must satisfy at least three conditions: they have access to, as well as have control over income; and they need to increase women's access to non-kin support, information and outside contacts. Women were empowered through an increasing control of economic resources, especially income, and through education (Blumberg, 1995). According to a study, improvement in women's economic position may not only increase their happiness, but also enhance their status. Adams (1996) of Britain argues that empowerment paradigm has replaced the paradigm of client treatment, which dominated social work in

former decades. The study offers an overview of the challenges and ambiguities of the empowerment paradigm in terms of a wide range of empowering relationships from individuals to whole communities. It describes self-help as the most significant traditional activity in Britain, on which empowerment practice draws. O'Connell (1993) describes that Oxfam work to empower women and to end gender discrimination suggests the strategies of education for consciousness and collective action. Other two-pronged strategy for empowering women focus 'alternative employment and alternative power structures at the local level achieved through building and strengthening women's groups'.

In the Women's Empowerment Framework used by UNICEF, Karl (1995), describes that the empowerment of women involves the interplay of four interrelated and mutually reinforcing components: collective awareness building, capacity building and skills development, participation and greater control and decision-making power, and action to bring about greater gender equality. According to Autobus (1989) political activism is the central concept of empowerment. In 'power', one distinguishes between role power (or power over) and personal power - the strength within each person to act - to empower women. Adams and Castle (1994) reported that a woman's status is influenced by the social economic power and prestige that comes with a particular role in her life-cycle. Policies and programmes, which aim at empowering women in decision-making, need to consider these complex power relations those structure women's lives. Juliana (1999) portrays the cross-sectional analysis of women's empowerment in a descriptive study by collecting the data with survey method in Kanchipuram district. It reveals that women were treated as secondary citizens in all spheres of life - social, cultural, economic and political.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment signifies confidence-building, acquisition of a sense of efficacy and the ability to overcome the feeling of helplessness (Sharma, 2000). The definitions of knowledge, self-respect and other elements related to human beings may be culture-specific. However, invariable of society the concepts of strong determination, assertive nature, motivation, etc. revealed the psychological empowerment of the individual. Often their self-confidence is expressed in their courage to meet the officials without any fear and to represent their problems and difficulties.

Social Empowerment

Empowerment as a social process challenges the fundamental imbalances of power distribution and relations. It is a process of redistribution of power within and between families, societies, through disempowering some structures, systems and institutions. Social empowerment promotes sustainable rural structure, dissemination of knowledge about health, nutrition, literacy, education, freedom and opportunities for realizing women's potentialities and adoption of new agricultural practices. The social empowerment scale employs indicators such as gender discrimination, female infanticide, dowry, marriage, poverty, caste and social justice to assess the level of empowerment of women.

Political Empowerment

Political process is central to the empowerment process (Karl, 1995). In this process adequate information and resources have to be made available for women to make their own

autonomous decision-making. Empowerment is used to describe a process by which women become conscious of their own situation and organize collectively to gain greater access to public services. The political empowerment indicators consider their basic political rights, role in decision-making bodies of the state and the central governments, representation in policy-making, participation in political-campaigning, leadership quality and ability to politicize their problems.

According to Adams (1996), in developing countries, self-help by poor people is as much a political issue as anywhere else. For instance, the shift to community-based, locally non-professionally led campaigns or programmes to change lifestyles, reduce environmental hazards or deal effectively with personal health and social problems, may involve confronting exploitative power in societies either apathetic, or actively hostile, towards any activity implying changes in their policies or practices.

The panchayat system had set in motion a silent evolution in the country towards promotion of women empowerment. Specifically political participation highlighted the visibility of leadership and decision-making of Dalit women in the local bodies and how it could lead their role-transformation in the society. Empowerment was a spectrum of political activity ranging from acts of individual resistance to mass political mobilizations that challenged the basic power-relations in society. Empowerment of women in the household was necessary before women could participate in public life; women must have some control over their own lives and enough self-confidence before they could engage in politics.

Empowerment also includes encouraging and developing the skills for self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future dependency for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. Empowerment is also defined as a process of awareness and conscientization of capacity building, leading to greater participation, effective decision making power and control leading to transformative action. Empowerment with reference to women includes power relation at such different levels such as family, community and society. According to Adams (1996), empowerment is the means by which individuals, groups, communities take control of their circumstances for achieving their goals thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to Maximize quality of their life. Empowerment may be considered as exercising control over resources viz., finance, physical and materials and beliefs, values and attitudes.

The term "empowerment" has gained significance among researchers and policy makers. It is concerned with people gaining control over their lives so as to achieve goals as a group. It is a method by which social workers enhance the power of the people lacking behind. The dimensions of empowerment may be classified as educational, economic, social, psychological and political empowerment, which all are interrelated.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Higher Education is also positively related to several human development indicators, in addition to economic development. Higher education is found to be very significantly related to the human development index and also to the gender development index. The higher the level of higher education in a society, whether in stock or flow forms, the higher can be the level of human development, through its influence on two main components of human

development index, viz., the life expectancy, and GDP percapita. Very few major empirical estimates are available on the quantitative effect of specialized human capital (Schultz 1988) on economic development. In a relatively recent growth accounting exercise, Mathur (1987) estimated the contribution of technological change to economic growth in India to be quite significant. Such research is relatively abundant particularly referring to agricultural productivity in India (see Tilak 1994) Malathy and Duraisamy (1993) estimated rates of return (using Mincerian earnings function) to scientific and technical education in India. The average rates of return based on 1981 census survey data, are high and vary between 17.4 percent (Under – Graduate Diploma) and 70.8 percent (Ph.D. Degree). Though few studies are available on the effect of research and development on other aspects of national development, its contribution is well noted.

Higher education has a very significant role in the development of the societies – in terms of economic development, human development, gender- based development, improvement in health, life expectancy and reduction in fertility, infant mortality and poverty. But there does exist some important research, some of which is, however, more recent, that analysed the relationship between post primary education and development, and did find significant impact of secondary and higher education on growth (e.g., Barro 1991, Barro and Salai-i-Martin, 1995, Lucas 1988, Mankiw et al., 1992, Barro and Lee 1993a, b; Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, Petrakis and Stamatakis 2002, Romer 1986). For instance, the panel analysis of real per capita GDP growth rates in about 100 countries over three periods, 1965-75, 1975-85 and 1985-90 by Barro (1991) showed that secondary and tertiary levels of education attainment of male adult population have significant effects on growth, and more over the growth is not significantly related to primary education. An increase in male secondary schooling by one standard deviation is estimated to raise the growth by 1.1 percentage points annually and higher education by 0.5 percentage points. According to Barro and Lee (1994), countries where the labour force had one year of secondary level or more experienced a higher annual growth rate of about 1.34 points more. This is robust even with the introduction of additional variables like political stability, openness of the economy and black market. Benhabib and Spiegel (1994) have found that secondary education helps in innovating technology and in sustaining growth. Self, Sharmistha and Grabowski (2004) found significant impact of secondary education on economic growth and the relationship is causal and statistically significant when secondary education is measured in terms of enrolments or in the form of stock of human capital. Jorgenson (2000) estimated that a considerable part of the growth during the 1990s was attributable to research innovations at universities and larger proportion of higher educated workforce. While primary education serves as a threshold level of human capital development for economic growth. it is secondary and higher education including investment in science and technology that accelerates and sustains high economic growth.

Even in case of India, there are a few important studies on this subject. Using recent data Mathur Mamgain (2004) found significantly increasing effects of education on economic development (NSDP per capita) by increasing levels of education. It is important to note that the regression coefficient for not only illiteracy but also for just literacy is negative and highest effects are found of higher education, followed by higher secondary and secondary education.

Estimates based on production functions on a cross section data on India (Tilak 2007)

similar cross-section studies on 49 countries in Asia (Tilak 2003a) and larger number of countries (Tilak, 2006a) indicate a strong effect of higher education on development. Higher education measured in terms of the gross enrolment ratios or in terms of higher education attainment, i.e., proportion of population with higher education – is found to have a positive effect on the level of economic development and if time lag is allowed in the production functions, the effect is found to be higher.

It is not only life expectancy that is significantly related to higher education, but also infant mortality, another measure of health is significantly related to higher education. Poverty is also found to be inversely related to the level of higher education in these analyses. The relationship between poverty and gross enrolment ratio in higher education is negative and is statistically significant. An analysis of logarithmic trend value of enrolment ratio in higher education on poverty on data on 77 developing countries indicates as the enrolment ratio crosses 40 percent, poverty ratio tends to reach nearly zero levels. In general, one can argue that while basic education may take people out of poverty, this can be sustained well by secondary and higher education, which help in upward mobility and offer better economic opportunities.

The level of achievement in technology critically depends upon the level of higher education in a given economy. After all, it is higher education and research that help in developing new technology; it is higher education and research that contribute to innovations and in their diffusion. So one can expect a very strong effect of higher education on the development of technology in any society. In fact, the level of achievement in technology may be a close indicator of economic growth itself. Most countries with high enrolment ratios in higher education become leaders in technology, with high levels of achievement in technology. The converse is also true: a large number of countries with low enrolment ratios (say less than ten percent) are marginalized in the area of technology. Those with medium level of enrolment ratios, nearly 20 percent, like Singapore and Hong Kong are indeed potential leaders in technology. A few countries like Philippines and Thailand with medium and high levels of enrolment ratios are classified by the UNDP (2001) as dynamic leaders. The rest who did not expand their higher education systems well, are indeed marginalized. We find not even a single country with a low enrolment ratio (less than ten percent) in higher education to have achieved high or medium level of achievement in the technology achievement index. The simple coefficient of correlation between enrolment ratio in higher education and technology achievement index on the Asian countries is as high as 0.8 and that between technology and higher education attainment is 0.65.

Thus the available, though meager, research evidence shows that higher education has a very significant role in the development of the societies – in terms of economic development, human development, gender-based development, improvement in health, life expectancy and reduction in fertility, infant mortality and poverty. Hence, the general presumption that higher education is not necessary for economic growth and development, particularly in developing countries and on the other hand, and that is literacy and primary education that is important, is not a correct presumption. But these findings are not yet as popular as the rate of return estimates and other findings described earlier that emphasised the role of primary education vis-à-vis other levels of education. As a result attention continues to be focused on primary education and at best on lower secondary education.

Substantial research has shown very clearly that education of women matters a lot. It significantly contributed towards demographic improvement by reducing fertility and improving the use of better methods of population control, by influencing the age of marriage, desired family size, improvements in infant mortality, child nutrition, health of the members of the family, improvement in participation of children in education and in their levels of educational achievement through improving pre-school abilities of children, and improvement in the economic status of the family with increase in the labor force participation of women, thereby in the household earnings, etc. The effects of women's education on women's behaviour on decisions relating to fertility, family welfare and health, etc., are very significant which in turn enhance the productivity of the people and yield higher wages. In fact, a large amount of research has concluded that women's education has a higher effect than the education of men on several dimension of development, which are not only related to women, but also related to the total population.

GENDER INEQUALITIES

Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States of America. However, inequality between women and men can take very many different forms. Indeed gender inequality is not a homogenous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems. Amartya Sen (2001) discusses seven dimensions of inequalities, mortality inequality, natality inequality, basic facility inequality, special opportunity inequality, professional inequality, ownership inequality and household inequality. Based on these dimensions gender inequality arises and affects empowerment of women.

Causes for Gender Inequality

The ideology of gender inequality is inculcated in both men and women from birth, before they can think for themselves, religion, mythology, social and cultural labour and superstitious behavioural training, seclusion, veiling, curtailment of physical mobility, distribution of work, dietary discrimination and rewards and punishment all are used to socialize girls to accept and participate in their own oppression. Gender disparity could be seen in terms of histological advantages. Even in the womb, the male fetuses have a lower rate of miscarriage than their female counter parts. Yadav (2000) states that the quality and quantity of women's work is governed by a host of social, religious and traditional factors. It results in constraining women from taking up occupation and education and thereby gender discrimination has been raised. Becker (1981) views that gender division of labour is the root cause of gender discrimination.

Gender discrimination caused by cultural traditions reserves the best food for men or feeding men first or devoting more time to the care of boys than to girls when children fall sick. Shortage of food in the household offers poorer nutritional status to the girls than to the boys. Although women usually bear primary responsibility for safeguarding family health and often find healthcare for others in the family, they may have difficulty in obtaining health care for themselves. Sometimes women need a male relative's permission to seek health care (World Bank Report 1992)/Patriarchy is the main reason for gender discrimination in the family. Furthermore women themselves cause gender discrimination. Female infanticide, child marriage, dowry deaths and so on continue to be a part of the Indian women's life. These problems are due to women themselves.

Gender Quality and Gender Specific Policies

Human Resource Development Programme should include empowerment strategies such as educating girls and women, facilitating their involvement in economic activities through development of their entrepreneurial and income earning and access to credit, involving women in policy formulation and decision making, encouraging socio-cultural change by exploring gender issues and promoting the effective implementation of equal rights legislation. Cart (1997) is of the same view that an organization is needed to remove structural inequalities inherent in the gender system. Many researchers suggest that gender specific policies with emphasis on activities and resource beneficial to women may help in providing equal opportunities and reaping the benefits of development. These policies would enhance women to take decision in their life and the socio economic status of women can be improved.

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Education will address the historical, socio-economic and political factors, which have acted to define the poor in general, and poor women in particular. Education is a dynamic process of learning in which women gain access to meaningful information, engage in critical reflection and act as a collective to transform the material and social conditions of their existence in some way. Education enables people to become more active participants. With education, individuals and societies have more responsibilities and choices. Nalini Srivastava (2005) recommended women's studies centres for enhancing the status of women. Women's participation in higher education has been improved and considerable progress has been made. Provision of training, employment and income generation activities should be available to women. Women should be allowed to enjoy rights and fundamental freedom on par with men in all spheres. Samungou Singh, (2007) exerts profound influence in acquiring higher education. He studied the linkages between the socio-economic background of the students and their higher education participation. The study carried out with one hundred and twenty undergraduate students comprising of 58 men and 62 women from three colleges of Manipur. The results of the study showed that the students whose parents were engaged in white-collar occupations had better chances of receiving higher education than those coming from other occupational background. The study also found that there is a relationship between socio economic background of the students and their occupational choices.

