Chapter – I

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

"In order to awaken the people it is the women, who have to be awakened once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and nation moves."

(Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)

National development of any Country depends upon the full possible development of its women along with man. As we all known that women is the incarnation of love and she is ready to sacrifices her life for the sake of development of her family, but it is unfortunate that due to certain Historical, Geographical, Political Economical and Psychological reasons, the Indian women has been left behind the race of development by man in almost all spheres of life. It is imperative from the researches conducted in India and Abroad that only the meaningful education is the only tools for the upliftment of women by bringing Social, Cultural, Moral, Emotional, Political, Ethical, Economical and Psychological changes in them.

The position of women reflects the cultural, aesthetic, moral and spiritual attainment of society. The elevation of the feminine principle pervades Vedic thought, throughout the Vedic period women was given a status equal of man's to participate in sacrificial rites, to undergo the investiture ceremony and to be man's equal in upholding "Dharma". She could fight wars, join in festivals, take part in philosophical discussions or even remain unmarried if she so desired. With the passage of time there was a
gradual degradation in the status of women. The social codes and sanctions of Manu left their marks permanently on the future status of the Indian women. Manu clamped down the freedom of women in certain spheres in order to safeguard their position and to preserve the family structure. His famous dictum "a woman must be her father's shadow in childhood, her husband's in her youth, her son's in old age" is all well known. It is indeed, right from ancient times to modern age, women's position in society suffered from strange somersaults, sometimes she was taken to a high pedestal from where she could dictate and sometimes brought low in the earth where nothing but kicks and pricks were her lot. But with the passage of time due to the highly praiseworthy work done by social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy- a wind of change regarding the status of women was felt and ever after that women have been on the move to improve their lot. The National Movement, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, provided further necessary impetus towards restoration of the status of women in the Indian society. Mahatma Gandhi's "call" to women to setup out of the confines of their home to join the "Prabhat Pheris, Satyagrahas" and other related activities was one of the first attempts to draw Indian women out of the restricted circle of domestic life into equal roles with men. Their involvement in the struggle for political freedom had taken women a long way from the position they had reached under the reformers. The new assumed leadership for their cause had, thus, generated fiery spirit in the women for the same. The spirit in which Mahatma Gandhi inspired women to participate actively and wholeheartedly in the struggle for freedom, has now come to be firmly enshrined in the Constitution of independent India which promises to all its citizens," Justice- social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of
the Nation. Thus in 1950, women were formally emancipated but the yoke of tradition and mechanism still impedes the free movement of women—ideologically, psychologically and physically. According to Late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, “After decades of tremendous strides in democracy and development, women’s participation and their role in life has not made much headway. This would require Women Empowerment.” At the same time, such an empowerment can come to women only with their social, political advancement and an increase in their number and participation in decisions making positions and roles. Such a participation in making public choices would lead to qualitative change not merely in women’s lives but in the functioning of public institutions. Therefore, a set of strategies and actions that would take care of the deficiencies and empower women in multiple way and help them to play their role effectively, have to be evolved. Hence, the emphasis is to be laid on their development of education, leadership quality and attainment of economic independence that will enable them not only to stand on their own feet but will also develop their latent ability to lead the family, the society, and the nations at large.

The Education Commission (1964-1966) asserted that education of women is even of greater importance than that of men. It says that:

“For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and for molding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women has even greater importance than that of men. The education of women can assert greatly in reducing the fertility rate. In the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up the children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equality with man, the responsibility of the development of society in all aspects this
equal partnership will have to continue in the fight against hunger, poverty, ignorance and ill health."

Although provision of educational opportunities to women has been an important programme in the educational sector since Independence, yet the education system of our country has not been able to make sufficient contribution towards women equality. In view of the above, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) envisaged that education would be used as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women. According to NPE, the national education system would; i) play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women, ii) contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and text-books and iii) women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses.

In programme of Action (POA-1992) it has been stated that education for women's equality is a vital component of the overall strategy of securing equality and social justice in education. Education for women's equality is too important to be left to the individual commitments or proclivities of persons in charge of implementing programmes. It should be incumbent on all actors, agencies and institutions in the field of education at all levels to be gender sensitive and ensure that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities.

Researches on girls and women have been conducted in India by several independent centers and universities and the researches generated by pioneering women's research centre such as the Research centre for women studies, the SNDT University-Mumba, Karnataka women's University -Bijpur, Karnataka, Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore, The Centre for women's Development Studies Delhi, The Institute of Social Studies Trust, The Centre for Women's Studies Trivandrum and the two Women's Universities- Mother Teresa
(Tamil Nadu) and Padmavati (Andhra Pradesh). The Institute of Education, Puna, and the Departments of Women’s Studies are noteworthy.

The NCERT, New Delhi took the initiative to set up the first chair in women studies in the country in 1988. According to Nayar (1997) the researches that have emerged from these centers have had a definite influence in shaping not only educational policies, plans and programmes but also in giving a direction to the national effort in the area of women’s development as equal partners in a secular democracy, and in bringing home the centrality of women’s education to women’s empowerment as a non-negotiable area of societal progress and enhancement of women’s status. After 1986, the researchers have not only emerged from women’s studies centre on their own but a lot of policy researches have been commissioned by national government and the UNO, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WHO and other international agencies like the Commonwealth Secretariat etc.

Fifth Survey of Educational Research (1992) indicates that while the Universities appear to be getting somewhat more sensitive to problems of women and gives from different groups of the population, especially the disadvantaged sections, they are not influenced by feminist perspective of women studies except in there Women’s Universities and the Women’s Studies Centre in the country.

National Perspective Plan for Women’s Education (1988-2000 AD) The programmes for women’s education will have to be implemented as a priority so that women attain a comparable level of education by 2000 A.D. The strategy to be adopted for raising literacy levels and education among women has to keep in view the vast cultural, geographical and ecological variation and also problems relating to poverty and ignorance.
In view of social and cultural handicaps that have operated against women's education and taking account of the multiple roles that women are required to play, the need for adopting a set of objective specific to women's education is imperative. The objectives to be achieved by 2000 AD in regard to women's education are:

(i) Elimination of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education and minimization of the dropout rate in the age group 6-14 years and stagnation to negligible proportions.

(ii) Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to appropriate level, nature quality of education and also the wherewithal for success comparable with men.

(iii) Substantial vocationalization and diversification of secondary education so as to provide a wide scope for employment and economic independence of women.

(iv) Making education an effective means for women's equality by:

(a) Addressing ourselves to the constraint that prevents women from participating in the educational process;

(b) Eliminating the existing bias in the system;

(c) Making necessary intervention in the content and processes of education to indicate positive and egalitarian attitudes, and

(d) Ensuring that teachers perceive this as one of their essential roles.

(v) Providing non-formal and part-time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.
(vi) Impetus to enroll in various professional degree courses so as to increase their number in medicine, teaching, engineering and other fields substantially.

(vii) Creating a new system of accountability, particularly in respect of the basic educational services, to the local community, interalia, by active involvement of women.

In brief, it is reiterated that the goals and strategies spelt out in the National Policy of Education, POA and the National Literacy Mission will ensure a much larger access to women education.

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in its preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The constitutions not only grant equality to women, but also empower the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the fifth five year plan (1974-78) onwards there 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 for women was set up by an act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th amendment (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayat and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision-making at the local levels.

The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specifically, the objectives of this policy include:
(i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.

(ii) The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil.

(iii) Equal access to participation and decision – making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.

(iv) Equal access to women healthcare, equality of education at all levels, carrier and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.

(v) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

(vi) Changing societal attitudes and community practice by active participation and involvement of both men and women.

(vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.

(Viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and

(ix) Building and strengthening partnership with civil society, particularly women’s organizations.

