CHAPTER-II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Introduction
- Conceptual and Theoretical Framework
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“Education is one of the greatest forces for change in women’s lives. Since education influences a woman’s chance of paid employment, her earning power, her age at marriage, her control over child bearings, her exercise of legal and political rights and even her ability to care for herself and her children, increased access to education is often the forerunner to a list of expanded opportunities for women.”

- The Population Crisis Committee, Washington (1986)

INTRODUCTION

Education is an economic good which is not easily obtainable and thus needs to be apportioned. Economists regard education as both consumer and capital good because it offers utility to a consumer and also serves as an input into the production of other goods and services. As a capital good, education can be used to develop the human resources necessary for economic and social transformation. The focus on education as a capital good relates to the concept of human capital, which emphasizes that the development of skills is an important factor in production activities. It is widely accepted that education creates improved citizens and helps to upgrade the general standard of living in a society. Therefore, positive social change is likely to be associated with the production of qualitative populations. This increasing faith in education as an agent of change in many developing countries, has led to a heavy investment in it. The pressure for higher education in many developing countries has undoubtedly been helped by public perception of financial reward from pursuing such education. Generally, this goes with the belief that expanding education promotes economic growth. It is also believed that education empowers human beings.
CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to give theoretical foundation and to review the existing literature in the field of education and empowerment. The discovery of a suitable theoretical framework helps in deriving the necessary theoretical support for the problem to be studied. It also gives a conceptual framework of the study. The basic and key concepts like knowledge, education, human capital, and empowerment are discussed in this chapter.

EDUCATION

Prior to the nineteenth century, systematic investment in human capital was not considered so important in any country. Expenditures on schooling, on-the-job training, and other similar forms of investment were quite small. This began to change radically during this century with the application of science to the development of new goods and more efficient methods of production, first in Great Britain, and then gradually in other countries.

It was during the twentieth century, education, skills, and the acquisition of knowledge became crucial determinants of a person’s and a nation’s productivity. The twentieth century can be even called as the “Age of Human Capital” in the sense that the primary determinant of a country’s standard of living is how well it succeeds in developing and utilizing the skills and knowledge, and furthering the health and educating the majority of its population.

Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment and generally of preparing oneself intellectually for a matured life.
The past decades have seen extraordinary expansions in access to basic education throughout the Middle East. Many countries are now on the edge of a further increase in access to secondary and higher education and in effecting spectacular improvements in the quality of education offered at all levels. As increasing numbers of students complete their basic education, their demand for education at higher levels is similarly increasing. Educating girls and women is probably the single most effective investment a developing country can make, whether or not women work outside the home. It creates a multitude of positive remunerations for families including better family health and nutrition, improved birth spacing, lower infant and child mortality, and enhanced educational attainment of children. Countries in the Middle East are increasingly integrated in world markets for manufactured goods. Their ability to compete in these markets and in globalizing service markets will depend on the excellence of human capital they bring to the competition. Ensuring that all citizens are educated and numerate, that many possess a wide range of problem solving skills beyond the basic level, and that some have world class professional skills will necessitate new curricula, improved teacher programs, and academic methods that encourage higher order cognitive skills.

No country has achieved constant economic development without considerable investment in human capital. Previous studies have shown handsome returns to various forms of human capital accumulation. basic education, research, training, learning-by-doing and aptitude building. The distribution of education matters. Unequal education tends to have a negative impact on per capita income in most countries. Moreover, controlling for human capital distribution and the use of appropriate functional form specifications consistent with the asset allocation model make a difference for the effects of
average education on per capita income, while failure to do so leads to insignificant and even negative effects of average education. Investment in human capital can have little impact on growth unless people can use education in competitive and open markets. The larger and more competitive these markets are, the greater are the prospects for using education and skills.

In the earlier neoclassical models, education was not considered a major input for production and hence was not included in growth models (Harberger, 1998 1-2). In the 1960s mounting empirical evidence stimulated the "human investment revolution in economic thought" (Bowman, 1960). The decisive works of (Schultz, 1961) and (Denison, 1962 67) led to a series of growth accounting studies pointing to education’s contribution to the unexplained residuals in the economic growth of western economies. Other studies looked at the impact of education on earnings or estimated private rate of returns (Becker 1964, Mincer 1974). A 1984 survey of growth accounting studies covering 29 developing countries found estimates of education’s contribution to economic growth ranging from less than 1.0 percent in Mexico to as high as 23.0 percent in Ghana (Psacharopoulos, 1984).