Pushpa Sinha and Ratna Mitra (2008) in their article on "Women Empowerment and Role of Education" pointed out the status of women before and after independence. The study also analysed the enrollment rate of women in different states and Union Territories. It was observed that improving the condition of women in the Indian society and empowerment of women can be possibly achieved only when women are educated. Education will impart in them decision making capacity. It helps them know their legal rights and they can be economically independent having their own identity. Sandhya Rani Das (2008) emphasized the importance of women's education for the socio- economic development of the third world countries. It pointed out the social and economic benefits derived out of female education. By highlighting census of India 2001, the study explored the gap between male and female literacy in different states. Correlation analysis was used to study the impact of education on economic growth. Based on the findings, the study concluded that education is indispensable for

economic development. Education, especially female education affects the income considerably and plays a major role in controlling fertility. Steps should be taken to reduce the gender gap in education by appropriate policy measures by planners. Mahore (2008) assumed female primary education promotes growth indirectly by encouraging lower fertility. Moreover, the perception of higher education as an important public good has eroded. Higher education is viewed by some as a private good with benefits accruing to the student in the form of higher future wages and quality of life. The researcher also stressed the importance of education for sustainable development. By highlighting different studies at various countries the article explored the fact that how an additional year of schooling has helped to increase the personal income. It also added that, in order to be more productive and to contribute to society, students will need to understand what they learn deeply enough to use it to solve the complex problems they will encounter in the real world.

Education and Decision Making Power

Education is strongly related to decision making on accessing own health care, ability to set aside money for own use and mobility. Malhotra and Mather (1997) view that education is critical in determining women's decision-making impact on financial issues, but not on social and organizational matters. Education is related to increased decision making on economic issues in the household, very strongly in Malaysia, Thailand and Pakistan more moderately in Philippines and not at all in India. Jejeebhoy (1996) observes that education is more closely related to decision-making, autonomy, mobility indicators in Tamil Nadu. The effect of education (Primary and Secondary) is positive on women's decision-making authority.

Education is immaterial in defining control over finances or household decision-making, but does increase women's freedom of movement (Bloom 2001). There is another view that education is positively related with women's decision making control of resources, and autonomy except mobility with which it is negatively associated. Many studies find a positive relationship between education and women's decision making power. Women with higher schooling are more likely to say that their opinion has weight in household decision, and they are also more likely to think that women should have decision-making input on matters both within and outside the customary female domain. In India based on the National Family Health Survey- II (NFHS-II) reports a strong and consistent positive relationship between women's schooling and their input on health care decisions for themselves and their ability to set aside money for personal use. In Indonesia, Asian Marriage Survey demonstrates a strong and positive effect of girl's education on their decision-making input in the selection of a spouse. In contrast education does not lead to greater decision-making power in certain specific settings. It is well-demonstrated by the three studies in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India. Agnihotri (1999) says that even without education women are liberal and enjoy the power of autonomy in decision-making. Niraula and Morgan (2000) have stated in another way that education has strong effects on women's freedom of movement but has no effect on their decision making capacity.

EDUCATION AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) opine that secondary schooling is associated with higher autonomy in Punjab, U.P and T.N. Primary schooling is moderately associated with higher

autonomy only in Tamil Nadu. There is another view that education is immaterial in defining control over finances or household decision-making, but does increase women's freedom of movement (Bloom 2001), Hollos (1998) is of the same view that less educated women have more independence and autonomy than educated women.

Studies on Asia and the Middle East countries reported a positive relationship between women's education and their freedom of movement. But Balk (1997) finds a strong negative association between women's education and their mobility. Studies by Kishor (1995) and Govindasamy and Malhotra (1996) in Egypt, Sengupta and Johnson (2003) in India find support for a positive relationship between education and not just decision-making, but also mobility. Other studies based on primary data, which found a null or conditional relationship on decision-making in specific settings, find that for mobility the relationship to education is more clearly positive. Bloom (2001) and Jejeebhoy (1996) report a positive impact of schooling on aspects of women's mobility. Similar findings are also reported by Niraula and Morgan (2000) for Nepal. Education does not increase women's autonomy on decision regarding household purchases, wife working outside home, fertility and other household decisions.

Education and Gender Equality

Greater prosperity, modernization and more widespread education for girls have reinforced patriarchal structures by defining an economically depended role for women relative to their husbands. The gender gap in education grew with girls having lower level skills and lesser access to higher paying jobs. The effect of women's education on gender relations is minimal because of the power of gender ideology and practice, lack of economic opportunities for women, and the largely irrelevant content and poor quality of education.

Vlassoff (1994) argues that greater prosperity, modernization and more wide-spread education for girls have actually reinforced patriarchal structures by defining an economically dependent role for women relative to their husbands. Moreover, it is only in theory that education is seen as a means of financial independence for girls. In practice, girls are educated to secure a husband, not to get a job.

Education and Absence of Home Violence

Severe and on-going domestic violence has been documented in almost every country in the past decade. On one hand it reflects gender asymmetries in power relations and on the other challenges to gender ideology. Violence towards women may be considered a sensitive index of their wellbeing and status. Educated and uneducated women report different forms and precipitating factors for violence, and higher levels of education are associated with lower reported physical or psychological violence. The extent to which women are willing to report violence may be influenced by education. Moreover the direction of this bias is not certain. If violence is more stigmatized among the educated, then educated women may be more likely to under-report violence. On the other hand, educated women may be more willing or able than uneducated women to recognize and vocalize violence, perhaps because of greater exposure to the issue. Koenig (2003) found in Bangladesh that education remained strongly and negatively associated with domestic violence even when community level variables of education, autonomy and credit group membership were included. In contrast, other studies in India and Bangladesh show that at least some part of

the protective effect attributed to education is due to women's participation in community level organization, whether they are credit-based groups or activist organizations involved in campaigning against violence (Sen 1999).

Some research in India (find no evidence that education protects women from violence. Moreover, Bloch and Rao (2000) view that wife's education does not have a significant impact on whether the wife gets severely beaten. Thus, any negative or positive relationship of violence with women's education may at least partly reflect education related differences in reporting rather than in actual experiences of violence.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Tapen (1998) opines that education provides information about health and nutrition, reproductive and sexual rights, family planning decision, gender quality, environmental awareness, religious objectives, political consciousness, economic opportunities, women's rights and legal provisions, production and consumption patterns, etc., which definitely empower women in a complete sense.

Education is a fundamental right to women. The educational policies should link education to empowerment, say Ramachandran (2002), Berhman (2003). Dreze and Sen (1991) are of the view that education is likely to increase their role in household decision making which in turn increases the level of empowerment. Education is an investment, which enhances the skill and credentials of women by increasing their knowledge. Moreover, it increases the freedom of women to choose their career, whatever they prefer (Barua 2002). Right education is one of the most important means or empowering women with knowledge, skill and self-confidence. Sundaram (2000) is of the view that education to rural women is highly essential to increase their earning activities. Learning by doing and earning is the apt way of empowering the rural women in India. Moreover employment with education augments financial position of women which in turn leads to economic independence. Thereby the productive and creative energies of women should be properly utilized and streamlined by education. Education is an investment in opening up employment opportunities – access to credit, land ownership and power to decision-making and there by empowerment is achieved. Sharma (1991) says that education is the potent instrument of empowerment, which refers to capacity building. Education is the major determinant to make the women self-reliant and pursue their goals and achieve their success in diverse fields which they like. Careful planning on the part of women education will result in enhancing the empowerment of women. Educated women are the forerunner in making awareness among the other women in the society, says Man on money (2000). Education equips women to assess their position and to participate in all socio-economic activities (Keller 1992).

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Women with education and employment make for themselves in society by the flowering of their personality while retaining their essential womanliness. Their mental orientation is more prepared than a typical household. In the event of working outside, the traditional division of labour has been rearranged to meet the situation. Nair and Siddagangamma (2000) are of the view that the low rate of employment of women is due to low level of female literacy. Agarwal (2001) states in another way that education and

employment are the significant factors that influence women's empowerment. Women's education increases labour market participation and provides better employment opportunities for women and hence raises their incomes (Cameron et al. 2001). Khandekar (1998) finds a positive relationship between women's education and labour force participation in Bangladesh and also finds that the husband's education is likely to reduce his wife's labour force participation rate because of the positive wealth effects of potential earnings. Female labour force participation is governed by the reflection of economic hardship and suggests that the female labour force participation widely differs among the states, which is due to the differences in the rate of female literacy. Education is a marginally significant determinant of female labour force participation of labour market work and earnings. Probability of participation in wage work increases with pose-secondaryeducation less so with lower levels of education Kingdom and Unni 1998.

Tertiary education increases the probability of being in the labour force. Duraisamy (2002) views that graduate and above increase probability of women entering regular salaried government or private sector or wage work. Thus, primary schooling has no effect on earning for women. Education is associated with better earnings for women, its effect varies with level of education. It is evidently seen from the study conducted in Ethiopia, Uganda and Cotede Ivoira by Appleton, Hoddinott and Krishnan (1999). The returns to school for both men and women increase with each level of education and are higher for women than for men. On the contrary Esim (2001) states that education has positive effect on earnings of both female and male self-employed, but impact on men's earnings is greater. The impact of schooling on earnings is positive and significant for females in the formal sector, but not in the informal sector and domestic sectors.

Employment and Power over Resources

Employment has given women an opportunity to shoulder responsibility, play new roles, react with new people, face new situation, etc. Many studies reveal that female earnings in the household by employment status would increase the power of financial management and decision making. Not only can employment be a source of economic independence, but also it can help to give women a sense of self-work.

INDICATORS OF EMPOWERMENT

UNDP (1990) measures women empowerment in terms of choice, such as the choice to live long healthy life, to have better education, access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Karl (1995) measures in terms of collective awareness building, capacity building and skills development participation and greater control and decision making power and action to bring greater gender equality. Sydney Schuler and Syed Hasheme (1996) measure on the basis of sense of self an division of future, mobility and visibility, economic security status, decision-making power within the household, ability to interact effectively in the public sphere and participation in non-family groups. Lalitha (1997) is of the view that empowerment means equality of work and wages, autonomy over reproductive life, access to ownership of land learning, access to bank credit and market, sage water and energy. Iyyampillai and Theresa (2001) assess women empowerment in terms of decision making process, Political awareness, psychological strength, provision of credit and education are the factors that determine empowerment.

Rustagi (2004) identifies women empowerment in terms of employment, education, health survival, safety and participation in private and public decision making. Kishor and Gupta (2004) and Acharya and Ghimire (2005) identify empowerment in terms of gender equality and freedom of ability to influence decision making process at all levels.

Gender issues in terms of power relation and inequality have received much attention only among feminist economists. Besides efforts taken by Gary Becker and Amartya Sen, others have registered a good spread effect. Sen's cooperative conflict model of household dynamics (1990) treats women as decision maker influence by endowments, perceptions, etc. No researcher affords to neglect the theory of capabilities and entitlements while discussing the term 'empowerment'. In Sen's model bargaining power varies through differential capacities of men and women and it can be increased by wage, work and other support system.

Social Empowerment

Gupta and Malhotra (2006) stated that the higher fertility reduces women's employment while there is a strong link between female education and lower fertility which is virtually universal. A World Bank 100-country study found that for every four years of education that girls attain, fertility rates drop by roughly one birth. Lewis and Lockheed (2008) identified that the negative relationship is due to several effects of higher education levels, including that early marriage declines as girls gain an education and women's education results in lower infant and child mortality rates due to providing better care and nutrition for the children. It is estimated that an extra year of girls' education cuts infant mortality by 5-10percent. Imai and Eklund (2008) noted that the women's community based organization in rural Papua New Guinea to assess the electiveness of autonomous women's groups compared to those that receive external support. Their analysis using a Heckman Selection Model as well as Propensity Score Matching shows that the autonomous groups are more elective in improving child welfare. Thus, community-level interventions targeted at women can generate significant benefits to children's well-being. Neelakantan and Tertilt (2008) stated that the local sex ratio works through the spousal age ratio to influence marriage markets and therefore household bargaining power. Scholars have found that, particularly in the Indian context, women have less bargaining power if their husbands are significantly older. Hall (1992) referred that women's understanding of their conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society. It involves understanding the self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural and social expectations, and understanding patterns of behavior that create dependence, interdependence, and autonomy within the family and in the society at large. Janssens (2010) suggested that the program significantly increases trust and engenders social capital. Participants are more likely to contribute to local educational and infrastructural community projects. Significant spillovers also exist with non-participants; non-participant households in program villages exhibit higher levels of trust and are more likely to engage in community building activities than households in non- program villages.

Economic Empowerment

Roa *et al.*, (1991) noted that women be able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of financial autonomy, no matter howsmall and hard to obtain at the

beginning. Income generating programs are difficult to implement because they are risky, time-consuming, and inefficient in the initial phases. But they can improve over time if accompanied by such necessary skills as marketing, accounting and sufficient funding. Beneria and Roldan (1987) found that while no simple relationship existed between women's economic resources and decision making, paid work increased the women's self-esteem and wives who made a considerable contribution to household expenditures (more than 40 percent) had augmented their domestic and conjugal decision making. Cheston and Kuhn (2002) noted that the investments in women's general education, including literacy is considered one of the most important elements, complementary to income-generating activities that are considered essential for women's economic empowerment. Post-primary education has the greatest payoff for women's empowerment in that it increases income earning opportunities and decision making autonomy.