In order to meet these goals the policy suggests,

1. Legal judicial system will be made more responsive and gender sensitive to women’s needs, especially in case of domestic violence and personal assault. New laws will be enacted and existing laws reviewed to ensure that justice is quick and the punishment meted out to the culprits is commensurate with the severity of the offence.
2. At the initiative of and with the full participation of all stakeholders including community and religious leaders, the policy would aim to encourage changes in personal laws such as those related to marriage, divorce, maintenance and guardianship so as to eliminate discrimination against women.

3. The evaluation of property rights in a patriarchal system has contributed to the subordinate status of women. The policy would aim to encourage changes in laws relating to ownership of property and inheritance by evolving consensus in order to make them gender justice.

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) (2003-04) The NPEGEL has been launched in the year 2003-04 with the noble objective to provide additional support to education of girls at the elementary level with the following initiatives:

- To develop school, as a model girl’s child friendly school, at the cluster level;

- To provide additional incentives such as stationery, slates, work books and uniforms and also to meet any other – felt need within the existing ceiling of Rs. 150 per girls per annum.

- Additional intervention like awards to schools / teachers, student evaluations remedial teaching bridges courses alternatives schools, learning through open school, teacher training and child care centre at the cluster level with in a ceiling of 60,000 per annum.

- Mobilization and community monitoring with in a ceiling of Rs.95000 per cluster over a five year period.

- Development of materials;
Planning, training and management supports.

Beside these, the department of women and child development under the aegis of the ministry of human resources development has introduced various other schemes for extending and enlarging the scope of education among the women and girl children namely, 'condensed courses for education and vocational training' and 'distance education programme for women' supplementing the efforts of department of the education.

The researches have proved beyond doubts that education is necessary for the development of individuals and nations that education is a basic right of all human beings, men, women, girls and boys, that education has brought attitudinal changes towards women and girls education. Still there is a major challenge of bringing about greater understanding and sensitivity to gender issues which is not a substituted for equality of numbers in all walks of life but involves a major qualitative change in the societal roles and social relation between men and women in our society. Equally important is that women should be studied as active contributors in all spheres of life in our emerging society so that their special problems and characteristics may come into limelight and educational provision may be made for them accordingly. The women's may be strengthened by inculcating in them Leadership Qualities, qualities of being Economically Independent and efficiency in gaining knowledge in the rapidly changing and ever growing society.

Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Educational Levels as the correlates of Women Empowerment have not been studied so far by any researcher in India. The above these independent variables are very important in the context of Women's Empowerment. This prevailing situation warrants that these aspects be given due attention by the researches in the country.
1.2 THE CONCEPT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's Conference in 1985 at Nairobi. The conference defined empowerment as a redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women.

According to Dictionary of Education, “Empowerment means recognizing power inequalities and seeking to reduce them by working together.”

The Programme of Action 1992 has comprehensively given the below mentioned parameters of empowerments of women:

- Enhancing self esteem and self confidence of women.
- Building a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy.
- Developing in them an ability to think critically.
- Fostering decision making and action through collective process.
- Enabling women to make informed choices in areas like education, employment and health especially reproductive health.
- Provide information, knowledge and skill for economic independence.
- Enhancing access to legal literacy and information related to their rights and entitlements in the society with a view to enhance their participation on an equal footing in all areas.

Empowerment is a term wildly used in the context of ‘development’, particularly, women's development. Empowerment in a nutshell, is a way of defining, challenging and overcoming barriers in one's life through which the individual increases her ability to shape her life and environment.
Empowerment implies:

- A state of mind and attitude of a person. An empowered women has a positive self image and takes an active part in decision making related to herself, her family and the community,

- Greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making and greater ability to overcome restrictions and constraints imposed by customs, beliefs and practices,

- Self confidence and understanding of the importance of human values, right and privileges; conducive for a more dignified and satisfactory way of life.

Empowerment is an active process enabling women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Women's participation in income generating activities would increase their status and decision making power. If a woman is economically a parasite, she can never claim an equal status with man. The problem of poverty cannot be tackled without providing opportunities of productive employment to women. Researchers conducted in India confirm that even where there is a male earner, women's earnings form a major part of the income of poor households. Moreover, women contribute a large share of what they earn to basic family maintenance than men. Increase in women's income translates more directly into better child health, nutrition and family well being. Women's participation in labour force also brings about changes in awareness and attitudes which may have long term benefits such as adoption of small family norms, reduction in birth rates and mortality and morbidity rates.
Women's empowerment can be achieved only through meeting the gender needs and interests. Education, which is the most dynamic factor of development, is the only tool for realizing empowerment. It is also a productive investment. It brings about conscientisation which helps individuals to perceive, interpret, criticize and finally transform their environment.

Women are partners in development. They can play a more positive and active role in development if they are given relevant education and training. They need to be enabled to use improved technology in their daily activities. The NPE has rightly envisaged that the national education system should play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women through the following action strategies:

- Building a positive self image,
- Developing ability to think critically,
- Building up group cohesion and fostering decision making,
- Ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change, and
- Providing the wherewithal for economic independence.

Empowerment literally means “to invest with power”. In the context of women’s empowerment the term has come to denote women’s increased control over their own lives, bodies and environment “in literature, women empowerment emphasizes on women’s decision-making role, their economic self-reliance and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance, and protection against all forms of discrimination, in addition to the elimination of barriers to their access of resources such as education, health and information”.

For more than a decade, the term ‘empowerment’ has been widely used in relation to women today, one leaves this term
much more often than term like 'women's welfare', 'upliftment', 'development', or 'awareness raising'. However, in spite of the growing popularity and widespread usage as the term, there is little conceptual clarity about what exactly empowerment means, and even less about what the empowerment of women implies in social, economic and political terms.

The researches on empowerment shows that the word empowerment has simply been substituted to describe the same strategies and activities which were earlier called 'integrated rural development', 'women's development', community participation', conscientization etc. In this chapter sincere attempts have been made to develop conceptual framework for women's empowerment.

1.2.1 What is Power?

The most conspicuous feature of the term empowerment is that it contains within it the world power.

Empowerment is therefore clearly concerned with power and particularly with changing the power relations— and the distribution of power—between individual and groups. Though the history of organized society, philosopher and scientist ever hue have attempted to define power. In our purpose, power can simply be defined as control over material, human and intellectual resources i.e. physical resources, like land, water, forests, human resources like people, their bodies, their labour and skills; intellectual resources like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money, access to money. The control of one or more of these resources becomes a source of individual and social power.

In every society, power is dynamic and relational, rather than absolute- it is exercised in the social, economic and political relations between individuals and groups. It is also unequally
distributed i.e., some individual and groups are powerful (having greater control over the sources of power) and some are less powerful or powerless (having little or no control). The extent of power of an individual or group is in turn correlated to how many different kinds of resources they can access and control. This control confers decision-making power, which is exercised in three basic ways: to make decision, make others implement one's decision, and finally, influence others' decisions without any direct intervention- which in one sense is the greatest power of all. Differential levels of control- viz. social power- are sustained and perpetuated through social division such as gender, age, caste, class, ethnicity, race, North-South; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law etc.

1.2.2 Need of Women Empowerment:

Empowerment is a continuous process for realizing the ideals of equality, human liberation and freedom for all. Women's empowerment, thus, implies equality of opportunity and equity between the genders, ethnic groups, social classes and age groups strengthening of life chances, collective participation in different spheres of life- cultural, social, political, economic, development process, decision making etc.