**Education and Productivity**

The educational provisions within any given country represent one of the main determinants of the composition and growth of that country’s output and exports and constitute an important ingredient in a system’s capacity to borrow foreign technology effectively. For example, primary and secondary education raises the productivity of workers; secondary education, including vocational, facilitates the acquisition of skills and
managerial capacity; tertiary education supports the development of basic science, the appropriate selection of technology imports and the domestic adaptation and development of technologies. Secondary and tertiary education also represents critical elements in the development of key institutions, of government, the law, and the financial system, which are all essential for economic growth. Empirical evidence at both micro and macro levels further illuminates these relationships.

At a micro level, numerous studies indicate that increases in earnings are associated with additional years of education, with the rate of return varying with high level of education (Behrman 1990, Psacharopoulos 1994). The returns to primary schooling tend to be greater than returns to secondary and tertiary education (Psacharopoulos, 1994: 1325-45).

In agriculture, evidence suggests positive effects of education on productivity among farmers using modern technologies, but less impact, as might be expected, among those using traditional methods. In Thailand, farmers with four or more years of schooling were three times more likely to adopt fertilizer and other modern inputs than less educated farmers (Birdsall, 1993: 75-79). Similarly, in Nepal, the completion of at least seven years of schooling increased productivity in wheat by over a quarter, and in rice by 13.0 per cent (Jamison and Moock, 1994:13).

Education is also an important contributor to technological capability and technical change in industry. Statistical analysis of the clothing and engineering industries in Sri Lanka showed that the skill and education levels of workers and entrepreneurs were positively related to the rate of technical change of the firm (Deranyagala, 1995).
Education alone, of course cannot transform an economy. The quantity and quality of investment, domestic and foreign, together with the overall policy environment, form the other important determinants of economic performance. Yet, the level of human development has a bearing on these factors too. The quality of policy making and of investment decisions is bound to be influenced by the education of both policy makers and managers, moreover, the volume of both domestic and foreign investment is likely to be larger when a system’s human capital supply is plenty.

For a macro prospective, the ‘new growth theories’ aim to endogenize technical progress by incorporating some of these same effects, emphasizing education as well as learning and R&D. According to Lucas (1998), for example, the higher the level of education of the work force, the higher will be the overall productivity of capital because the more educated are more likely to innovate, and thus affect everyone’s productivity. In other models, a similar externality is generated as the increased education of individuals raises not only their own productivity but also that of others with whom they interact, so that total productivity increases as the average level of education rises (Perotti, 1993). The impact of education on the nature and growth of exports, which, in turn, affect the aggregate growth rate, is another way in which human development influences macro performance. The education and skills of a developing country’s labor force influence the nature of its factor endowment and consequently the composition of its trade. It has been argued that even ‘unskilled’ workers in a modern factory normally need the literacy, numeracy, and discipline, which are acquired in primary and lower secondary school (Wood, 1994).
Education and Income

It is argued that there is a positive relation between improved education and greater income equality, which, in turn, is likely to favor higher rates of growth. As education becomes more broadly based, low-income people are better able to seek out economic opportunities. For example, a study of the relation between schooling, income inequality, and poverty in 18 countries of Latin America in the 1980s found that one quarter of the variation in workers’ incomes was accounted for by variations in schooling attainment. It concludes that ‘clearly education is the variable with the strongest impact on income equality’ (Psacharopoulos, 1992). Another study suggested that a one percent increase in the labor force with at least secondary education would increase the share of income of the bottom 40% and 60% per cent by between 6% and 15% per cent respectively (Bourguignon and Morrison, 1990). An investigation of the determinants of income distribution in 36 countries found secondary enrollment rates to be significant (Bourguignon, 1995 53-86).

Education may affect per capita income growth via its impact on the denominator, i.e., population growth. For example, a study of fourteen African countries for the mid-eighties showed a negative correlation between female schooling and fertility in almost all countries, with primary education having a negative impact in about half the countries and no significant effects in the other half, while secondary education invariably reduced fertility (Birdsall 1995, Behrman and Wolfe 1987). The three success countries in terms of reduced fertility, Kenya, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, had the highest levels of female schooling as well as the lowest child mortality rates (Ainsworth, 1995).
Education and Family

Formation of human capital starts with the family. It is the foundation of a good society and of economic success. Families have differed over time, but they are still very important in the modern economy. Because it is families that are concerned about their children and try with whatever resources they have, to promote their children's education and values. Families are the major promoters of values in any free society and even in not-so-free societies.