Johnson *et al* (2003) found that high school dropouts tend to experience both lower wage growth within jobs and lower wage growth in starting wages across jobs than do females with more education. Different empirical studies estimated returns to women's education in terms of wage growth. World Bank studies indicate that an extra year of schooling beyond the average boosts girls' eventual wages by 10-20 percent. Another study has found returns to female secondary education in the 15–25 percent range. Comparing returns to women's education with men's education, one study estimates that returns to education for women are higher than for men. Another study estimates that the rate of return to schooling appears to be nearly two percentage points greater for females than for males. Morrison *et al.* (2004) concluded that women's rising educational level equips them, particularly younger women, with current educational qualifications that the changing economy demands. Improvements in women's access to employment expand choices, while education improves women's capabilities to take advantage of those choices. And also educational levels determine income aspirations. More-educated women have higher income aspirations over their less-educated counterparts. They expect education to pay off through a high return in salary and job quality. Hooft *et al* (2005) found that the level of education is positively related to job search intention among women. Besides, the more educated use a more pro-active approach to job search. Unemployment deprives skilled individuals of their high expected returns. Therefore, the higher educated have a bigger incentive to adopt a greater search effort.

Feliciati (2006) confirmed that many poor, uneducated villagers do not attribute much importance to the education of girls. Early marriage is another common feature leading parents to withdraw their girls from school, and once they are gone, very few girls return to school, according to a senior teacher. In a hurry to get them married, some girls fell into the wrong hand. As a result they have to suffer a broken marriage at a very immature age. Thus, economic problems are the main hindrance deterring women from getting an education, coupled with early marriage and parental negligence playing an important part in the ultimately deteriorating status of women. Azmat *et al.* (2006) noted that the education is seen as the most effective way to give girls access to the economic possibilities. More education is associated with lower unemployment. The most plausible reason for this relationship between unemployment rates and human capital is that the gap between marginal product when in work and the reservation wage is smaller for those with low levels of human capital. Human

capital theory predicts higher unemployment rates for women than for men and, among women, higher unemployment rates for women who are likely to have accumulated less human capital. Patrinos (2007) that the women with higher education are more likely to work in the formal sector versus being self-employed or engaging in informal work and are more likely to get high quality jobs with higher fringe benefits and better working conditions. For instance, in India and Thailand, women with post-secondary education were about 25% more likely to be formally employed. Heckman (2008) noted that the equal access to education and equal opportunity in gaining the skills are necessary for women to compete in the labor market. The better educated is a woman, the more able and willing she is to compete with men in the labor market. Gains in women's education lead to increase in their productivity. This in turn reduces discrimination against them. This is obviously evident in today's labor markets, where jobs are becoming more and more demanding of skills and as a result workers need to upgrade their skills or risk losing out in the competition for jobs. The reason why many of the unemployed might be considered "unemployable in a modern economy" is their comparatively low level of education. In recent decades, the rise in women's employment has been greatest among the well-educated.

Political Empowerment

Molyneux (1981) identified 'the practical gender interests' and 'the strategic gender interests'. She notes that the former are short term and linked immediate needs arising from women's current responsibilities vis-a-vis the livelihood of their families and children, while the latter address bigger issues such as sexual division of labour within the home, the removal of institutionalised forms of gender discrimination, the establishment of political equality, freedom of choice over child-bearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women. Bhasin (1985) mentioned that the empowerment cannot be constrained by a sectoral approach. Nor can it be related to just a set of activities or inputs. Empowerment is an all-encompassing term in which a whole range of economic, social and political activities, including group organisation, agriculture and income generation projects, education, integrated health care and so on, would work synergistically towards the common goal of empowering the poor. Sime (1991) explained that paradigm of popular education was drawn up with the following perspectives: *Political*: it searches for a democratic society through the full participation of all people in social life regardless of their race, social status and gender. It also looks forward for people to achieve peace, tolerance and solidarity. It promotes the empowerment of minority groups, popular and marginal sectors of society, and women to be able to influence social and political decisions. *Cultural*: it questions to what extent to preserve the traditional, how to relate the traditional and the modern, how to manage the racism and patriarchy of popular groups, and how to value the plural ethnicity of many countries. *Pedagogical*: it questions the authoritarian relations of teachers over students. It recognizes the traditional knowledge of people promotes assertiveness among participants and encourages multiple ways of knowing. It does not prioritize the group above the individual, or the rational over the affective. *Ethical*: it seeks congruence between means and ends. It stands for human rights, the claims of women, and against exploitation of children, injustice and corruption.

Shetty (1992) stated that experience is important for the certain sections of village women but also from certain sections of village men. Alongside various women's groups, political parties, unions of lawyers, doctors, etc., have lent support to the agitation. An interesting development has been that the village women took a conscious decision not to identify leaders for their agitation. It is said that their argument was that once leaders were identified, they would be 'bought' over by the politicians.

Balagopal (1992) argued that the women's movement is gradually becoming more militant and has now become politicized because of the support it has received from all the opposition political parties. Given this conflicting scenario, the future direction of the anti-arrack agitation remains uncertain. But despite this uncertainty, there is a hope that 'the women cadres and leaders emerging from this movement will pose serious questions in future.. The question that the grassroots women pose to husbands, activists and parties - to the entire civil society - will be radically different from the ones that the urban middle class women have posed so far".

Kabeer (2001) revealed that women's empowerment can be measured by factors contributing to each of the following: their personal, economic, familial, and political empowerment. We make a point to include household and interfamilial relations as we believe in a central locus of women's disempowerment in India. And by including the political, we posit that women's empowerment measures should include women's participation in systemic transformation by engaging in political action.

Pandey (2002) stated that women's development saw a reflection in the Indian constitution wherein laws were enacted to eradicate the social evil of inequality, five-year plans and voluntary actions by women, state sponsored programmes like rural Mahila Mandals and local self-government, participation in social and women's welfare programmes through voluntary action and finally the demand for reservation in political institutions. Barua (2003) found that women discovered their own potential and played an equal part in India's struggle for freedom. Many women came to be accepted as great patriots in their own rights. The freedom struggle of India was the platform where women again proved themselves.

Rihani et al. (2006) found that the political empowerment, no doubt that educated women are better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them and thus are more politically active and can participate equally in societal and political decision-making processes. Women's levels of education determine their chances of becoming parliamentarians. Anderson and Eswaran (2009) found that the empowerment is an unobservable latent variable, economists use its observable characteristics as proxies for empowerment. Women with high values of the proxies, such as a greater spousal age ratio, access to outside employment or a high level of political participation, are also likely to have greater bargaining power. Thus, the indicators of a high level of empowerment include (1) access to outside employment, (2) physical mobility, and (3) political participation. The corresponding dependent variables we use to react high levels of female autonomy are (1) the ownership of identification cards for the national government's rural employment guarantee scheme, which proxies for access to outside employment, (2) the ability to leave the household without permission, which reflects physical mobility, and (3) participation in weekly village

council meetings, which measures political participation. These variables were chosen because they represent a diverse set of ways in which the Mahila Samakhya program can potentially empower women.

Educational Empowerment

Stromquist (1993) stated that literacy skills can also be empowering but they must be accompanied by a process that is participatory and content that questions established gender relations, features that, unfortunately, do not characterise the great majority of literacy programs. It is indicated that women with newly acquired literacy skills have moved into self-help organizations ranging from neighborhood soup kitchens to public health groups. Maitr and Sinha (1993) mentioned that illiteracy is the second most important problem following poverty. Female literacy rates are very low nationally. A look at the statistics relating to female literacy reveals a grim picture. Though the female literacy rate has progressively increased from 8.86 percent in 1951 to 15.34 percent in 1961 to 21.97 percent in 1971 to 29.75 percent in 1981 to 39.42 percent in 1991, it is still below the desired level. Dolado *et al.* (2002) found that gender segregation had been declining across age cohorts in the case of female graduates and had remained steady for those with lower educational levels. Part-time jobs which tend to be typically "female" occupations are found to be negatively correlated with education. Different studies in developed, developing and transition countries reach the same result that education plays a central role in determining segregation. Analyzing variation in the economic role of women in 65 developing countries (including Egypt), access to education was found to be a key determinant of women's ability to join the skilled labor force as technicians. Fortin *et al.* (2002) identified that the education is essential to overcome occupational segregation. This in turn leads to improve women's labor market outcomes. Using the human capital model, a decline in vertical segregation is predicted as women reach higher levels of educational attainment over time. Blumberg (2005) asserts that the effect is stronger, the more educated a mother is. Besides, daughters of educated mothers are more likely to have higher levels of educational attainment, which comprises a "multiplier effect". In many countries, each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-third to one-half year. Eckert *et al.* (2007) found that there is a negative correlation between female education and maternal mortality and a positive correlation between female education on one hand and women's life expectancy and family health on the other hand. Education here refers not just to getting education but to the level of education which is found to be more important; only at secondary or higher levels of schooling does education have a significant beneficial effect on women's health. Abbas (2007) suggested that standard aspects of school quality have a stronger impact on girls' education than on boys' education. On one hand, the evidence suggests that quality is an important demand factor. When education costs too much and when good quality education is hard to come by, parents, especially those in poverty, may feel that the future returns may not justify the present costs. However, girls' enrollment is more sensitive than that of boys to school quality. Evidence from Bangladesh, Kenya and Pakistan indicates that girls' enrollment is more sensitive than boys' to school quality and to specific delivery attributes, such as the presence of female teachers and sex-segregated schools and facilities, and safe transport to and from school. Johnson and Johnson (2008) compared that the male literacy is 63.68%, it is clear that female literacy is neglected. This gap ultimately contributes to the subordination of

women and greater dowry demand in the marriage market. Among the literate women only a handful of women obtain their education in order to acquire economic independence; for the majority, literate women receive an education only to become more eligible in for marriage. Lewis *et al.* (2008) focused that the education enhances women's well-being. It reduces violence against them, gives them a more autonomy in shaping their lives, improves their status within the family and gives them a greater voice in household decisions, including financial decisions. Govinda (2008) explored that the secondary and higher levels of education provide the highest returns for women's empowerment in terms of employment opportunities.

Psychological Empowerment

Stromquist (1988) found that the empowerment psychological component includes the development of a feeling that women can improve their condition and the belief that they can succeed in their efforts. In Nellore, as women have collectively picketed the arrack shops, marched untidily to the district collector's office and organized a dharna to ensure that auctions are not allowed to take place, they have become strengthened in their conviction that it is only such united action that can bring about any change. "Now that we have come out of our homes, we will fight to the very end" is the refrain that has been echoed in village after village. Cousins and Earl (1992) recognized that the importance of working with public institutions but offer only a weak acknowledgement of the need to work with women's groups so that they can develop their autonomy and advance their agenda. Zuniga (1992) stated that the concept of sustained health through a process of group production of food, cooking practices and learning about nutrition as a source of health, the development of gender identity and self-esteem, and cultural community traits of their locality. Stromquist (1993) that the cognitive, psychological, political and economic components of empowerment. These components are related to the understanding of women's condition of subordination (cognitive); the development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their conditions (psychological); the ability to organize and mobilize for social changes (political); and the skills to obtain some degree of financial autonomy (economic). Rahman and Rao (2004) identified that determinant of female autonomy in India ends that a better-educated woman has greater bargaining power, as measured by physical mobility and say in household resource allocation, through the channel of increased information. Basch (2007) identified that the education is the single biggest correlate with high job quality. Education gaps between men and women lead women to face discrimination in attaining decent jobs based not just on their sex, but also on their relative lack of skills. While postsecondary skills do not guarantee an individual access to good jobs, the lack of such skills increasingly condemns workers to bad jobs. Kandpal and Baylis (2013) explored that the diversity of participants' peer group, while study whether peers' participation improves female bargaining power and child welfare outcomes; neither of these studies explicitly estimates treatment effects of the program's intended impact, which is to empower women through participation.

APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women's empowerment according to Bhasin (1985) involved the transformation of power relations at six different levels: individual, family, group, organization, village community and society. In order to empower the rural poor, especially the women, female

development workers must first empower themselves. Batliwala (1994) identified three approaches to women's empowerment: the integrated development approach, which focused on women's survival and livelihood needs; the economic development approach, which aimed to strengthen women's economic position; and the consciousness approach, which organized women into collectives that address the sources of oppression.

Mayoux (1995) stated two approaches: the market approach, which aimed to assist individual women entrepreneurs to increase their incomes and the empowerment approach, 'which aimed not only to increase the incomes, but also the bargaining power to poor producers through group activities'. The empowerment approach included the costs in terms of time outside the home and time spent in decision-making. The process of empowerment may occur at several levels and the transformation induces changes in the ideological system, in access to resources and in institutions and structures such as the family and the household, the village and the community, the state and the market (Batliwala 1994) by the end of the twentieth century all approaches to development involving a focus on women had been amalgamated into gender and development (GAD) approach.

Kate Young (2004) argues that this bears little similarity to the original formulation of GAD and that the term gender is often used as a mere synonym for women. There are some important approaches of women development given below:

1. **The Welfare Approach:** until the early 1970s developed policies were directed at women only in the context of their roles as wives and mothers, with a focus on mother and child health and on reducing fertility. It was estimated that the benefits of macroeconomic strategies for growth would automatically trickle down to the poor, and that poor women would benefit as the economic position of their husband improved.
2. **The WID Approach:** the rise of women movement in Western Europe and North America, the 1975 UN International year for Women and International Women's Decade (1976-85) led to the establishment of women ministries in many countries and the institutionalization of women in Development (WID) policies in governments, donor agencies and NGOs. The aim of the WID was to integrate women into economic development by focusing on income generation projects for women.
3. **Gender and Development (GAD):** This approach originated in academic criticism starting in the mid 1970s in the UK. Based on the concept of gender relations (the socially constructed pattern of relations between men and women) they analyzed how development reshapes these power relations. Drawing on feminist political activism, gender analysts explicitly see women as an agent of change.
4. **Women and Development (WAD)** at the 1975 UN Women's World Conference in Mexico city the feminist approaches of predominantly white women from the north aimed at gender equality which was rejected by many women in the South who argued that the development model itself lacked the perspective of developing countries. They saw overcoming poverty and the effects of colonialism as more important than equality.
5. **The Efficiency Approach:** The strategy under this approach was to argue that, in the context of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), gender analysis made good

economic sense. It was recognized the understanding men's and women's roles and responsibilities as part of the planning of development interventions improved project effectiveness.