Yojana (2008) the need for women's empowerment was felt in India long back. Mahatma Gandhi had announced at the Second Round Table Conference that his aim was to establish a political society in India in which there would be no distinction between people of high and low classes and in which women would enjoy the same rights as men and the teeming millions of India would be ensured dignity and justice- social, economic and political. The need for women's empowerment was discussed by Rao and Rao in following three levels:
At the level of the individual women and her household:

- Participation in crucial decision – making processes;
- Extent of sharing of domestic work by men;
- Extent of which a women takes control of her reproductive functions and decides on family size;
- Extent to which a women is able to decide where the income she has earned will be channeled to;
- Feeling and expression of pride and value in her work;
- Self-confidence and self-esteem; and
- Ability to prevent violence.

At the community and /or organizational level:

- Existence of women's organizations;
- Allocation of funds to women and women's projects;
- Increased number of women leaders at village, district, provincial and national levels;
- Involvement of women in the design, development and applications of technology;
- Participation in community programs, productive enterprises, political and arts.
- Involvement of women in non-traditional tasks;
- Increased training programs for women; and
- Exercising her legal rights when necessary.

At the national level

- Awareness of her social and political rights;
- Integration of women in the general national development plan;
• Existence of women's networks and publications;
• Extent to which women are officially visible and recognized; and
• The degree to which the media take need of women's issues.

1.2.3 Women Empowerment- In International Scenario

French Revolution has initiated a process of growing awareness of women's rights. Feminism had struck quick roots in Germany, England, and other European countries by the end of the Century.

The struggle for political equality started in England as early as 1792 but it took over 100 years for this right to be recognized. It was only after the First World War that this was conceded. In Russia, in the mid-19th century women issue attracted much attention among those people who were demanding political reforms.

New Zealand was the first country to enfranchise women. But its first women could be elected in the parliament only in 1933. Even in the developed countries like Italy, France, Japan the right of political equality was conceded only in 1945. The two great wars were the turning points in the history of women empowerment as the countries across the world realized the extensive contributions, women had made during the war years.

It is the UN which has provided the lead to bring women's issue in focus throughout the world. Halvi Sipla, UN Assistant Secretary General for International Women's year has remarked that "Half of the humanity' 'women' have yet to go a long way to achieve equality of status and opportunities along with men. Equality between men women does not exist. Evaluating women's economic condition a UN report has come out with such starling conclusion: " though women and girls provide half of world as
work hours: but they receive only a tenth of world's income and own less than a hundredth of world property."

We have come a long way since 1975, when the year was declared by the UN as International women's Year, UN and all countries were amazed how little was known about of the society, what they do, where they stand in the power of equation of the society, if they are unequal and discriminated and how much. To know more about us, the UN and many international agencies and member states released enormous for research on the women. However, while, result of research were awaited, it was apparent even of the inexperienced that women were not benefiting from the development efforts in the developing countries and almost all the benefits were being monopolized by men, widening the gender gap in economic status. It was followed by 1975-1985 as "International women's Decade." This in fact the first official international recognition of women's issues in the global context it is also evident from the four international conference of the UN held during the last two decades.

The Mexico World Conference (1975) during international women's year has pointed out that: "problem of women's of the society as a whole and that change in their present economic, political and social situation must become an integral part of the effort to transform the structures and attitudes that hinder the equality of opportunities of their needs." This conference has emphasized the equality of opportunities which are expressed in the clear words: "Equality between men and women means equality in their dignity and worth as human beings as well as equality in their rights, opportunities and responsibilities." In 1990, World Summit for Children has set goals for health, education and nutrition for women and their children. The International Conference on Nutrition held in 1992 in Rome has also emphasized the elimination of malnutrition among women
and children. In 1993, World Conference on Human Rights has affirmed women's right as a central element in the overall global Human Rights Agenda, and has stressed upon the need for confronting the specific problem of violence against women. In 1994, International Conference on Population and Development (IPCD) has produced an agreement on the connection between demographic issues and advancement of women through education, health and nutrition. And in the year 1995 World Summit for Social Development has synthesized these achievements.

The Fourth World Conference on women held in 1995 at Beijing has focused on the structural changes that are necessary in the societies. It has emphasized that no enduring solution to society's most threatening social, economic and political problems can be found without full participation and full employment of the women in the world. The emphasis has come to ensure women's full and equal participation in the power structures, and the term which has come to be widely used for this is "Empowerment of women" social political and economical empowerment.

As a culmination of the concerted efforts during the 1980s, the year 1990 was declared as the SAARC year of the Girl Child. The enthusiastic response to the issues concerning the Girl Child in 1990 resulted in the declaration of the 1990s as the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child by the Head of Governments and State. This was a conscious attempt to maintain the tempo and drive of various activities initiated in the region during the year of the Girl Child. The National Plan of Action for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child 1991-2000 A. D. has three major goals of Survival, Protection, and Development of the Girl Child in India while emphasizing the needs of the girl children belonging to special and vulnerable groups and adolescent girls. This plan visualizes
the cooperation and support of governmental and non-
governmental organizations for its successful implementation and
for sustaining the consciousness regarding the rights of the Girl
Child with a view to giving her a brighter future. An urgent need is
felt to reduce the existing disparities and ensuring equality for the
development of the girl child/adolescent girl.

The International Woman’s Day (IWD) (Editorial apparitions
The Tribune, 2010 is a major day of global celebration for the
economic, political and social achievements of women. It is
celebrated on March 8 every year by women’s groups around the
world. Organizations, governments and women’s groups choose
different themes each year that reflect global and local gender
issues. The first IWD was in 1911, so this year i.e. 2011 will see
the IWD global centenary. IWD encourages us to consider steps
to bring about equality for women and girls in all their diversity
and to celebrate the collective power of women past, present and
future.

The significance of the International Women’s Day lies in
our reaffirmation to improve the condition of women, especially
those at the margins of our society and empower them to take
their right full place in the society. Despite existing policies
women are still socially disadvantaged section of our society.
Even within the family they suffer the discrimination. According to
the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the entire scenario
is rather scary: one crime against women in every 3 minutes, one
rape in every 29 minutes, one dowry death in every 77 minutes,
and one case of cruelty by husband and relatives in every 9
minutes and one suicide in every 240 minutes.

1.2.4 Women Empowerment in India

The most noteworthy feature of ancient India education is
the education of women. Women were given equal right with men
in all walks of life, including education. Women have been quoted
as authors of some of the Samhitas of Rig Veda. We hear of
women philosophers and Brahma Vadinis who dedicated their
whole lives to education. We find that women had the freedom to
remain single as well as freedom to choose their life partners. We
have ample evidence to prove that co-education existed in the
Ashrmas. But as conditions changed, when girls started to lose
the privileges of education, the marriage age came down, they
lost their equality, came to be considered as mere possessions
and by 100 A. D. i.e. Manu’s time, they were ascribed completely
to a dependent status. This lawgiver has said, “By a girl, by a
young women, or even by an aged, nothing must be done
independently even in her own home.” During the middle ages,
seclusion or Purdah was added to the existing subordinate and
subservient status of women and in course of time, women
became completely illiterate and entirely dependent on men-
father, husband and son, economically, socially and culturally.

In India also the movements for the welfare and
development of women have their roots in the 19th century. When
one looks at women’s movements in India, the first impression
that emerges is the impact of modernization and social reform
movements as a formative influence on feminist thinking and
movement. Earlier problem of women that have attracted
attention of social activists and politician in independent India are
naturally related to their social and ritual activities.

The significance of educating girls for the first time has
been brought by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1815. The difficult path
that women in 19th century India traversed can be understood
front the fact that even the practices like ‘Sati’, ‘child marriages’
and ‘purda’ despite having been banned in the 19th century have
‘defenders’ in the present day.