6. **The Empowerment Approach in the 1980s:** Parpart (2002) empowerment was regarded as a weapon for the weak, best wielded through grassroots and participatory activities. However, empowerment has many meanings and by mid-1990s some mainstream development agencies have begun to adopt the term.
7. **Gender and Environment (GED):** This approach was based on eco- feminist views, especially those of Vandana Shiva, (2004) who made an essentialist link between women and the environment and encouraged environmental programmes to focus on women's roles.
8. **Mainstreaming Gender Equality:** Derbyshire (2001) claims that the term 'gender mainstreams' came into widespread use with the adoption of the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The 189 governments represented in Beijing unanimously affirmed that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality with men are matters of fundamental human rights and therefore prerequisites for social justice. Mainstreaming gender equality tries to ensure that women's as well as men's concern and experience are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects so that gender inequality is not perpetuated. It attempts to overcome the common problem of 'policy evaporations'. The implementation and impact of development projects fail to reflect policy commitments.

EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

Empowerment is an active multidimensional process that enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. The dimensions of empowerment are self-perception, perception of the women in the society, economic independence, decision-making innovativeness and attributes towards group action, communication and desire to improve living conditions. Empowerment aims at changing the values and direction of systematic forces, which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context. It is a process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Women in India constitute about 50 per cent of the country's total population, yet they are the biggest excluded category in all the sphere of the life. According to our ancient Dharma shastras, women were regarded as the embodiment of 'Shakti'. She was equated with Goddesses in our religious pantheon of deities and also worshipped as a symbol of 'fertility'. Manu said that women had to be dependent before marriage on her parents and after marriage on her husband. Thus may be the foundation of damaging of the position of women in Indian society and they began to be regarded as inferior and were also excluded from the important fields of activities.

Almost in all the societies, inequalities of women and men are part and parcel of an accepted male dominated culture and women are subjugated in all aspects of life till now. This long term discrimination against women has been accentuated by underdevelopment.

In terms of Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in human development, report is also very low compared to other developing countries. Women representation in different decision-making bodies has been always minimal than men. Even women's representation in our parliament and state legislatures has never been crossed 10 per cent.

Women empowerment refers to the freedom and ability of women, expanded for making strategic decisions. These decisions involve control over the resources for the well-being of the entire family. The contribution of women in the family as well as in the economic development of the country is vital. Empowerment is more than delegation. It helps the people to take intelligent decisions with the power already possessed by them. India has supported international conventions and human rights forums to ensure equal rights of women such as ratification of convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1993.

Enhancing empowerment in women is crucial for the growth of India. Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project in India was introduced in late 1999. The objective of this project is to bring about social and economic betterment in the status of women. The core mechanism of this project is the introduction of self-help groups (SHGS). The process of self-help group has changed the mind-set of the women, particularly in rural areas of the country. The empowerment improves the status of the women and promotes confidence and gender equality. The women in rural areas are becoming small scale business entrepreneurs by micro credit system of self-help groups. The objective of micro credit system is to eradicate the poverty of women and making them self-sufficient. The micro credit system also enables the women to take other community development programmes for the betterment of the entire society. The empowered women are making alignment with the changes in environment and sustain their enterprise by using their leisure time productively. The active participation of women in self-help programme not only enhances the income generating capacity of the women but also improves the decision making capabilities of the women, which ultimately lead to thereal empowerment.

The economic empowerment of women forms the basis for all other empowerment. The benefits which may be derived from the economic empowerment of women are given below:

- Self confidence
- Improved standard of living
- Sense of achievement
- Increased social interaction
- Engaged in political activities
- Improvement in leadership qualities
- Involvement in solving problems related to women and the community
- Decision making capacity in the family and the community

Even the Five Year Plans consider women empowerment as an important embodiment. From the First Five Year Plan itself women development has been receiving a special attention. But in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002), the emphasis was shifted from 'development' to 'empowerment'. It made two important changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women. Firstly, 'Empowerment of Women' becomes one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan. To this effect, the approach of the plan is to create and enable

their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men and secondly, the plan attempted convergence of existing services available in both women-specific and women related sectors. To this effect, it directed both the centre and states to adopt a special strategy of 'Women's Component Plan' through which not less than thirty percent of funds and benefits flow to women from all the general development sectors in India. Following measures for gender empowerment and equity were the essential component of the Eleventh plan (2007-12):

- (a) Check violence against women (VAW) through effective policies and legislation and also seek to provide physical and social security to women.
- (b) Alcoholism is a leading cause of both physical and economic VAW and the Eleventh plan must explore ways of checking it.
- (c) It must evolve legislative measures to address trafficking. Support system must be put in place for victims of trafficking and de-criminalisation assured for commercial sex workers.
- (d) The plan ensured that towns and cities under the NURM are made Women-safe and Women-friendly.
- (e) It must address problems emerging from feminization of agriculture and other forms of feminal employment like domestic work.
- (f) Adequate and need-based training is to be provided to women to enable them to enter all sectors of the economy on an equal footing with men.
- (g) Special attention will be paid to the economic empowerment of women from marginalized and minority groups.
- (h) Women's political participation in and their role in all levels of decision-making will be strengthened through legislation and rigorous training.
- (i) The Eleventh plan will recognize the pivotal importance of women's holistic health.

CONCLUSION

The review of above literature reveals the factors driving the women towards empowerment, educationally, economically, politically, socially and psychologically. Women's contribution to the fields of art, science and sports is equally significant. It is the fact that women are endowed with natural qualities of beauty, affection, tolerance and sacrifice. They can bring about any social change with ease. It is with Great Spirit and hope that women agitate for more political representation. The demand for the state of women in panchayats and municipalities has also been conceded. Hence all education becomes self-education. Good higher education can do much to keep up the personality of the women. The improvements and enhancement provided by the government, NGO's and other social organization also have been reviewed. Studies conducted in foreign countries and in India were reviewed and most of the studies are related to metros and big cities only. Very few studies are available for the rural areas of India. The present study focuses on "Impact of Higher education on Women empowerment".



4

WOMEN EDUCATION AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is a latent concept. The paradox of empowerment is the latent nature that it possesses forbidding human capacities to quantify the qualitative elements borne by the concept. Rarely people talk about empowering men, nobody tend to watch 'Men Empowerment Day' and this refers to a regimen where our public perceives men to be empowered. This reality speaks of the gender inconsistencies that inhabit the socio-cultural lives of our nation stating that women are yet to be in par with men and hence necessarily should be empowered. In 2011, the Human Development Report addressed the importance of sustainability and equity for all and announced the initiation of a brand new index termed as 'Gender Empowerment Measure'. Over and above this development, glancing at the recent economic process and development in 2013 as per the Human Development Report by UN Development Programme with collective economic contribution of India, Brazil and China, not much has been converted for the human development of the people in India. Accordingly, United Nations Development Programme reports that there's a desire for improving the plans and proposals planned for adding value to the programmes and nurturing the progress of the feminine population in India. For hundreds of years women are excluded from many aspects of development process predominantly entrepreneurship. At the identical time, the country suffers from severe unemployment of men and women, leading to slow economic process. From the event, equality and empowerment perspectives, it's necessary to analyze those processes which crumple for full participation of women in entrepreneurial career.

Countless researches and studies have happened within the field of empowering women through entrepreneurial programmes and to what extent have they transformed as entrepreneurial and empowered women contributing to the economy. As a result Government has taken measures to watch the extent of progress in every state by decentralising the roles and responsibilities to the State and native Self-Governments. Knowledge systems and research foundations define Women empowerment because the fostering and strengthening the sense of identity, authority, esteem and persuasion by nurturing women with the power to appreciate the aim of life and livelihood supported with the perpetual forces of education and knowledge. Self-decision regarding education, participation, mobility, economic independency, awareness and exercise of rights, and plenty of more factors ensure women empowerment. To encapsulate, women empowerment is the nurturing of personhood in women that consists of concrete everlasting ingredient of one's identity to perform and prosper. It's tacit about the impact of excellent working environment and work ethics for the future sustenance of an enterprise, and hence in today's context women enterprises require well outlined flawless code of conduct for enterprise management. However women haven't been ready to make impressive leadership representation amongst the general public in initiating and establishing entrepreneurial ventures and enterprises. Empowerment is far talked about in India and overseas, however it doesn't result in women entrepreneurship when viewed from social, cultural, economic, legal and technological context. Kerala dominates with an excellent percentage of eligible and intensely qualified bunches of women. Hitherto women receive less room for proving self-leadership roles in entrepreneurial activities apart from Self-help groups. The problem of persisting marginal empowerment among women suggests the start of a process of change. Hence, this modification necessitate more awareness towards entrepreneurial education to women discarding all differentiations and enlightening them on social, cultural, economic, legal, technological and environmental dimensions of entrepreneurial engagement, empowerment outcomes and therefore the work psychology involved for the sustainable development and existence of enterprises to the women.

Every individual employee's code of non-public ethics influences their ethical behaviour within the work environment. However, the employer and also the leaders have a serious stake in their ethical response to the activities and add the organisation. There are arguments on the scope of acceptable ethical behaviour from the worker once they are managed and led by women within the work environment. Are women efficient in maintain ethics and sustain manpower within the enterprise? This relies on the non-public code of ethics the women entrepreneur has framed from her value system, society, family, community and therefore the contingent factors present within the scenario. Work Ethics in woman's life denotes the principles and integrities that women are expected to place forth in dissimilar and distinct situations during which women occupy the role of a parent, daughter, employee, professional, businessperson, coworker and citizen. Women are critical social capital for economic process, and thus developing a stronger work ethics in women will promote and enhance women leadership and deciding abilities additionally guarantee their effective participation within the economic sphere. In fact, work ethics is inevitable for women empowerment to effect in cost-effective and productive terms successively stimulating creative work environment for the staff and therefore the entrepreneur to herald balanced work life.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the post liberalization and digitalization era, the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises has clad to be an integral base for women globally with exceptions still around. The very concept of entrepreneurship and therefore the idea of being an entrepreneur has been one in every of the prime reasons for the progress of entrepreneurship. Eventually this has led to the rise within the figures of women entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries. For example, in terms of working population of women in MSMEs, women outnumber men. Correspondingly, women have began to express entrepreneurial interest generally business platform with innovation and destitute of innovation. Micro, small and medium enterprises today has been recognised by women as a robust platform to have interaction in entrepreneurial activity no matter the innovative element within the entrepreneurship (expressing imitative entrepreneurship to urge established in business). It's so because women are improving their livelihood socially, psychologically, economically, technologically and educationally. Despite of the actual fact that the scale of investment, number of employees and workforce, volume of output, market share and profitability may vary from than those existing among men entrepreneurs reviews support the view that women vests her interest not alone in agricultural production and consumables, but in commercial, digitalised and professional establishments. Numerous studies are distributed at different points of time during the last five decades and have controlled diverse situations. However the socio-economic conditions prevailing in nations, the infrastructural facilities available and therefore the level of commercial development, trade and commerce within the West are very different from the conditions available in India. Similar is the case on the existence of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship expressed by people varying from nation to nation with the above said conditions still lasting with low progress. Hence, their comparisons with the Indian scenario wouldn't reflect the fact in total. From the angle of national developments, Hagen (1962), in his book 'On the speculation of Social Change', quoted on the historic period bringing innovativeness among those that further ensued with the progress in economic development assumes that an innovative entrepreneurial community is developed among the prevailing social barriers. The very concept of women entrepreneur is very new within the Indian context. However, some small but directed efforts are on the thanks to provides a new dimension and look at to the standard tag of women in Indian society. Women in India vary in their social, cultural, political and regional construct attributable to various factors that determine the status of women in India. It's evidently stated by scholars and institutions that social and economic status of women is crucial for the economic and holistic development of the state. Manickaval (1997) disclosed that before millennium that just about 56 percent of women in India are jobless, and thus enforcing entrepreneurship amongst the feminine population is imperative for national development. Eventually, of these expresses that a change is going on within the attitude of society towards the empowerment and entrepreneurial interest of women, but the pace of the change is quite slow.

Twentieth century researches were focused on trait based in identifying the leadership and entrepreneurial skills among that expressed business appeals. Birley opines that the majority of research works today focuses about the profile of women entrepreneurs, and works

exist describing how male and feminine entrepreneurs differ. These explicitly speak of the research apprehensions over the proper profile that describes an entrepreneur distinguishing them from the general public domain. Cochran (1965) described an entrepreneur to be exhibiting an exemplary leader within the society equipped with strong educational, societal and cultural background. Women around 35 years old were assessed as people who belong to women entrepreneurs initiating their first enterprise. It's obvious that women are filled with domestic responsibilities besides the economic demands within the family while using the resources within the optimum manner and together with her children growing and schooling, most of such women belong to the center income group. Researchers conducted abroad by Maloney in Brazil, Mexico and in Argentina found that women settled after marriage was more probable to travel for entrepreneurial activities than other labour jobs. On the contrary, Justo and De Tienne opined that though married women are better entrepreneurs, apparently they quit business willingly.

Financial & psychological factors like social relationships and associations from neighbourhood groups, financial aids from Self-help groups, and training and assistance entrepreneurial training centres motivates women to become entrepreneurs. In a study it absolutely was found that Jain women are highly restricted from social activities and hence should be encouraged to return forward and work to require their own place within the society and become economically independent. Women in their younger ages like others failed to have a business background yet possessed all the innate drives to pursue her aspirations through economic activities. Simultaneously being single or married had no impact on her entrepreneurial interest and engagement. Women's major intention to interact in economic activities was observed to realize better conduct of household activities taking care of kids and dependents. In 1992, Singh found that because of increased industrialization and technological development in India, women are displaced from their previously held jobs and have turned to entrepreneurship so as to confirm regular income. Primarily more privileged women who are from high people groups, business family and of high educational backgrounds have progressed better within the area of entrepreneurship.