To promote the medical and general education among
women Pandita Ramabai (1852-1922) has founded for promoting
women teachers, industrials, schools, dairy, oven, sewing, weaving activities among the women. Women are coming forward to raise their voices on issues of social significance and rapidly developing nationalist political movements.

Rabindernath Tagore’s sister Swarn Kumari Devi founded ‘Bharti’ (a journal) and in 1886 founded the powerful and popular movement of ‘Sakhi Samiti’. The organization adopted the programs for women’s education and self-reliance. In the 1889 ten delegates attended the congress session. While in 1890, a large number of women marched the streets of Calcutta under the banner of “Brahma Samaj”. While some of them were allowed to sit on the Dias, they were not allowed to speak “it was in the 1880 session of Congress that for the first time a women was allowed to speak. It was only in 1900 in Calcutta session of Congress that the first lady spoke, that was “Kadambini Ganguli”.

Rarneshwari Nehru started a journal “Stree Darpan” in 1990; Roop Kumari also started another one “Kumari Darpan”. These journals motivated large number of women to jump in the national movement.

These developments have led to a great change in the perception of women by society. Indeed, the movement towards enlightenment contributed by focusing attention of society more on the strength of women rather than on their weakness. As a result of these developments the society has come to consider women as “Mothers of the Nation,” this is clear from the view of prominent leaders of those days. As for instant, in the Congress session of 1906, Sarojini Naidu- said: “Educate your women and the nation will take care of itself....., the hand that socks the cradle rules the world.”

In 1910 Madam Bhikaji Rustamji Cama (1861-1936) said “the soft hand of women is the chief factor of nation’s life".
Annie Besant (1847-1933) had come to India in 1893 as a member of the Theosophical Society to become very soon a leading light in the movement of women rights. She joined the Congress in 1914 and founded the Home Rule League in 1916 and women's India Association in 1917. In 1917, she has become Congress President and in the same year along with Sarojini Naidu raised the demand for voting rights for women.

The partition of Bengal in 1905, passage of Rowlat Act in 1919, Quit India Movement in 1942, all these have shown the contribution of women in the National Movement.

Mahatma Gandhi too realized: "women in India tore down the Purdah and came forward to work for the nation". Gandhi Ji also realized that women adhered more closely to this creed of non-violence. He noted: "who can suffer more purely and nobly than women".

As the country become free from the clutches of foreign rule the issues for women's emancipation are put on the back burner by our national leaders. Those who believed that freedom of the country would quite naturally mean that the emancipation of women as well they were concerned for building a modern India that is free from hunger, malnutrition, unemployment and poverty. They were surged by the naïve belief that building a modern India would overcome all these problems. As a result of this therefore, almost for three decades, hopes and aspirations of women lay subdued in this naive belief. We find the resurgence of women movements in the 1970's and problems of women again begin attracting attention. Price rise, alcohol, crime, dowry, sexual harassment environment became the focus of women movements and have remained so in the last three decades. Reservations to women in elected bodies like Panchayat and local bodies, states legislatures and central Parliament are the latest issues to be added to women's issues. These issues have
gained much support in the public and media. The political parties also support these issues in public and media. But when it comes to action, i.e. to pass an act, they are reluctant and postpone the issue for one reason or the other.

Women constitute 48% of the total population of India. Their welfare and development has been a matter of great concern. The Constitution of India has made certain provisions to protect the interest of the female population. Besides, series of legislation have been enacted from time to time to provide protection to women against social discrimination, violence etc. Unfortunately, due to many reasons, this section of our society has not been able to take full advantage of the constitutional privileges and statutory rights so far. The reasons are the existing social structure, discrimination against women, lack of education, poverty, economic dependency etc. the social institutions, like the family and community, have defined the duties of women but failed to recognize their rights.

Delivering the presidential address at a seminar on Rights of Women 50 years after Independence organized by the International Institute of Human Rights Society in New Delhi, the then Chief Justice of India, Justice A. S. Anand said that the Indian legal system had adequate provisions to safeguard women’s rights, but there was a need to properly implement them: “The problem is not about the existence of laws that safeguard women’s right’s but about translating their de jure rights into de facto ones.” He said it was a sign of a sick society and “unless we revive our value system, we cannot do away with these social evils.” The then Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Najma Heptulla, in her keynote address said that education was the best way to empower women as “it broke societal stereotypes.” The Constitution of India has guaranteed equality, liberty and dignity to the women. The preamble promises to secure for all its
Citizens, Justice social, economic and political liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity, and to provide them all fraternity, assuring the dignity of individual and the unity of nation.

The National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 was drawn up as a long term action, which highlights women’s issues since its inception. In the national development plans for women, welfare schemes have been accorded a high priority. The Indira Mahila Yojana For women’s welfare is aimed to empower women through a sustained process of awareness generation and direct access to resources, thereby they can share and demand socio-economic development.

In India women’s participation in economic and political decision making is very low. Human Development Report 1999 shows that the ratio of women administrators and managers in India is as low as 2.7% which is even lower than the countries like Pakistan (4.3%) and Bangladesh (4.9%) the share of females in Parliament is only 8.3% in India. The consequence of this low participation of Indian Women in decision making is that many social issues relating to women and gender issues do not receive due attention to enhance women’s political participation, the 73rd amendment to the provides one third reservations of seats for women in local bodies and Panchayats. It is a welcome step.

According to the last census held in 2001, the percentage of female literacy in the country is 54.16 percent. If we analyse the state-wise percentage of female literacy, the minimum percentage is in Bihar (33.57) followed by Jharkhand (39.38) and Jammu and Kashmir (41.82).

The Tenth Plan approach aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted national policy for empowerment of women (2001) into action and ensuring survival. The annual plan for 2002-03, being the first of year of the Tenth
Plan, had initiated and brought into effect the thrust areas outlined in the approach along with relevant policies. A total outlay of Rs 2220 core had been provided for the women and child development as against as 1650 corers made available in 2001-02.

1.3 THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

"One who leads is a leader" is the general of a leader. Linder man describes the leader as "an individual whose rationalization, judgment and feeling are accepted by the group as base of belief and action." Benard gives a similar emphasis "any person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological attitude to others and is thus effective in conditioning collective responses may be called a leader." Some scholars mention about three main components of leadership, the leader the follower and the situation. If these components are brought together leadership is defined as the interaction between leader and follower in a particular situation. It is involves attempts on the part of a leader(influences) to affect(influence) the behaviour of follower in a situation and social problem and is endowed with traits considered to be above the average by other.

1.3.1 Leader

Member of group who directs its activities. The leader represents the entire group and he has influence over all the members of the group. His role is central with regard to goal setting, planning, and formulating group ideologies and in directing and controlling all the activities. Maintenance of group cohesion, order and discipline are also his responsibility. Group morale and the efficiency of group functioning are also dependent on him. Lohithakshan describes three styles in which leaders exercise their influence viz. democratic, authoritarian and laissez faire.
1.3.2 Leadership

According to Taneja “Process of completing a desired task by ensuring that a group works well together and each individual plays his maximum part”.

According to Airan (1989), leader should have some qualities for becoming successful. Thus he answered the following questions:

(i) Who he knows?
(ii) What he is?
(iii) What he does?

Leadership is a multi-dimensional aspect as a result; all the leadership theories have one element in common i.e. a leader is one who exerts more influence within a group than does any other member of the group. Here an attempt is being made as to how the women should be motivated so that the personal qualities which they are occupying could be utilized in political decision-making process. No doubt they have the ability but ability and will to work have to be generated which is the key sector of leadership. The primary challenge facing women today therefore is to increase their participation so that they get hold of the situation and become actively involved in the process of decision-making.

Leadership is dependent on influencing people. Ordway Teed is of the opinion that, “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some common goal which they come to find desirable.” He elaborates; “Any person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological stimuli to others and is thus effective in conditioning collective responses may be called a leader.”
1.3.3 Leadership Qualities and Women Empowerment

Leadership is a quality which is theory signifies the ability of a person or a group of people to persuade others to act by inspiring them and making them believe that a proposed course of action is the correct one.

David Robertson in dictionary of politics defined Political leadership is generally thought to be a desirable property, expect when a leader becomes too conscious of his or her position and refuses to acknowledge their accountability to the rank and file of their party or to the electorate.

Women's participation in nation's development is not merely a question of providing some special concessions to them. Women's collective action on issues of relevance for their empowerment is the key factor around which women's movement as a whole has to be organized and directed. A nation or society goals ahead only through the contribution of all its members. Push the women into the backyards, and society itself will be behind.

The constitution (73rd amendment) act makes villages the focus of development efforts and gives special importance to local communities in deciding priorities and programmes. The fact that one-third of the elected representatives at village, block and District level are going to be women, provides the right opportunity for decentralized planning and programming as well as community participation for making an effective assault on poverty among women. Decentralized decision making powers can ensure accountability and sustained development.

Mahatma Gandhi 1929 said, “The national commission for women will initiate a dialogue with leadership, manifesto committee members, women parliamentarians and candidates, workers, organizers and youth leaders of political parties to
address the issue of women is equal representation in political decision making. Women must have votes and equal legal status. But the problem does not end these. It only commences at the point where women begin to effect the political deliberation of the nation."

The Hindu, (1994) a county-wise break down of the data showed several interesting facts. Finland had 39 percent, Norway 35.8 and Denmark 33 % women legislators. The United States the most advanced industrial nation of the world, had only 10.8 percent women legislators while the United Kingdom, the "Mother of Parliament", had only 9.2. The Indian parliament and state legislature had only strength of 7.3 percent women members. Among Islamic countries of the world, Indonesia leads the rest with 12 percent women members with Iraq, Algeria and Syria coming next. Pakistan has but 0.8 percent while Bangladesh can boast of 10.3 percent women legislators.

Under behavioral revolution which rejuvenated the academic discipline of Political science is the fifties and sixties of the present country, ‘Political participation’ has acquired new and dynamic commutating than what was understood is Traditional terminology. In the USA, many minority groups especially blacks, students and women started demanding vigorously for better and equal opportunities to participate in societal decision-making process. They demanded an open system, so that they could choose from a variety of roles.

1.3.4 Political Participation and Women Empowerment

Political participation is a broader and complex term, expresses itself in various kinds of over and manifest political activities. It is not confined to the selection of decision-makers only but also to affect their political behavior and hence the societal decisions at large. Generally speaking, Political
participation is the involvement of individuals and groups in the political process of a political system at various levels.

Political participation includes activities like voting, campaigning in elections, convincing other persons to vote in a particular way, attending public meetings, distributing party literature, joining an organization or a party, contributing money to a party, contesting election and holding public or party office, etc. These are also called conventional political Activities. But recently, the concept of participation has been broadened to include all those political acts through which people directly affect politically decision-making Process. Besides conventional activities, participation now also includes such activities like petitioning, participation in mass movements, agitations, strikes, demonstrations, protests, sit-ins, marches, presenting memorandums and violent acts designed to change political system. These are known as the direct means of political participation or the unconventional political activity.

Yojana, (2008) 8 March 1996, on the occasion of International women's Day, the parliament passed a resolution to set up a standing committee for the 'improvement of the status of women' in India, and the committee on empowerment of women was constituted in April, 1997. The functions of the committee, included examining the measures taken by the union government 'to secure for women equality, status and dignity in all matters' included the steps taken for securing 'comprehensive education and adequate representation of women in legislative bodies/services and other fields,' 'to report on the action taken by the Union Government and Administration of the Union-Territories on the measures proposed by the committee.'

Today, one of the issues of concern is the level of woman's participation in political life. This is because achievement of equality in all areas is seen as inseparable from achieving
political participation. Here, Political participation includes the right to vote, right to contest, right to candidacy, women as campaigners, women as members, women's involvement in the decision-making process and appointment of women at all levels of government, including the participation of women at the grassroots through the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Reservations of seats are one of the instruments of Political empowerment for women. Although, this technique guarantees women representatives and recognition to half the population, many feel that through such a method a small number of women representatives can be isolated from decision-making and not represent a power to be reckoned with in these institutions.

Article 243D of the constitution that currently provides for 33 percent reservation for women in Panchayats, will be amended to provide for the enhanced reservation. With the passage of this amendment, every second member of India’s village Panchayats will be a woman. Already five states- Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand- have 50 percent reservation for women as the states have the power to bring amendments in states laws to increase women’s representation up to 50 percent.

The Tribune, (2009) at present, women account for 36.87 percent of the total 28.1 lakh elected Panchayat representatives. On implementation of the revised reservation the number of elected women’s representation at the grassroots level is expected to rise to more than 14 lakh. This will be another step in strengthening the democratic process in India.

The current enactment is indeed a landmark development. It may create new opportunities for women to be forerunners in economic and social progress. Gender equality is critical to the
development process. It calls for creating opportunities for women to be part of this development process.

Political participation is not only a symbol of women’s development and empowerment but it also creates further awareness and mobilizes other women to be a part of the political arena to promote their and societal interests at large.

1.4 ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The economic participation of women- their presence in the workforce in quantitative terms is important not only for lowering the disproportional levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step toward raising household income and encouraging economic development in countries as a whole.

Amartya Sen makes a compelling case for the nation that societies need to see women less as passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation, a view strongly buttressed by a body of evidence suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development. Economic participation concerns not only the actual numbers of women participating in the labour force, but also their remuneration on an equal basis. Worldwide, outside of the agricultural sector in both developed and developing countries, women are still averaging slightly less than 78% of the wages given to men for the same work, a gap which refuses to close in even the most developed countries.

The Women participation in economic activity besides increasing total participation and outputs have other important implications. Firstly, it tends to reduce fertility and population growth, thereby raising per capita income and consumption. Secondly, women participation will result their greater access to
educational opportunities. Thirdly, women participation in economic activity affects the structure and operation of labour market. It is often argued that in low income countries, with express labour supply women employment would reduce employment available to males.

Unfortunately, the importance of women participation in social-economic development has emerged not out of fundamental consideration but out of:

- Need to maximize output in growth models,
- To reduce population growth, and
- To contain misery and discontent that interferes with productivity and growth.

The empowerment of women constitutes one of the fundamental objectives of all the development efforts of almost all countries in the region. The integration of the region's trade, investment and financial ties with the world economy has altered the economic and social role of women as business owners, entrepreneurs, managers, workers and family support providers. The continuing growth of the service sector and the declining importance of physical capital in the production process are also bringing new opportunities for women to improve their economic and social status. The activities of women's organization and networks have contributed significantly in raising consciousness about the need for the economic and social empowerment of women.

Moly Kuruvilla, (2008) an important means of women's empowerment is economic independence through information, knowledge and necessary skills. If a woman is economically a versatile parasite, she can never claim an equal status with men. As long as she is dependent on others, she is treated as a slave at service of the provider and this very often aggravates her
subjectivity to exploitation by the ‘super sex’. In this context the opinion of a writer seems quiet relevant. ‘If you give a woman Rs. 100, she will spend it on her children’s education, health, food and family needs. But you give it to a man; it may many a time go to alcohol, his friends, enjoyment, and if there is anything left over then the family may get to see a bit of it’. This is a true reflection of the mentality of majority of Indian women and this obsession of womanhood makes them easy preys to exploitation in several instances. The same feeling is reflected in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru when he opines ‘freedom depends on economic conditions even more than political and if the women are not economically free and self-earning she will have to depend on her husband or someone else and dependants are never free.’ Thus economic independence is an essential aspect of women empowerment.