Women entrepreneurs undoubtedly experience difficulties in running small and medium enterprises (SMEs), many of which are gender-specific, it should be noticed that a lot of of the obstacles are generic. Women entrepreneurs experience these obstacles to an excessive degree. The rights of self-employed people and owners of small and micro enterprises, in addition as those of their employees, are secured by generic equality legislation in many cases. However, gender equality issues have to be incorporated specifically into the legal and regulatory framework governing micro and tiny enterprise development.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CHALLENGES

Women have overtaken the status of men in ruling the business domain with the evolution and emergence of recent entrepreneurial thoughts and platforms claims reports from u. s.. Such impressive developments exist in other developed and developing nations and globally women still possess the popularity for establishing business enterprises than how men do. The justification is that women entrepreneurs behave differently than men in terms of behaviours, characteristics and multitasking in nature. Though massive research has been

applied associated with women entrepreneurship, Greene et al (2007) opined that in-depth research bringing policy implications for the event of the women community should be the main focus of researchers within the field. Decades back Bowen and Hisrich (1986) compared and evaluated women entrepreneurship summarizing on the relatively better status of education among women entrepreneurs however not trained, skilled sufficiently and wish better ethic for conducting business. The entrepreneurial skills of women are determined by the extent of motivational aspects like time off reception, accepted desire for business from family and self-contentment for performing business. Concurrently, research by Watson (2003) investigated and highlighted the closure of business units amongst women established enterprises in Australia, pointing that women enterprises undergo failure comparatively over men established enterprises, however it's also contingent to varied scenarios.

STRATEGIES AND MEANS TO EMPOWER ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN

The struggles of the entrepreneurial women leading to failure in their business ventures have led to the formulation of steady strategies in empowering women. the subsequent strategies were found more practical for overall development. They are:

- (A) **Empowerment of women through development of women through Self Help Groups within the preliminary phase:** In addition to financial help and assistance, SHGs also aims at the task of accelerating awareness, cooperation, self- reliance, self- management and social consciousness, empowerment and self- respect. SHG's aims to form women who have an interest in business activities free from economic and social bondage and help them become more productive. The establishment of a self-reliant activity will mutually reinforce the method of promoting positive attitudes and values through SHGs.
- (B) **Empowerment of women through education and entrepreneurial training:** Empowerment of women through education and training is one among the foremost critical components within the development of a society is the investment in human development. The Human Development Report on South Asia (1998) shows that South Asia has all-time low adult literacy rate within the world, which is under that of geographic area. In India public primary education facilities are expanded and national literacy shows a rise of around 40 percent in 1991 to around 66 percent in 2001. However, these achievements are small as India still accounts for around 30 percent of the whole adult literates everywhere world, where around 25 percent of women of primary age are still not at school. Educated women keen in business still are unaware of monetary knowledge, economic awareness, market know-how, social changes then on.
- (C) **Empowerment through social, political and legal participation:** There's low representation of women in any respect levels of political institutions. Thus, there's widespread neglect of women's priorities by politicians and bureaucrats mirroring the actual fact that women are least preferred when it involves leadership. There's a growing realization among the women that local elections are a way to bring positive change in their lives. However, women on gaining the social and political power can bring rapid change within the lives of other women and attain equality.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

This segment portrays a quick description of one of the most themes 'Work Life Balance' within the study and thus aims at conceptualizing 'work-life balance' of women entrepreneurs. Work-life balance is usually a way debated theme but has remained a priority for working and business women and also the quality of labor life balance in their entrepreneurial lives. The study expresses interest in answering the dilemma 'what maintains and sustains a good work-life balance? Hence, this section will summarize some models and ideas surrounding work life balance and also the challenges faced by women, and the way empowerment is viewed as a tool to balance work life issues amongst women.

- **Perceptions on Work Life Balance:** The term "work/life balance" was coined in 1986, although its usage in every-day language was sporadic for variety of years. Before war II, the W.K. Kellogg Company created four six hour shifts to exchange the standard three daily eight-hour shifts, and therefore the new shifts resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency. Accordingly, the phrase, work-life balance is known during this study, because the strategies adopted reception and / or at add order to reduce role conflict and achieve work-life balance. Work life and private life constitutes diverse factors influencing its conduct of balance. Family and individual life related factors include increasing participation of women, dual career couples, single-parent and child bearing women in workforce and well-being considerations. Work related factor include long hour culture and unpaid overtime, demand for shorter working hours, increase in part-time workers, work intensification and stressful period. As these changes at the workplace and family are affecting the work life balance of particularly the women employees working in various organizations, thus within the present era several empowerment organizations are specializing in such issues.

Theoretical Framework of work Life Balance

Through several researches it absolutely was obvious that a lot of theories tend to clarify the thought behind the concept of the work-life relationship. There are five main models on the individual level which aid in understanding the problem of the work-life relationship.

1. As a hypothetical model, the segmentation approach theorizes that job and non-work are fairly distinct domains, which don't have anything in common. However, no empirical support was found for this model, because it solely represents a theoretical possibility.
2. Hence, far and away the foremost influential and researched theory represents the spillover approach. because the name already suggests, it proposes that job and non-work/home domains are interconnected during a sense that both domains can have a positive or negative (emotional or behavioural) influence on the opposite, despite the physically and temporal present boundaries. As an example, with relation to emotional spill-over, happiness or sadness at work cause happiness or sadness reception.
3. Complementary to the spill-over approach is the compensation approach of work-life balance, which postulates that one environment should rectify for what happens within the opponent domain. As an example, folks that have an unsatisfying work life will try and engage in activities in their private life that enrich their satisfaction.

4. Instrumental theory posits that the two environments overlap in such the way that action in one environment help to render success within the other. As an example, an instrumental worker might work flat out for ten years to induce a loan for a brand new house.
5. The ultimate theory, the conflict model relies on the belief that when in both environments demands are high, decisions need to be made that may cause conflicts and overloads.

In response to the conflict perspective, an author has developed yet one more theory, which emphasizes and recognizes the positive effects of labor to family role spill over. Particularly, in their 'Work-Family Enrichment' (WFE) theory, defines work-family enrichment as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the standard of life within the other role" whereby quality of life are often captured by high performance and positive affect. They suggest that resources (i.e. skills and perspectives, psychological and physical resources, social capital resources, flexibility and material resources) built up in either role (work role or home role) promote positive affect and high performance within the other role.

WOMEN AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

The working world context has been continuously varying with the evolution of working practices like home based working, career established in multiple fields, contract works are familiar among people today. Unlike previous years working environment isn't featured as a structured milieu and thus has brought in several challenges and issues within the workplaces. One concern amongst many is making it possible for those who work for maintaining work life balance a reality. Critical studies about work life balance are emerging because generally individuals face conflicting situations to possess a bearing over things they're engaged in. Hence several studies were applied in alliance with the concept of labor life balance that voiced the connection and imbalance issues that parent-employee duality individuals faces from the point of view of an employer and employee. Balancing work life and private life is observed because the key for reducing rigidities within 'work life' and 'life of people'. To resolve the work life pressures and apprehensions Labour Department of New Zealand proposes work life balance as a key resolution. Working woman and their concerns are highly imperative during this regard of dialogue. Over the last number of decades, though women's pay scale has improved within the labour market, they're not yet considered for premium designations and superior positions in their organisations.

CHALLENGES OF WOMEN AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

Stress, depression and anxiety are the results of the imbalance in work life otherwise termed as work life conflict or work life collision as proposed by Allan et al (2007). The study conducted by Jane Sturges (2004) about "Working to measure or living to work?" highlighted the importance of affiliations and interpersonal relationships in balancing work life, degree of labor life collision, time spent for work and also the extent of dedication within the organisation. Work life balance brings greater effectiveness to any or all aspects of life. Personnel perform effectively and efficiently at work as they're ready to equitably spend the identical interest for his or her family moreover. The problem has become pertinent not only in India but has become major issue of concern for every kind of industry worldwide.

Work Life Balance Indicators

Many studies have highlighted on the indications of labor life balance. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2011) reported that Gender is the most vital cause for the existence of inequalities in one's work and private life. It's generally observed that the male working population spend greater time for paid work than women but take more leisure than women; contrastingly women are paid less for spending dedicated time at work but the unpaid work that she expends at family for rearing children and caring dependents. Duxbury and Higgins (2001) identified that aiding and understanding employees in their responsibility to worry children and dependents would enhance their work productivity which work life balance best practice like family care and wellbeing guidance and support in assisting employees their families will thereby improve their work productivity. In line with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2010) three indicators of labor and life balance were identified. the primary indicator shows the proportion of employees working for higher pay by working long hours, the second aged between 25-64 who explore for leisure are subjected to face work life conflicts and also the third shows the speed of employment amongst mothers with children aged 6-14 years. The latter gives evidence about the extent of skill and skill mothers use to manage family need and work requirements. Attaining the balance to satisfy both these requirements is important for his or her wellness and welfare reports OECD.

SHG and Women Empowerment

The idea behind self-help group is the mutual trust and commitment that individual express that's supported group approach. Self-help groups depend upon group cohesiveness, lending support empty of collateral, groups in manageable size, women friendly, reinforcement in repayment, training and capacity building programs and empowerment of women and their livelihood. Due to these features of self-help group's women's involvement in business is improving progressively. It's evident that fifty percent of world population do the 2/3 of world work hours receive 10 percent of world income and own but one percent of the world property. Women owned business have become increasingly important within the economies of virtually all countries. No matter the struggles put forth for women's economic well-being, most of the business achievement oriented women are restricted to accumulate support from Micro, Small and Medium sector and informal sector. Since the emergence of SHG system, in keeping with National bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and directives from depository financial institution of India (RBI), since 1990s majority of Mahila Samajams and credit unions were transformed into SHGs and were linked to financial institutions for better credit services. The striking role of self-help groups was to form awareness about business and entrepreneurial avenues existing in their places. Anju and Sidney (2002), in their study found that women's empowerment will be thought to be a variable in international development of a nation.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

In the discussion about work life balance, women hold the greater part. Though women's intake and involvement at workplaces has improved from previous decades, yet women remain overstressed and disadvantaged than men. The research on work-life balance

has been heard from various contexts however much has not been heard about work life imbalances in women owned and woman managed enterprises. The paradigm that directs the research is figure life balance and work ethics through women empowerment. 'Work life balance' refers to figure life integration and 'Work life imbalance' indicates the work life conflict. The research investigator has analysed how women entrepreneurs (micro, small and medium enterprises) have managed to thrive within their business amidst work life combats and pool efforts to sustain healthy work ethics in the work context.

Work-Family Balance: Motherhood and also the gendered division of labour that places primary responsibility for maintaining the house and family to get on women. These for example are crucial determinants of gender-based inequalities between the sexes and of inequalities among women. Conflict between these family responsibilities and therefore the demands of labor contributes significantly to women's disadvantage within the labour market and therefore the sluggish progress towards civil right and treatment for men and women in a job. While women are forced to just accept poorly-paid, insecure, part-time, home-based or informal add order to mix their family responsibilities with their paid employment, difficulties in reconciling the strain of labor and family contribute to men's disadvantage within the family and limit their ability to be involved in family matters. particularly, women's career advancement may suffer once they take a "career break" longer than the statutory maternity leave for the needs of family care or take up parental leave provisions immediately after maternity leave. However, there has recently been an increasing recognition of the importance of devising measures to assist reconcile workers' family responsibilities with their work a key strategy to facilitate women's greater participation in decent work.

Work-Life Balance The term 'work-life balance' refers not only to caring for dependent relatives, but also to 'extracurricular' responsibilities or important life priorities. Work arrangements should be sufficiently flexible to enable workers of both sexes to undertake lifelong learning activities and further professional and individual development, not necessarily directly associated with the worker's job. Issues associated with the development of career opportunities, lifelong learning, personal and professional development activities are considered to be secondary to the target of promoting the more equal sharing between men and women of responsibilities within the family and household also as within the workplace. It's hence essential to know the role of women entrepreneurs in balancing their work life simultaneously sustaining work ethics in their enterprises. The role of women entrepreneurs during this context emphasizes on the key women indicators that women entrepreneurs have chosen to figure get into business and amongst her workforce.

WORK ENGAGEMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A proper balance between work and life demands is prerequisite so as for employee engagement to be present because work-life factors like caring about employees, placing employee's interests first and adaptability are predictors of engagement. Enrichment from engaging in work to family takes place when experiences at the work role advance the standard of family life, demonstrated by high performance and positive affect. Within work family enrichment (WFE) concept, the instrumental path proposes that resources built up in one role foster high performance within the other role. The affective path indicates that

resources accumulated in one role end in positive affect therein role, ultimately promoting high performance and positive affect within the other role. A job state which features both high performance and positive affect should be the most effective think about predicting work-family enrichment. Therefore, this idea is significant in understanding the behaviour of women entrepreneur's in maintaining a piece life balance by adopting women empowerment in their lives. Consequently, work engagement may be considered very almost like positive affect and high performance and hence, resources, skills and knowledge at work are transmitted and employed in the family environment through the experience of labor engagement. Because people high on work engagement regard their work as meaningful and strongly identify with their job, they're more likely to demonstrate resources, knowledge and skills, which successively are more easily transmitted to the family domain. Moreover, supported the intuition behind highly engaged employees, high energy levels at work and a positive mood and favourable emotions spill over to the family environment, increasing performance and positive affect and mood within the latter environment is observed. Hence, the experience of high engagement at work incorporates a positive influence on the family domain, thereby reducing role conflict between the two domains.

SHG'S AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Women empowerment specifically the social, economic and political empowerment which is during a way the objectives of SHGs in addition. The economic empowerment includes skill development, income generation and credit availability whereas the social empowerment consists of equal respect and recognition, equal choices and equal status. Political empowerment reflects process of controlling power and strengthening of their vitality. Studies by Pattnaik (2003) revealed on the efforts made by self-help groups to create rural, tribal and concrete women and enlighten them to participate, take decisions and become beneficiaries economically and socially in their livelihood, however, towards barriers like gender bias and discrimination many self-help groups don't seem to be yet efficiently organised⁹⁸. Further research conducted by Manimekalai (2004) established with evidence that remarked that self-help groups improved and enhanced the self-identity and self-confidence of rural women over themselves. Anitha and Revenkar (2007) quoted that self-help groups not just improved women's economic status but led to a good change within the position of women. Proving the above study, the government, Non-Government organizations and financial institutions are implementing various programmes for the economic empowerment of women. Women have gained significantly through the function of Self- Help Groups and other Government sponsored programmes. Women have gained right to access, avail and control one's own income and savings and this has been better than past decades.

SHG'S AND WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONGST WOMEN

Family and work are the two most vital domains especially for women. As encounters happen within these domains, it affects women, the individuals related to them, their families and organisations stated Andrews & Withey (1976). Burke (2001) indicated that although men increasingly express interest in an exceedingly more balanced commitment to their work role, it's women who experience the best levels of conflict between work and family, since

women are still expected to perform the majority of family and tasks and responsibilities. The role of SHG's has not been very prominent in creating work life balances. Work life balance through the function of SHG's becomes possible when women are ready to satisfy both work life and familial life with the assistance of SHG's. a number of the studies have separately restrained the status of women within the family in relevance their male counterparts in matters like decision-making with relevancy monetary and non-monetary matters, changing attitude of women towards factors influencing their status and also the impact of development programmes and welfare schemes introduced by the govt for women to require part in several fields like health, education, employment, social and political. Studies by Perumal (2005) established that a far better standard of living satisfies the work life imbalances amongst women. The study found that the family expenditure has increased thanks to positive change in women's income who are members of SHG's. The incremental income not only enhances the expenditure of family but also promotes the savings, wherein many SHGs are encouraging women to begin small business, cottage industries, food processing units, etc.

WORK ETHICS

Work Ethics refers to abidance to laws and regulations associated with the entrepreneurial activity, ensuring ethics and integrity which is an integral a part of business core values, to make sure the economic success of the business, enhancing trust and confidence with employees and team mates, and further work ethics is the key source of pride for the full organisation. Leslie M. Dawson (1995) highlighted that the moral climate of an organisation improves with the presence of a woman's specific and talented by being customer caring, understanding clients, patiently creative and approaching problems, thoughtful of building relationship with trust and empathising leadership styles and roles adopted in organisations. At the identical time, some female proclivities could be construed as dysfunctional to traditional corporate mores. As an example, women may be viewed as less decisive, slower to create decisions, or naive. Very likely the foremost satisfactory result for firms will come from a blending of the simplest traits of every sex. The importance of labor ethics (work righteousness) is explained in Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the verses below explains that one has the correct to perform ones actions, but not entitled to the fruits of the actions. From the women's empowerment perspective, it's important that women entrepreneur's activities are economically viable and also the capacities and competencies of women entrepreneurs are enhanced and organised to manage within the presence of a correct work life balance and work ethics. The challenge is to link women entrepreneurship with the tool women empowerment, thereby leading to a balanced work and family life by following the ethics and standards of her work life.

There are many studies in work ethics that bring out the particular value of ethics and ethical culture embraced in organisations. People still keep exploring the ways within which work ethics and ethical environment is incorporated during a business. It's imperative to notice that the employer's code of conduct and also the employee's ethics should match well to sustain the commitment of the workers for an extended term bonding. What are the aspects that impact the attitude of employees in terms of performance, commitment and loyalty to the organisation is one among few interrogations that experts are questioning. This makes it more

comprehensive to grasp how women entrepreneurs would deal with the human resource management that goes uncertain with the character of a heterogeneous group of individuals working within the enterprise. A girl manager finds great difficulty than her male counterpart to combat differences that occur among employers and employees. While men contend to boost work environment with an ethical conception that features individual rights, rules and ethos, women holds an ethical conception which upholds values for relationship, care, and empathy for the realm where her employees and workers are engaged in. Are women more ethical than men; questioned Dawson in 1992, later explained that though women hold high priorities for ethics in an exceedingly working scenario however, it's different in cases involving one's own personal conscience which is arbitrated along with her personal ethics differing with situations and individuals. During this framework of perceptions that individuals negotiate for and against women, the study underlines the results that aimed to find out what extent has work environment with women's ethical conception at her enterprise. Half way through the research, majority of women commented on the work life challenges they're bounded with, which rather creates hassles and tussles within the comfort zones of her work life. Majority of women expressed that higher responsibilities at home and enterprise, lack of business expertise, financial challenges, non-accessibility to funds, ignorance about subsidies and schemes, managing members of the family and dependents, absence of employee support, business losses that resulted in work life challenges, less family support because of religious and cultural oppression, liability upon bearing the domestic requirements and responsibilities being the only earner, gender discrimination, continuing insufficient education, social and political sarcasms existing within the State are the prime reasons for work life and private life challenges. it's time the policy thinkers and governance take keen interest for women's voices to be heard and celebrated with a constructive approach to stop dysfunctional moral conceptions in an organisational scenario with recurring ethical dilemmas amidst employer and employees. Women's distinctive attributes and qualities create a reliable and sustainable improvement within the ethical climate and culture of the organisation. This straightens the purpose that women hence hold superiority in enduring the work life imbalances and briefly time regain the balanced status in her life.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN ENTREPRENURESHIP

Women empowerment has transfigured to a good extent with the start of commercial revolution and IT revolution reinforcing attention within the global scenario amongst the male dominant societies in India. It's painful to recognise the unpleasant and chastising acts of the Indian civilians to women preventing herself development that is still stagnant after marriage. Within the 21st century where modernisation has become the most policy, women are yet not free of the stringent capacities of the masculine power that overlooks women as his subordinate seemly right for familial responsibilities and unfit for equipping herself in business and entrepreneurial endeavours. The status of women is measured and built on the extent of education offered to her with a vision towards economic and national development and specifically education, health and nutrition would improve among women if treated destitute of gender bias. In today's context, the liberty of choice has given women space for education imparting knowledge and skills that's exhausted for chores. Women require education for critical and rational deciding, to grasp a way to choose amongst

financial services, the way to explore source of funds, obtain credit benefits and schemes extended for enhancing women's economic activities. Education can establish change and demolish the resistance to alter. Women contribute economically with the aim of familial, civic and communal transformation in her vicinity. This streamed women's economic participation through better self employment avenues in India, which successively would usher in improved status of women and lend healthier economic freedom. It's this education that in stills the courage and power to be hostile against gender injustices predominating amongst the general public in economic and political spheres within the country. Thus, education is the resilient tools to empower women to help her exercise the freedom to require choices for economic purposes.

Intense research plays an indispensable and phenomenal role during this context saturated with multiple obnoxious and conflicting concerns within the socioeconomic and cultural form existing in our nation. Number of researchers and research studies should be disbursed within the remote regions for example coastal regions within the absence of NGOs. Not overlooking the very fact that Government and immediate local administrators in every community area has got to deal in reducing the gender gap, by improving the protection and security of women intensely. As a herculean task naturally, it's crucial to hold out research surveys to reinforce the statistical database on women by conducting gender related comparative analysis regionally, nationally and globally. the info so received should be offered to the general public domain for references so on bear in mind of the status of gender discrimination prevailing in each nation. Multi-stage research works has got to be run to assess the impact of women entrepreneurial policies, programmes and developments from time to time. Development writers are so often wont to repeating that focus of women development in India has shifted from 'welfare' within the 50's to development within the 70's and now to empowerment. This can be hardly borne move into the programmes on the bottom. There are largely schemes for relief like maturity and widowhood schemes and major schemes associated with Gender reinforcing assistance associated with reproduction National Institute of Public Finance and Policy undertook the primary gender budget exercise and categorized expenditure in three categories. Training of women in leadership research and entrepreneurship with follow ups must be institutionalized. At the national similarly as state levels we'd like a full-fledged mechanism to confirm gender sensitive policy, implementation through a participatory apex body. Country's inclusive agenda requires an identical engendering in any respect levels. Women empowerment must improve the social, economic, political, educational, equal gender rights and spiritual strength of the women everywhere the globe. The modern society must bring sociological empowerment among women to deal with the social and gender discrimination processes within the society. Women empowerment may solve many social issues further as bring growth and development of the state on right track. Relatedly women owned businesses are becoming a standard approach since after liberalization paving way for women to achieve success but at the identical time obstructing her with challenges. The hour has arisen to firmly act and facilitate women to interact in economically and socially benefitting entrepreneurial activities and likewise add value to the commercial and overall national development.



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CONCLUSION

Women are the most important and powerful organ of the entire mechanism of the system called Universe. They are simply an extra ordinary gift to the world , however sad, they are totally neglected or taken for granted by the school of old thoughts where superstitions and false beliefs prevail which treat women as mere source of bearing and rearing of kids. The society has become a tough male dominating one so women are always sealed in the four walls of the house. In this whole study we are going to see the other side of the women who not only bear and rear the family but can powerfully spin the economy towards development and steady growth with a bang on healthy environment. Women are very subtle yet mentally strong beings. When they are biologically fit to bear the future, they are equally fit to handle any given situation. With this positive note we are going to have an insight of what is women empowerment and what can a woman achieve if good education is imparted to her. Time is history, where women have shown there valour and brains in all spheres of life, be it battle field, or space, she is fully into it. Here we will throw some light of the concept of women empowerment through education, problems, obstacles and measures and suggestions to improve the subject which is definitely going to have an impact on women. Before we start the study let us clearly bring out the objectives of this topic. Women are no longer a weaker or a deprived section of the society. They have to be treated equally. Women are stronger mentally and physically, its just they are very subtle and patient. They have to be respected equally. When they are strong and equal, they are subject to a healthy diet and provided all necessary medical facilities. Women are subject to the right of the best education they can attain at par equal to men. The day when every person in our country believes in the strength of woman, we will achieve the desired heights of economic and social development of the entire nation.

The terms 'women empowerment' and "life-style of women" have become new catch words across the world in present decades for development of the country.. The raised familiarity with the two terms has resulted in transformation of most of the ideologies that have justified inequalities in the social structure. Women empowerment and life-style of women have been acknowledged significantly effects on the well established roots of the by institutions that provide support to the upliftment of existing structures of society like family, state, education, health etc. Government have tried to eliminate the gender gap in the work opportunities, political participation, health facilities and accurate distribution of resources but there still prevails the influence of socio cultural ideas and rules with conservative outlooks. The emergence of women to the strategic life-style in social structures has given way to a relatively better understanding and identification of the oppressive practices. However, these transformations seem dominant compared to number of issues that continue to degenerate the conditions of women in the society along with challenges that have emerged to impede the holistic advancement of women. It has been realized that females have not yet been empowered to understand and confront the structure of patriarchal system

Women account for more than half of the world's illiterate population and achieving literacy for them could be one of the first steps towards empowering women to participate more equally in society and free them for economic opportunity which can be seen as highly important end in it self. The education enhances their decision making capacity in vital areas, especially in the areas of reproduction. Education is one of the most important means of empowering women and giving knowledge, skills and self confidence which is necessary to make them to be full partners in the development process.

Women Empowerment is my chosen topic which should be reiterated again and again till women do not achieve equal ratios in all the aspects such as health, education, employment and so on. India produces as many strong ladies like Indira Gandhi, Kalpana Chawla, Mary Com but they are very few which can be easily counted who shine in different fields, whereas a majority of women fall prey to the mishaps of socio-cultural trauma. As per the latest Census in the year 2011, the total female sex ratio in India is 940 per 1000 males, which is to an extent bearable though not equal. The census- 2011 also indicated a 2001-2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2 per cent, which is slower than the growth seen during the previous decade. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14 per cent for men and 65.46 per cent for women, is disheartening and non- acceptable. Why is there a difference between men and women. Women should be considered as the key components in many areas like family, society and a nation. So women have to be looked up and join them in their steps when we want our nation to grow. Nation is nothing but the combination of male and female and their thoughts. In a country like India where women cover nearly half of the population, no real development is possible neglecting women. Therefore, it is evident that to ignore women's role is to harm not just women but the entire communities and a nation because women, after all are half of the human race. And when we talk about development of the nation there is no other option except for educating women.

Women's education and empowerment plays an important role in the development. Empowerment is a very broad term encompassing all types of empowerment such as

education, economic, social, political, legal and cultural empowerment of women. The world declaration in world conference in 1990 laid emphasis on "education of all" and stress on universalizing access and promoting equity, the two issues which are vital to the empowerment of women. The history of women's education began with heated controversies about women's right to education and this battle has been won. Women today, enjoy a formally and explicitly recognized right to education, but few specific and effective guarantees have been put in place to ensure that women's access to education is secure. Education is the most important instrument for human resource development and the most important mediums through which knowledge and information is acquired. Hence, access to education has been recognized as a fundamental right of both men and women. The empowering role of woman's education is multipronged, affecting not only every aspect of women's lives, but also the lives of their children and others who are likely to depend on them. Education has the potential of empowering women in several different ways by equipping them with the awareness and knowledge required to make beneficial life choices by increasing their ability to access to resources and services, by enabling them to become informed consumers and citizens, by inculcating a feeling of self-worth, and by increasing their ability to challenge and make accountable those who hold power and authority among other things. Education is also likely to enhance women's economic independence by equipping them with skills necessary to avail of paid employment opportunities thereby also making their economic contributions more visible. At the national level the education of women has resulted in the improvement of the productivity, income and economic development of women as well as better quality of life notably a healthier and better nourished population.