The economic empowerment of women is a fundamental element of strong economic growth in any country. Empowering women enhances their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a better social and economic order. The economic empowerments of women further their political empowerment as well. Increasing the participation of women in stimulating economic activity and producing jobs them the requisite influence in the large political and policy decision-making framework. The absence of women from structures of governance leads to a situation wherein national, regional and local priorities like resource allocation are typically defined without inputs from women, whose experience gives them a different awareness of the community’s needs, concerns and interests from that of men.

The growing participation of women in paid empowerment has contributed significantly to the economic and social empowerment of women. Access earned income improves
women's position within the household substantially, gives them greater control over the distribution such gives them greater control over the distribution of such earnings and household resources, and generally improves their status and strength 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. Growth in employment has also led to bridging the gender wage gap, suggesting that there can be macroeconomic effects on the conditions and pay of women workers independent of any policy interventions. However, under the present circumstances, there could be several difficulties with relying on this process to reduce gender gaps in employment. The excess demand for labour that was being experienced in some of the countries in the region is likely to disappear and current trends indicate increased female unemployment, implying that gender-based wage differentials could increase.

Small businesses have emerged as significant avenues for the economic empowerment of women. The flexible nature of these businesses facilities the participation of women in formal economic activities as entrepreneurs, managers and workers. They can be run with simple technology, and limited financial and managerial resources and often serve local markets, characteristics which favor women's participation in gainful activities. They also tend to be family-based, an important aspect in women's decisions to participate in formal economic activities.

Women's group, NGO's and other sections of the civil society are also planning vital role in empowering women in the
region. Women organization have greatly helped in raising consciousness about the rights of women and drawn attention to the social and economic hardships experienced by them. These organizations along with the relevant NGO's have been campaigning for legal reforms and legislative changes for the betterment of women. Social development in general and human rights in particular from the broad frameworks within which the women's organizations are working in advancing the cause of women. As in most other areas, these organizations tend to be more resourceful and effective in the developed and more advanced countries of the region. In the weaker economics, these organizations need further strengthening in order for them to play a more meaningful role in empowering women.

According to Lail Rahman Kabir "If women get the opportunity to develop as entrepreneurs, I think they can do very well because they very early in life learn from their mothers to manage available resources and time successfully."

Women themselves have to come forward and unite in their march towards empowerment irrespective of their class, caste, creed or religion. A layman should draw inspiration from empowered women like Indira Gandhi the first women Prime Minister of India also known as the 'Iron-lady, Vijaylakshmi Pandit- the first woman President of UN. General Assembly, Sarojini Naidu- the Nightingale of India and former congress President, Dr Indira –the brain behind India’s first test tube baby, kiran Bedi-India’s first women IPS officer, Kalapna Chawala-the first Indian- American women astronaut, Sucheta Kriplani, Veteran freedom fighter and the first women chief minister of UP, Pratiba Devi Sing Patal become the first women's President in Indian history on 25 July 2007, Meria Kumar –the first women Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Meena Kumari, Aishwarya Rai, Lata Mangeshkar the first is endless.
1.4.1 Role of Women in Economic Activities

The role of women in the labour force in developing countries has several outstanding characteristics such as (a) lowest level of reported economic participation (b) most of the economically active women are unpaid, and (c) extremely high dependency ratio.

In spite of their involvement in economic activities, the rural women are deprived of benefits of development programmes and projects. The uses of economic activities in the census include only those activities which are paid either in case or in kind, and are categorized as productive. The activities which are crucial for the survival of the family include food processing, manufacturing for family consumption, household construction, water fetching, fuel collection etc. The women engage in these activities but without being paid. If labour, is hired to do these work, the household will have to pay more than what the members of the family earn. It can no longer be ignored that women make up a disproportionate number of the poor, whom development has largely passed by (World Bank 1980) the planning has erred in one or more of the following:

(a) By omission- that is, by failing to notice the traditional productive role which women are playing;

(b) By reinforcement of values already in existence in the society which restrict women's activities to child-bearing and child-reading, and other household tasks and;

(c) By addition- that is, by superimposing western values of what is appropriate work for women in modern society on developing societies.

Realizing in the vitality of women work force for rural development, and under the guidelines of government policies,
some of the rural development projects have incorporated programmes specifically designed for women. The rural development programmes have been accepted as the best alternative strategy to solve the rural problems. But Pradhan and Acharya (1980) have raised doubt that the new strategy of rural development automatically ensure its benefits to women is unwarranted.

1.4.2 Role of Women in Nation Building and Economic Growth

Since women are considered the most oppressed section of the society, the term women's empowerment has come to be associated with women's struggle, social justice and equality. Several Programmes have been launched with the explicit objective of empowering women and many measures have been taken for the betterment of women.

The women's role in society has been constantly changing. The influence of western education and the liberal ideas of great leaders and reformers brought about a change in status of women in India. No social-political system can ignore their vital contribution in a national building exercise.

The position of women differs in many basic featured in the community groups. If the nation is to develop, it is essential that the basic standard of living of the people is elevated. This cannot be achieved unless women, who constitute half of the pollution, are mobilized towards contributing to the national development and growth. Women cannot contribute in the process of development unless their own development is taken care of. There are hosts of inhibiting factors Social, economic, Political and cultural, which prevent women from being active participants in the development process. Women could be the best indicator of a nation's progress. "The position of women in society is the true index of its cultural and spiritual attainments."
In Indian society is presently experiencing an accelerated change in economy, social structure and family structure. There is a shift in the family structure from joint to extended, single career family to dual career family. Traditionally women were expected to take up only house hold work and this was considered essential for the very endurance of the institution of the family. Indian women's role has been domestic whiles their father/brother/ husbands assumed the responsibility of the breadwinner and protector of the family. Today woman has realized that and the four walls of her home. She wants to play a multifaceted role to offset the challenges place in the country. In fact, Indian women are striking a balance between traditional and progressive values on the society in transitions.

With the advent of industrial revolution and the consequent technological changes and development, education and social-economic necessities led to the change in the attitude of women, socio-economic status and her role in the society. For the post 20 to 22 years economic opportunities for women have increased considerably. Indian women today have engaged themselves and trying their best to become proficient in many activities and professions. Job opportunities are increasing and more and more women are getting into the profession demonstrating their skill, abilities and leadership qualities.

1.5 ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Education includes all the process that develops human ability and behaviour. According to UNESCO, "Organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge skills and understanding valuable for all the activities of life."

The process of developing the potentials of man to the optimum level in order to enable him to lead a productive and happy life in society.
Education has always contributed towards the development of women's position in society. It is one of the most important variables, which determine the status of women. It has always helped in raising the status of women and their role in society and the world at large. Looking back to the history it has been found that various committees and commissions have been appointed before and after independence to evaluate the progress in women's development and suggested ways and means to enhance the status of women.

1.5.1 Constitutional Provisions for Women Education

Our women have more rights than women of other countries, but there are large areas wherein women are suffering, may be they are not conscious of their rights.

- Indian constitution came into force from 26th January 1950.
- Our constitution has made explicit provisions against women and has been playing an important role in changing deeply rooted social attitude.

During the last three-decades a number of laws have been registered with a view to ensuring equality of status and opportunity for women.

Following articles in the constitution of India make specific provision for the education for women:

- Article 15 (1) States “The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.”
- Article 15(3) States: “Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children.”
• Article 16(1) "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state."

• Article 39 (a) States: “The citizen, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.”

• Article 39(d) “That there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.”