Education is the creative and smartest platform for women which can guarantee the positive changes in the life of especially illiterate, unskilled, disabled, and uninformed women. Education gives women entrance to the world's enormous store of knowledge. The procedure of learning develops thought capacity and enhances creativeness, awakens women to the value of their own humanity and enables them to strive for distinction denied by patriarchal cultural norms and backward traditions. When women become aware and empowered of their rights and position, the remaining half part of the sky according to population will also be clear which ultimately brings positive effect to every sectors of a nation, so let's start from Chennai as the area and spread the fire of Women Empowerment throughout the nation rapidly.

Empowerment of women is one of the main reasons as to why female education is necessary in India. If a woman is educated, she will build self-confidence and this will result in empowerment. Women's empowerment is a new phrase in the vocabulary of gender literature. The phrase is used in two broad senses that are general and specific. In a general sense, it refers to empowering women to be self-dependent by providing them access to all freedoms and opportunities which they were denied in the past only because of their being women. In a specific sense, women empowerment refers to enhancing their position in the power structure of the society. The word women empowerment essentially means that the women have the power or capacity to regulate their day- today lives in the social, political and economic terms - a power which enables them to move from the periphery to the centre stage. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women

but also empowers the state to adopt measures, a position, indiscrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of democratic polity, our laws, developmental policies, plans and programmes are aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions to secure rights of women.

Empowerment would become more relevant, if women are educated, better informed and can take rational decisions. Education is the foundation of woman empowerment. The greatest single factor that can incredibly improve the status of women in any society is education. It enables her not only to gain knowledge about the world outside her hearth and home, but also helps her to get status, positive self esteem and self confidence, necessary courage and strength to face the challenges in life. It also facilitates her to procure a job to supplement the income of the family and achieve social status. Educated women can play an equally important role as men in nation building. Education is the nourishment of the mind with knowledge which practices purposefully and productively. Education disciplines the mind, sharpens the intellect and refines the spirit. It shapes and polishes a rough unknown diamond into a multifaceted Kohinoor sparking with scintillating brilliance. It's the development of integrated personality that unfolds itself to the highest wisdom. It's a continuous process.

Now the women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve the present positions as a commodity. History is a witness that women were made to dance both in private and public places to please the man. Secondly, in Indian society, a female was always dependent on male members of the family even last few years ago. Thirdly, a female was not allowed to speak with loud voice in the presence of elder members of her in-laws. In the family, every fault had gone to her and responsible. Forth, as a widower dependence on male members of the family still more increase. Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. Empowerment includes control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). It is not merely a feel of greater extrinsic control, but also grows intrinsic capacity, greater self-confidence and an internal transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. As per the United National Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the term women's empowerment means –

- (a) Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
- (b) Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.
- (c) Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.

- (d) Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change.
- (e) To create more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community.
- (f) International, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect.
- (g) Critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. Empowerment includes control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). It is not merely a feel of greater extrinsic control, but also grows intrinsic capacity, greater self-confidence and an internal transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology. Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

Education as the means of empowerment of women can bring about a confident attitudinal change of women in the society. It is considered as the justice to protect women's right against all the violence's that take place in today's world right from the time she is in the fetus. Education is the eye opener for every woman, to the practical challenges faced by the society and serves as a weapon to overcome them in a more dignified procedure until she chooses the way that matters to her, and her decisions are accepted and respected by her surroundings. It is therefore, crucial for the socio-economic and political progress of India and an open challenge which can appeal the world, what not a woman can achieve towards the positive growth of development. The Constitution of India empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. Education significantly makes difference in the lives of women. These can be direct or indirect. Education increases the economic, social and political opportunities available to women. It leads to direct economic benefits in the form of higher lifetime earnings for women. The society and community also benefit from the higher productivity of its labour force. Besides improving human capital and increasing economic growth, female education also reduces the fertility rate. The lowering in the number of dependents is referred to as the "demographic gift". Keeping women illiterate clearly retards economic growth. Societies that do not invest in girls' education pays a price for it

in terms of slower growth and reduced incomes. Investments in female education start a virtuous cycle that leads to improved levels of income, growth and gender equality. Inequality in education is like a distortionary tax that misallocates resources, thereby reducing economic growth.

PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In recent debates on women's empowerment through adult learning different perspectives on women's advancement have been expressed. One perspective advocates improving women's position and equity without radically altering the existing structure of gender relations. This perspective includes the so-called self-reliant model of empowerment. In this context self-reliance means achieving the best one can for oneself within the present system. From this point of view, a woman is "empowered" when she is literate, educated, and has productive skills, has access to capital and self-confidence. This view of empowerment as individual self-reliance is considered not to recognize nor question how a woman can gain increased access to resources if the hurdles of gender discrimination remain in place. It leaves out the political and ideological dimensions of women's struggle. The other perspective sees women's advancement as necessarily involving the transformation of an excessively male-dominated society. This involves collective action and working as a team towards the goal of ending discriminatory practices and gender inequality. Advocates of this view use the term "gender equity" to denote their ambition for a new form of gender justice within an egalitarian society and are interested in structural transformation to create more justice. They hold the view that women can achieve an equal footing with men only if there is equality of opportunity, which is not the case, as women continue to face systematic discrimination.

The term empowerment pre-supposes primacy of power over other dimensions. We speak of women's sharing of political power and participation in government. An important issue related to women's empowerment is the reservation of seats for them in the state legislature and union parliament. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 has provided 33 percent seats for women in Panchayats and municipal bodies. Though the experience of the Indian Panchayat Raj Institutions, one million women have actively entered political life in India. Since the creation of the quota system, local women - the vast majority of the illiterates and poor - have come to occupy as much as 43 percent of seats - spurring the election of increasing numbers of women at the district, provincial and national level. Since the onset of PRI, the percentages of women in various levels of political activity have risen from 4-5 percent to 25-40 percent. According to an Indian writer and activist Devaki Jain, "the positive discrimination of Panchayat Raj Institutions has initiated a momentum of change. Women's entry into local government in such large numbers often more than the required 33 percent, and their success in campaigning, including the defeat of male candidates, has shattered the myth that women are not interested in politics, and have no time to meetings or to undertake all the other work that is required in political party processes. Panchayat Raj Institutions reminds us of central truth: power is not something people give away, it has to be negotiated, and some time wrested from the powerful. In India, the participation of women in politics has actually been declined since the days of freedom movement (10 percent). It reached a high of 8 percent in 1984 elections. This figure has not crossed since then. The account of measures taken

for women's empowerment in India clearly shows that there is a deep concern in the country to uplift their social and economic conditions, so that they may play an active role in the task of national developments. Government is not serious for the political participation of women; the data shows that they are lagging behind in political sphere.

WHY THIS STUDY IS REQUIRED

A retrospective review of literature on women empowerment revealed a little number of studies conducted on empowerment of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. Apparaya and Patil (2014) studied problems and challenges of scheduled caste women's empowerment and Gupta (2008) compared the percentage of enrolment of women belonging to scheduled caste in higher education as compared to women belonging to general caste. Panda (2007) studied political empowerment and decision-making capacity of women representatives belonging to scheduled tribe in panchayat bodies. Similarly, Awias (2009) studied socio-economic empowerment of women belonging to scheduled tribe. Some studies were conducted on empowerment of women and girls belonging to general caste. Despite the growing importance of women empowerment in general and empowerment of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in particular, there is a dearth of systematic research studies relating to empowerment of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe on different aspect of women empowerment such as mobility, freedom from family domination and economic security and contribution to support their family vis-à-vis levels of education.

Further it was found out that there was no study conducted so far investigating the impact of education on life-style of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. However, some studies have been conducted on life-style of general women. McGuire and Anderson (2012) studied on lifestyle risk factor modification in midlife women with type 2 diabetes; Rama chandran and Kowitlawakul (2016) studied on awareness, knowledge and healthy lifestyle behaviours related to coronary heart disease among women and Shehu (2016) studied Sedentary lifestyle and wellness of people. The meta-analysis was also conducted by Lan (2017) on impact of preconception lifestyle interventions on fertility, obstetric, fetal, anthropometric and metabolic outcomes in men and women. Dammen (2018) studied on lifestyle interventions in women of reproductive age with overweight or obesity; and Malcolm (2019) studied loneliness and social isolation causal association with health-related lifestyle risk in older adults. Despite the importance of upliftment of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in enhancing their life-style, it was perceived from the review of previous research studies that there was a need for systematic research studying the impact of education on life-style of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe with regard to different dimensions of life-style of women such as health-consciousness, academic-orientation, career-orientation, socially-orientation, seeking different trends and family-orientation. Therefore, to explore more in the area of women empowerment and life-style of women belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe, it required both intensive and extensive types of research.

WOMEN EDUCATION PROPECTUS

Women Empowerment is although global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment in India is poised to becoming a superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 is fast approaching; it is just 3 year away. This can become reality only when the women of this nation become empowered. India presently accounts for the largest number of illiterates in the world. Literacy rate in India have risen sharply from 18.3 percent in 1951 to 64.8 percent in 2001 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen sharply 7 per cent to 54.16 percent . Despite the importance of women education unfortunately only 39 percent of women are literate among 64 per cent of the man. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. From the fifth five year plan onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level. In spite of the forceful intervention by a bastion of female privilege, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes over the last 62 years and above all, the United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the uplift of the plight of women in terms education is still in the state of an enigma in India for several reasons. The 2001 Census report indicates that literacy among women as only 54 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women India is even much lower to national average i.e. 65.38. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. Moreover education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 54 percent against 76 percent of men as per 2001 Census.

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desired goals. The impact of it is enormous on the society. Education is the torch which throws light on facts and enables women to gain knowledge, giving a strong sense of reasoning and she becomes a powerful decision maker. Education gives a platform to step on and walk towards the path of success and grab self-respect in a male dominated society. Then why is it that they hesitate to come forward? A simple answer to this can be that our government is corrupt and the justice system long drawn is expensive. But there is more to this than putting the blame on “systems”. There is an “inherent” reluctance to leave the “comfort zone of self and societal notions” on one hand and the lack of “skill” to handle such situations in real life on the other.

Empowerment of women as a goal of development projects and programs has gained wider acceptance since 1990s. It is not a simple linear process. It has long been argued by various UN agencies that the critical determinant of women's socio-economic status is education, and that education is the key to achieving social development by improving the well-being of the girls and women and thus promoting gender equity. The experience of numerous programs in the government and the NGO sector shows that it is indeed possible. Empowerment of women was one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) and every effort was made to create an enabling empowerment where women could freely exercise their rights within and outside their home as equal Partner with men. Education is one of the most critical factors responsible for the development of a human person. Right to education, therefore, is held as a very important human right. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. The international community has realized the importance of education for individual and collective well-being made explicit provisions in several human rights instruments on the rights to education. The Constitution of India was recently amended to provide for the right to compulsory elementary education to children falling between the age group of 6-14 years. Among the world's 900 million literacy people, women outnumber men two to one. Girls constitute the majority of 130 million children without access to primary education (Human Development Report 1995). The illiteracy rate of women is 55.16 percent as against 75.85 percent for men (2001). They can be seen as beggars on road crossing and rag pickers. Education, in a broad sense, essentially involves penning the mind, enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence, building a sense of positive self-worth, accessing information and tools of knowledge and acquiring the ability to negotiate this unequal and unjust world from a position of strength. No society has ever liberated itself - economically, politically or socially –without a sound base of educated women. Many countries experience around the world have demonstrated that investment in educating women is the most precious investment a society can ever make.

EXPERT'S VIEW ON EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar the prominent person of the nineteenth century (1820-1891) helped the British Government to establish the first girl's school in Calcutta in 1849. He was farther responsible for the establishment of forty girl's schools in Bengal between 1855-1858. Gopal Krishna Gokhale a brilliant national leader (1866-1915) worked relentlessly

towards raising the status of women in Indian society. He founded the "Servants of Indian Society" in 1905 as its main objective the education of women. Two religious leaders who helped in bringing about the renaissance in the Hindu religion were Rama Krishna Paramahansa (1866) and Swami Vivekananda (1862- 1902). In the 19th and early 20th centuries there was also an improvement in the status of women in India. Two major movements which affected women's position during this period were the Social Reform Movement of the 19th century and the Nationalist Movement of the 20th century. Spread of education was an important instrument for social change and in improving status of the women.

The lack of education is the main cause for which women suffer more than men do. The lack of education means the lack of self-reliance, self confidence because of which women are not able to come out of their problems. So, educating a woman means educating a family. As per one estimate about 850 million people in the world are illiterate. Out of these about 50% are in India alone. But if we take illiteracy rate among women, the situation becomes more alarming. Four out of five women in this country are illiterate which means they are denied the benefits of modern knowledge, improvements of functional skills and behavioural changes towards modernization. No doubt that there has been a tendency towards literacy in post-independence era, but women to a large extent have been ignored. Consequently, a considerable majority of the women particularly from rural areas continue to be either illiterate or semi-literate. It means women are not given the opportunities in order to enable themselves to take the benefit of the modern technology. The National Policy of Education (NPE) sees education as an instrument to bring about basic changes in the status of women and envisages a well conceived edge in their favour.

1. Mahila Samakhya is one of the most successful efforts to link women's empowerment project with education to create an environment for women, to acquire knowledge and information with a view to bring about change in their perception about themselves and that of the society.
2. The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) has been successful in raising the demand for education, especially among women. In most of the 428 districts women make up over 60% of the adults enrolled in the programme.
3. The Non-formal Education (NFE) is being extended particularly to meet the needs of girls who are unable to attend formal school. NFE centres run exclusively for girls to get 90% assistance from the Central Government.
4. The University Grant Commission (UGC) has been encouraging institutions to take up research projects in the area of women's studies by providing necessary funds. National Policy on Education (NPE) - Initiatives for women 1986 is a landmark approach towards women education. It has attempted for the first time to address the basic issues of women's equality.