• Article 45 "The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

Desai, (1992) listed out different laws and acts passed government of India before independence and after independence for the benefit of women:

• Widow Remarriage Act passed in 1856.
• Civil Marriage Act passed in 1872.
• Married Women’s Property Act passed in 1874.
• The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1924.
• Prevention of Prostitution Act of 1923.
• Hindu Inheritance Act of 1929.
• Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 1929.
• Women’s Right of Inheritance 1956.
• 1956 special act, Inter cast and inter-religious marriages got recognition. Bride’s age was to be above 18 and bridegroom’s 21.
• 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act.
• 1972 Abortion got Legal Sanction.
Apart from the constitutional provisions, a large number of laws have been enacted to protect the Human Rights for Women. The women-specific Legislations are the Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act-1956, The Dowry Prohibition Act-1961, The Indecent Representation of Women (prohibition) Act-1986, The commission of Sati (prevention) Act-1987, Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Besides, there are as many as forty one women-related legislations.

The National Commission for women made a number of recommendations for changes and removal of lacunae in 34 laws and 8 bills. It also made recommendations on Older Persons Maintenance, Care and Protection Bill, 2005, The Compulsory Registration of Marriage Bill, 2005 Protection of women from Domestic Violence Rules, 2005 and Laws relating to rape sexual assault etc.

1.6 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Indian constitution is most progressive constitution in the world. It guaranties to all Indian women equality before law. It provided affirmative action programmes for women.

Inconformity with the constitution provisions a number of women specific and some related laws has been enacted. The dowry prohibition act, 1961 makes offence under the act cognizable offence. The child marriage restrain act, 1986 the prenatal diagnostic techniques (Regulation and prevention of misuse) act, 1994 and equal Remuneration Act 1976 are also some other acts enacted at prevention exploitation of women. Besides these legislation acts, central government as well as state government has taken many steps to empower women by running various developmental programme.
1.6.1 Developmental Programmers' for Women

Following developmental programmes are run by state government for development and upliftment of women.

1.6.2 State Homes

State homes aims at resettlement of destitute, helpless, prostitute and women who are in mortal danger by providing them free boarding, lodging, education and training up to age of 50 years. After training women are provided with a financial help of Rs 6000/- for resettlement. State home run by state government in Himachal Pradesh: Run by women welfare development.

- Mashobra (Shimla)
- Mandi (Mandi)
- Chamba (Chamba)
- Run by Himachal Pradesh child welfare department Nahan (Sirmaur)

1.6.3 Assistance to Women for Self Empowerment

The programme aims at encouraging women for self employment to become self-development and providing them financial help. It provide financial help of Rs 2500/- to each women having monthly income Rs. 7500/-. 

1.6.4 Poverty Alleviation Programme:

Under this programme, Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna, Self helping groups of women is formed and they are given financial assistance in the form of loan and subsidy to start income generating activities. A self help group is entitled for a subsidy of Rs 1.25 lacs and loan amount depends upon the cost of the project. According to guidelines, out of the total coverage, 50 percent groups should exclusively for women. Besides, among individual beneficiary also 40 percent should be women beneficiaries.
1.6.5 Marriage Grant to Destitute Girls

This programme aims at providing financial help to destitute girls or women and residents of state home for marriage. Destitute girls or girls whose parents are not able to earn their living due to physical or mental handicap and divorced women whose guardian’s annual income is less than Rs. 7500/- are provided with a financial help of Rs. 2500/- under this programme.

1.6.6 Awareness Camps

Awareness camps aim at awarding women towards their rights, different policies for their development and evoking public opinion towards social evils like dowry system, child marriage etc. Awareness camps are organized in rural areas where representatives of different department’s gives information about various development programmes run by their department. Rural women are encouraged, with the help of mahila mandals and voluntary organizations, to participate in these camps.

1.6.7 Himachal Pradesh Women Development Corporation:

The corporation provides financial help to women cooperative societies and women organizations to set up self-employment.

For the women completing 18 years of age and having family annual income less than 50000/- corporation provides loans on following rates for setting up self-employment.

- Free loans up to Rs 3000/-.
- Loan ranging from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 10000/- at 3% interest rate
- Loan ranging from Rs. 10000/- to Rs. 20000/- at 4% interest rate.
• Loan ranging from Rs 20000/- to Rs 30000/- at 7% interest rate.

• Free loan up to Rs 75000/- for studying selected curricula. Corporations also have training programmes for women and provide loans to women organizations on cheaper rates.

1.6.8 Himachal Pradesh State Women Commission

Commission aims at improving position of women and providing protection to them. Its main functions are:

(1) To give suggestions to government for improving position of women.

(2) To supervise and evaluate effectiveness of policies for women run by government.

(3) To dispose women’s complaints.

(4) To re-examine plans for statutory protection by examining women related policies.

1.6.9 Role of State Women Commission

The Himachal Pradesh state commission for women is also actively looking into cases of harassment and abuse against women. During the last two years 170 cases have been disposed off out of these, 72 cases have been disposed off through counseling and 98 cases have been registered with the police, which are known subjoined.

For the implementation of immoral traffic (prevention), act, 1956, a plan is being drawn up for identifying suspect and vulnerable areas. Efforts are made to univale the Mahila Mandals and the local population with the purpose of not only nabbing the culprit but also to spread consciousness regarding the evils of practice. The efforts of development, however, are required to be supplemented by the co-operation of the judiciary. Recently some persons were nabbed under the act but
unfortunately they were bailed out the very next day this is not only disheartening for the administration but also sends wrong signals to the public. Most cases whether rape, harassment at work place, wife beating go unreported because of fear of society and the stigma attached to being the victim of such offences. Being subjected to longwinded procedures and embracing questions also does not build confidence to report such cases.

As questions are cast on the character of the victim of sexual assault added to all this is the low rate of conviction rate in 1990 was barely 20% and in 1997 it was a near 33%. The attitude of individual judges is also an important factor in determining the kind of justice available to women. In a study conducted in 1996, 109 judges were interviewed to assess their attitudes. The result is quite surprising to say, the last 48% believed that there were certain occasions when it was justifiable for husband to slap his wife, and 74% believed that the preservation of family should be women’s primary concern even if she faces violence.

1.6.10 Present Position-Profile of India and Himachal Pradesh

In spite of so many multifaceted efforts made by our government the general socio-economic structure of women has not changed very much. According to the census of India 2001, a little less than half of the female population is illiterate in India. At present literacy rate of women in Indian is 54.16%, while that of male is 75.85%, which is for behind the universal literacy. Literacy rate in India from 1951-2001 given as below Table 1.1.
Table 1.1

Literacy Rate in India: 1951-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Male (%age)</th>
<th>Female (%age)</th>
<th>Total (%age)</th>
<th>Male - Female Gap (%age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>23.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>26.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>52.51</td>
<td>24.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>21.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the Table 1.1 indicated that literacy rate during the decade 1951-61 improved from 18.33% in 1951 to 28.30% in 1961. However, the progress of literacy rate in the country could not be maintained even at this level during the next three decades. Literacy rate rose to 52.21% in 1991. The progress of literacy in India during the decade 1991-2001 has surpassed all the efforts in this direction. The literacy rate progressed by 13.17 percentage points during the decades 1991-2001 which is about 1.6 times the decade average of the last four decades. The decennial census of 2001 argues well on many counts, for the first time, the number of literate persons in the country was higher than the number of illiterates. Moreover, female literacy increased at a faster pace (14.87%) than male literacy (11.72%). Overall, the literacy rate has recorded an increase from about 18.33% of the population aged 5 years and above in 1951 to 65.38% of the population aged 7 years and above in 2001 (i.e. an increase of 47.05%). The female literacy rate also rose noticeably from 8.86% to 54.6% in 2001(i.e. an increase of 45.30%).
1.6.11 Profile of Himachal Pradesh

Growth in literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh given in the Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (% age)</td>
<td>Male 43.19</td>
<td>Female 20.23</td>
<td>Male 64.27</td>
<td>Female 37.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (% age)</td>
<td>31.96</td>
<td>42.48</td>
<td>63.86</td>
<td>77.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Directorate of Education Shimla.

Table 1.2 shows that Himachal Pradesh has a literacy rate of 77.13% and hold 11th rank in the country. The success story of Himachal Pradesh is a living example in the educational development especially with regard to women's education. Himachal Pradesh came into existence on 15th April, 1948. Since then special attention was paid by the state government towards the discharge of the onerous responsibility enshrined in article 45 of the Indian constitution and NPE, 1986. The literacy rates in Himachal Pradesh were 31.96% in 1971 (male 43.19 and female 20.23%) followed by 42.48 in 1981 (male 64.27 and female 37.72). As per 2001 census, the literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh has reached 77.13% (male 86.02 and female 68.86). Thus the above figures show that there has been quite significant increase in female literacy from 20.23 in 1971 to 68.08 in 2001.

The Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Sharveen Chaudhary said the government had doubled the insurance benefits under the Matri Shakti Bima Yojna to Rs. 50,000 in case of accidental death and Rs. 25,000 in case of loss of one limb.

"The government is spending Rs. 30 core annually on welfare activities for women and various facilities were being extended under the integrated Child Development Scheme".

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She said 18,500 women self-help groups were functioning in the state, having more than two lakh members. She said 16 hostels had been constructed for girl students belonging to SC and ST categories, while there were 14 hostels for working women in the state. (The Tribune, March 9, 2008).

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

If India is to march into the New Millenniums a strong and prosperous nation; women must grow and have positive self-image. Nothing can be achieved without the all round development of women and their involvement in national development as rightly observed by Nehru, “The status of women reflects the character of the country.” So, we have to look into the gender issues with more sensitivity in the New Millennium.

During the last few decades the problems of women have attracted more and more attention of the social activities, academicians, and policy makers. The focus has of late shifted from women development to women empowerment especially after the declaration of international year of women. As a consequence of this many policies have been announced and programs launched for the welfare and development of women in India. The aim of all these policies and programmes is to empower women.

The Finance Minister in his Budget of 2000-2001, announced that the year 2001 would be observed as “Women Empowerment Year”. As a consequence of this policy a “Task Force” was set up to chalk out specific programs for observing the year 2001 as “Women Empowerment year” the main objectives of this Task Force are to improve the access of women to the natural resources and to ensure their rightful place in mainstream of economic development. It reiterates the Government’s commitment to bring about equality for women in all walks of life through their economic, social and political
empowerment and to improve their working conditions, to provide them better education, training and skills so as to increase their work participation rate, increase their job avenues and better promotion chances through various supportive measures.

The concept of empowerment of women in terms of Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Education, is the process by which powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both the control over resources and over ideology, a growing intrinsic capability—greater self-confidence and inner transformation of one’s consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers. Here empowerment is not about power over other but power to achieve goals and ends, and it is more generally applicable to those who are powerless whether this is male or female individuals or a group of class or a cast.

From the foregoing revelations it should be evident that the malady is too deep-rooted to admit of treatment by cosmetic remedies. What is needed is a change in the basic social attitudes which took upon women as a possession rather than as a human being. The education that is imparted to women must inculcate among them a sense of dignity and self-respect. It should create in them self-confidence and equip them so as to achieve economic independence. More employment opportunities should be made available to women so that they are not driven to fall a prey to dowry-hungry dogs or being smothered in the death-grip of hallows feudal tradition.

Education has always been considered an important instrument for bringing change in any social set-up. The teachers who impart education are the key person in grooming the personality and the life style of the younger generation. They can invariably set the ball railing in the positive direction of change. Realizing the importance of this aspect NPE (1986) has
emphasized, education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be well conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will pay a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will faster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, test books, training and orientation of teachers, decision – makers administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions. Education certainly can help women to conquer the disadvantages and discrimination, which they suffer from and that is indeed the greatest and foremost empowerment. Education helps women to resist exploitation, besides of course empowering them to be self reliant. Educating women benefits the whole society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men education. Indeed as far as the philosophy behind the empowerment of women is concerned it looks to be all very alluring but the practical situation shows that it is all illusive, hence, there is a dire need to empower the women in the prevalent scenario so that they may be active and constructive contributors to develop the present conditions of family and society. The above mentioned variables viz. Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Educational Levels play very important role in empowering women. These variables are closely related to each other and have great relationship with empowerment. Hence the problem is worded as under:

1.8 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“LEADERSHIP QUALITIES, ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AS CORRELATES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT”
1.9 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To construct and standardize the Inventories for measuring Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Women Empowerment.

2. To study the Leadership Qualities of women as correlates of Women Empowerment.

3. To study the Economic Independence of women as correlates of Women Empowerment.

4. To study the inter relationships of Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Women Empowerment at following Educational Levels:
   (i) Illiterate
   (ii) Primary
   (iii) Matriculation
   (iv) Plus Two
   (v) Graduation and
   (vi) Post Graduation and above

5. To study the Leadership Qualities and Economic Independence as significant predictors of Women Empowerment at following Educational Levels:
   (i) Illiterate
   (ii) Primary
   (iii) Matriculation
   (iv) Plus Two
   (v) Graduation and
6. To study the main effects of following variables on Women Empowerment:
   (i) Leadership Qualities
   (ii) Economic Independence
   (iii) Educational Levels

7. To study the two way and three way interactional effects of following variables on Women Empowerment:
   (i) Leadership Qualities x Economic Independence
   (ii) Leadership Qualities x Educational Levels
   (iii) Economic Independence x Educational Levels
   (iv) Leadership Qualities x Economic Independence x Educational Levels

1.10 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following were the hypotheses of the study:

1 There exists a significant relationship between the Leadership Qualities and Women Empowerment.

2 There exists a significant relationship between the Economic Independence and Women Empowerment.

3 There exists a significant inter relationships between the Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Women Empowerment at following Educational Levels:
   (i) Illiterate
   (ii) Primary
   (iii) Matriculation
   (iv) Plus Two
   (v) Graduation and
4. Leadership Qualities and Economic Independence will emerge as significant predictors of Women Empowerment at following Educational Levels:

(i) Illiterate  
(ii) Primary  
(iii) Matriculation  
(iv) Plus Two  
(v) Graduation and  
(vi) Post Graduation and above

5. There will be significant main effects of following variables on Women Empowerment:

(i) Leadership Qualities  
(ii) Economic Independence  
(iii) Educational Levels

6. There will be significant two way and three way interactional effects of following variables on Women Empowerment:

(i) Leadership Qualities x Economic Independence  
(ii) Leadership Qualities x Educational Levels  
(iii) Economic Independence x Educational Levels  
(iv) Leadership Qualities x Economic Independence x Educational Levels

1.11 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study was delimited only to the women of Himachal Pradesh.

2. The study was restricted to only the three District of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Solan.
3. The study was further delimited in terms of variables viz. Leadership Qualities, Economic Independence and Educational Levels.

1.12 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

1.12.1 Women Empowerment

The scores obtained by the women on the Women Empowerment Inventory developed and standardized by the investigator.

1.12.2 Leadership Qualities

The scores obtained by the women on the Leadership Qualities Inventory developed and standardized by the investigator.

1.12.3 Economic Independence

The scores obtained by the women on the Economic Independence Inventory developed and standardized by the investigator.

1.12.4 Educational Levels

Educational Levels mean women posses different levels of education i.e. Illiterate, Primary, Matriculation, Plus Two, Graduation and Post Graduation and above.