In January 1991, the government constituted a statutory body called National Commission for Women (NCW). In accordance with the directives of the National Policy on Education and the implementation strategies envisaged in the programme of action, the government formulated a comprehensive programme known as National Literacy Mission

(NLM) of adult education. The NLH was launched by Rajiv Gandhi (at that time he was Prime Minister of India) in May 1983 to achieve the goal i.e. imparting "Functional literacy" to 80 million illiterate persons in the 15-35 age - group, 30 million by the 1990 and an additional 50 million by 1995. The mission was, thus, aimed at achieving 80% literacy in 1995 in comparison to 36.0% in 1981. The NLH aimed at involving youth and voluntary agencies in the programme. In 1990 there were 3113 projects in operation in various states and union territories. Likewise presently there are 500 voluntary agencies working in the field. In addition to this Shramik Vidhyapuths and 16 state resource centers are functioning in different states to cater to the worker's education and to improve technical resources support to the programme. In January 1991, the government constituted a statutory body called National Commission for Women (NCW).

The Government of India has launched various programmes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), The National Programme for Education of Girls at an Elementary level 2003 (NPEGEL), The National Policy on Education (1986) which recognized the need to redress traditional gender imbalances in educational access and achievement. The National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education was launched in 2008 by the Government of India which provides incentive to the girl child who passes VIII Std examination and enrolls in a Secondary School. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001 highlights the creation of a gender sensitive educational system.

Women' education has assumed special significance in the context of India's planned development, as it is incorporated in every Five-year Plans as the major programme for the development of women. Universalization of elementary education enrolment and retention of girls in the schools, promotion of Balwadies and Creches, raising number of schools and colleges of arts, science, and professions for girls, polytechnics, girls hostels, multipurpose institutions and adult education programs are some of the steps being taken by both Central and State Governments in India to boost up women's education. The Mahila Samakhya experience over the past twelve years offers a unique case of trying to explore and understand the issues of women's education and empowerment and the interlinkage thereof in different regional and rural contexts within India. It offers an example of the importance of empowerment of women as a critical precondition to facilitate greater inclusion of women and their daughters into education. Further, it provides an alternative paradigm to women's mobilisation and empowerment to the current and dominant focus on economic interventions as the principal strategy for women's empowerment. Mahila Samakhya started as a pilot project in 10 districts in the states of UP, Gujarat and Kamataka during 1988-89 and has grown into a programme of scale and is currently being implemented in 60 backward districts in the country covering over 9000 villages in 10 states. It is estimated that over two lakh women are actively mobilised and organised by the programme with a much larger number being impacted indirectly.

Education is important for all, but it is especially significant for women and the girl child. This is true not only because it is an entry point to other opportunities but also because the educational achievements of women can have far reaching impact on the family, the society and across generations. The present study has focused on the concepts of marriage, family planning, domestic violence and political participation of women in India. Its main

objectives were to establish a relationship between education and empowerment of women in Indian context. This study sought to delineate the impact of education in furthering or declining the state of empowerment of women.

Modern education has played a significant role in changing women's outlook. There is a remarkable change in the values which the women cherished under the influence of traditions. The modern education has brought about a new concept of womanhood in India which is at odds with the traditional concept of women today the woman is not only the manager of house hold but she also actively participates in public life. Education removes the inequalities between the sexes. In changing societies like ours the education has especial significance in the changing notion of women in politics. Education is the means that enables the women to utilize their rights and get emancipation.

The gender equality can be attained by virtue of empowerment. The constitution of India stands for equality between men and women and provides that there should be no discrimination on the ground of sexes. Nonetheless, the women lag behind men in various areas and the poverty among women is on the rise. Their status is that of subordination in almost every sphere of life. The efforts of the government are focused on economic development more and less in the field of social empowerment. Ever since the dawn of independence in 1947 the equality between men and women with their liberation from traditional constraints has been the part and parcel of Indian policy towards women. Education leads to equalization of the status between individuals and help intellectual, social and emotional development of human being.

Marriage and remarriage rates among women have also changed with the arrival of education among them meaning thereby that the college educated women in comparison with the women with fewer years of education marry latter, have fewer children and are less likely to view marriage as "financial security" and are happier in their married life and with their family life and are least likely to divorce.

Female education has also great impact on marriage age of females and is responsible for the delay in their marriage. Among the urban middle and upper classes there is a strong pressure to educate girls so that they can find a better employed bridegroom. Even the top sections in rural areas, which were averse to educate their girls are now sending them to schools and colleges because they now comprehend that they will find it difficult to get a suitable match for their girls in case they are not educated. Education and fertility are closely related with each other. Female education has played a significant role in the decline of fertility in India. The National Sample Survey has indicated that where the education level is higher the fertility is lower. The National Family Health Survey in India has indicated that the education of women can play a pivotal role in shaping their attitudes and behaviour. Educational attainments have shown a substantial association with important variable considerations including age at marriage, fertility, the use of and demand for family planning, number of children desired, antenatal care, delivery in a health facility, vaccination and multi-nutritional status of children, use of oral dehydration solution and infant and child mortality. Education among married women has also led to the weakening of son preference.

Female education makes women aware that there is a noticeable difference in the reproductive and child health seeking behaviour of educated women than illiterate women. The educated women stand empowered mainly in decision making, autonomy and control over household resources. They have knowledge and awareness of the modern world and their inter-spousal communication has greatly improved. Education among women is responsible for later age of marriage and smaller family size and because of the education they take decisions to control their fertility. It is by virtue of education that the educated women have the knowledge about contraception which gives them the choice to have desired number of children. The infant mortality is lesser among the children of educated women and their children are healthier and get better education.

This study also depicts the impact of education on domestic violence. With the increase of the level of education there is a decrease in the incidence of domestic violence. Because of education there is greater awareness among both women and men about family planning, marriage, domestic violence, political participation etc. There is close and positive relationship between political participation of women and education. Education enables women to assert their rights and get emancipation and helps them to think and take decisions at their own. In the last few decades the social, economic and cultural life of women has greatly improved with the rise of women's educational standard both in rural and urban areas. Education has given rise to an interest among women to participate in political, social, cultural and other activities. Education of women is the powerful instrument to free them from the yoke of slavery, oppression and ameliorate their social and economic condition in the male dominated society. Only through education we can prepare a woman with ability and potential to meet society's challenges, effect positive change and make them become thoughtful ethical leaders. Ensuring access to education is a precondition for full realization of the right to education. Without proper access to education it is not possible to guarantee the right to education.

Parents are not generally opposed to female education but they are reluctant to pay for it. When there is an economic constraint in the family, the girl child is first in the family to be taken out of school. Boys are usually retained as they are looked upon as a sort of investment for the future. Therefore, the state intervention in the form of free textbooks, uniforms, food, etc can be an important factor in the initial enrolment of the girl child in school.

From the above discussions we arrive at the conclusion that the true and real empowerment of the women is possible by education. Only the educated women are empowered in true sense. The empowerment of women is not possible without educating them. The education is, therefore, the remedy of all problems that come to surround them in their lives and a powerful means of their all round development.

FINDINGS OF STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS

It is said that women do three fifths of the world's work, earn one tenth of the world's income and own one hundredth of the world's asset. Empowerment requires self-help, confidence, daring, knowledge and skill. All these are facilitated by education. National Policy for Empowerment of women includes social empowerment, economic empowerment and Gender justice. It is the duty of higher education institutions to make provision of training,

employment and income generation activities of women. This would help women to take off themselves. The path is clear for women, only strong and positive attitude with assertive efforts on the part of higher education section and society at largely needed. Then there is no limit for women except sky. India is rich in a lot of natural resources, rich in agricultural soil, and various things like spices, textile, and recently software's. It produces more number of doctors and farmers. But still our country is poor, because of our thoughts and superstitious beliefs and traditional customs. We have more population than any other advanced countries in the world, with which we can accumulate more wealth and freedom. So it is time we realize that we forget the biological difference between men and women, and understand that in all the fields' women get an opportunity to attain higher education and work shoulder to shoulder with men to take the country towards advancement at a faster rate. Women should be treated as pride of the nation and not the weaker section of the society. By women empowerment it does not mean that women become dominating but women has the power in decision making and financially relaxed. According to the Country Report of the Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power." Education of women in the education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in mainstream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for the hostilities midday meals, scholarships, free circles and so on.

The finding of the present study education has no impact on women empowerment and life-style of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe bears significant educational implications. Basing on the findings, it is recommended that both Central government and State government need to give importance to women empowerment as a focused objective of education in the system of education from elementary level to higher education level. Accordingly curriculum across subjects needs to be integrated with women empowerment elements. Further, it is recommended that various issues, challenges and problem of women along with skills and knowledge relating to women empowerment should be included in the curriculum. It is also recommended that both central government and state government should take necessary steps for organizing orientation programs on women empowerment to make women of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe empowered. Universities and research institutions all over India should be provided with funds and research grants by government to carry on research activities on and awareness programmes on women empowerment with special focus on women empowerment of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women. Curriculum of women studies at university and college levels should have a scope for special paper on women empowerment with special reference to topics on empowerment of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women. On the basis of above detailed analysis it could be concluded that there is no doubt about the essential need of empowering women through education. Now it is cleared that only literacy is not the ultimate solution but women should be highly educated to know

their rights and duties and should be able to use their rights as per the need. But it is also mandatory that there should be proper implementation of what policies and programmes are made by Government of India regarding women empowerment.

The finding that education has its significant impact on life-style of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women bears important educational implications. It is recommended that development of life-style in women should be one of the objectives of education at all stages of educational system around which curriculum across subjects need to be redesigned. Further, it is recommended that both central government and state government should take necessary steps for organization of orientation programs on life-style of women for women of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe frequently. Curriculum of women's studies at university and college levels should be focused with special paper and topics on life-style education for women in general, and women of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in particular. Special research grants and funds need to be sanctioned by both central government and state government for research and academic activities on life-style of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women. Lastly, it is recommended that national policy and programmes on education should focus on women empowerment and life-style of women with special reference to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women.

Educational planners in India have tried a wide range of strategies to bridge the gap between men and women. Education is a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives. Educating women is a high return investment in socioeconomic development of the nation. There are some useful suggestions for empowerment of Indian women which can be brought about through education.

Present study offers the following suggestions:

1. Elimination of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education and minimization of the drop out rate.
2. Improving women's and girls' health by ensuring them access to adequate maternal health care, family planning and nutrition and reducing maternal mortality and increasing the life expectancy.
3. Acquiring knowledge and skills for social, cultural and political advancement and inculcating positive and egalitarian attitudes for women.
4. Promoting qualified women to positions of power at every level within political, legislative and judicial bodies with the goal of achieving parity with men.]
5. Securing women's right to vote, stand for election and hold public or political office.
6. Greater female inheritance rights may improve female education through a substitution of dowry payments in the marriage market.
7. The parents of children belonging to poor, underprivileged families must be specially educated with proper social formula to help them to understand the significance of educating the girl child as foundation for empowerment.
8. Concession in fees and provision of learning resources-Poverty is an avoidable characteristic of the Indian Economy. Poverty is the main reason of drop outs of girl

students and break in their education. In nearly all families preference is given to education of male student than female students. So, girl students from economically backward class are given concession in normal fees such as Library fee, laboratory fee etc.,

9. Promoting research in women studies-universities should promote structural studies regarding women. Research grants or project grant should be provided for data base studies. Their conclusions and suggestions be communicated to the policy makers at state level as well as at national level. These studies certainly suggest new ways, means and measures for empowerment of women and the national policy can be designed on the realistic ground.
10. Awareness about the various scheme of government most of the girl students are unaware of the various schemes of the government for women upliftment. Institutions of Higher Education should establish linkage with such government and non government organizations that would help for empowerment of women. It should work as mediator between these organization and women.

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In order to bring women to the center stage of development and empowerment, thereby ensuring better participation in the development efforts of the nation and enabling them to take a lead role in the social and economic system, the following suggestions may be considered:

1. Compulsory education must be given for women, because of literacy is the first step towards empowerment of women. The entire population is to be involved to create a sense of awareness about values and the need to empower women through equality education.
2. Education up to minimum of 12th standard must be made available and compulsory for every child. Attempt should made to reduce further or close the gender- gap in education at all levels.
3. In the light of education as the fundamental right and education for women's equality special attention is required to identify low female literacy pockets along with women, girl children, adolescents belonging to socially disadvantaged group viz., SC/ST's, OBC's, minorities and disabled.
4. To minimize the drop-outs among girls, the government programmes and other educational schemes must be implemented effectively.
5. The Government should promote more higher and technical educational facilities in the rural areas. There should be special incentive packages for women education.
6. Create more non-farm employment opportunities for women especially in the rural areas so that the income level of the rural families can be increased.
7. Special efforts are required to generate gainful employment for women through promotion and expansion of both wage and self-employment opportunities.

8. The attitude of husband, family members should be changed towards her occupation and should come forward to share her burden. Women should also change their attitude about themselves. They should be self confident in their approach.
9. Introduce and insist to use information technology to impart up to date and useful knowledge regarding their profession and problems.
10. Ensure availability of need based, affordable, acceptable, accessible health services for women who are working in different fields.
11. Ensure integration of reproductive health care in primary health care so as to optimize resources.
12. Encourage Indigenous systems of medicine in women health care through adequate budget allocations for training providing services and for research.
13. Ensure involvement of women from Mahila Mandals etc., in health policy making as well as programme implementation. Ensure women are present in local governance and at all levels of decision making.
14. Universalisation of reproductive health service requires special attention with a special focus on the underserved and under privileged segments of population.
15. As part of representation to women we can initiate with reservation for women by 33 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures.
16. Political parties have to play a crucial role in the representation of women. They have to keep in view that women cannot be kept aloof from politics especially when equality is the corner stone of a democratic frame work. Political parties have to assure equal opportunity to women while assigning position in the party.
17. Political Party should take care to have educated and talented women to contest in elections and play relevant role in political process. Only talented women can educate masses and make them politically conscious.
18. Even among women, vested interests should not be allowed to exist when they work in political parties. If vested interest are promoted 33 percent reservation may not serve the purpose. This will not lead to the empowerment of complete women.



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