Families make a variety of decisions. One is whether to have many children or to have fewer children. Also some try to do more for each child. As countries develop, the trend shifts very strongly toward the latter. Every nation that has developed has done that, some in remarkably short periods of time. Taiwan, for example, has a birth rate lower than the United States. Declining birth rates also characterize Hong Kong, Mexico, and Poland (Becker, 1998).

In the developed part of Turkey the average number of children that families have is lower than the less developed part of Turkey. This is related with the level of education level of families. On average, educated families, particularly educated women, have 1.4 children and uneducated families have 5.1 children in the eastern region of Turkey (Baloglu, 1998: 40-42). It indicates the importance of education in having smaller families. Greater education of parents, perhaps of mothers, tends to improve the treatment of children, especially the daughters. The gap between the education of sons and daughters is smaller when parents are more educated.

More educated men and women tend to invest more in their own health and the health of their children. Indeed, education may be...
the single most important personal determinant of a person’s health and life expectancy. For example, the educated persons in the United States and other rich nations are the least likely to smoke. Smoking in the United States is now found in significant numbers only among those with no college education, and is especially common among high school dropouts.

Education of the poor helps improve their food intake not only by raising their incomes and spending on food but also by inducing them to make better, healthier, choices. All the studies from different nations indicate that educated persons tend to consume a healthier diet even when the total amount spent on food is held constant. Of course, the relation between education and better health and life expectancy involves causation in both directions. Because greater health and lower mortality also induce larger investments in education and other human capital since rates of return on these investments are greater when the expected amount of working time is greater.

**Education and Trade**

Some countries have successfully combined openness and investment in learning and education, forming a virtuous circle: openness creates demand for education, and learning and education make a country’s export sector more competitive. Knowledge accumulation influences a country’s trade performance and competitiveness (Grossman and Helpman 1989), trade, in turn, enhances knowledge accumulation, especially through imports (Ben David and Loewy, 1995). Lucas notes that, to sustain any kind of knowledge accumulation, a country has to be outward-oriented. Young and Keller (1996) find that trade itself cannot be the engine of
growth, but rather must operate throughout some mechanism, such as the formation of human capital, to affect growth. A World Bank study found that economic growth rates in a sample of 60 developing countries during 1965-87 were especially high where there was a combination of a high level of education and macroeconomic stability and openness (Tilak, 1989). The impact of trade openness on long-term growth thus depends on how well people are able to absorb and use the information and technology made available through trade and foreign investment.

From all the theories it can be inferred that there is a strong positive relationship between education and economic development by having its impact on productivity of work force, birth rate, GDP, standard of living, industrialization etc. Besides, it empowers women too, who are a part of human capital.

**HUMAN CAPITAL**

Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, creativity, skills embodied in human beings to perform labour so as to produce economic value. It is an aggregate economic view of the human being acting within economies. A.W. Lewis is said to have begun the field of Economic Development and consequently the idea of human capital when he wrote in 1954 the "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour." However, it was first discussed by A.C. Pigou.

The use of the term in the modern neo-classical economic literature dates back to Jacob Mincer's article "Investment in Human Capital and Personal Income Distribution" in 'The Journal of Political Economy' in 1958. Even T.W. Schultz too contributed to the
development of the subject matter The best-known application of the idea of "human capital" in economics is that of Mincer and G Becker. Becker's book entitled 'Human Capital', published in 1964, became a standard reference for many years. In this view, human capital is similar to "physical means of production"; i.e., just as investment is made in factories and machines, one can invest in human capital through education, training, etc., and one's outputs depend partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. Thus, human capital is a means of production, into which additional investment yields additional output. Human capital is substitutable, but not transferable like land, labor, or fixed capital. Modern growth theory sees human capital as an important growth factor. Many theories explicitly connect investment in human capital development to education.

The economists who considered human beings or their skills as capital are Petty, Smith, Say, Senior, List, Von Thunen, Roscher, Sidwick, Walras, and Fisher (Kiker, 1966). Early in 1937, Smith believed that "the skill of a man might be regarded as the machine that has genuine costs and returns to profit."

Most of the economists argued that human capital should be included in the concept of capital for 3 reasons:

1. The cost of rearing and educating human beings is a real cost.
2. The product of their labor adds to the national wealth.
3. An expenditure on a human being that increases this product will, ceteris paribus, increase national wealth.

The first attempt to estimate the money value of a human being was made by Sir William Petty around 1691. Three methods have been used to estimate the value of human beings viz, cost-based approach, income-based approach, and educational stock-based approach.
The theoretical framework most responsible for the wholesome adoption of education and development policies has come to be known as human capital theory. Human capital theory regards education as an investment "like any other" and as a generator of externalities. For example, individuals make individual choices concerning their education, but this choice has a strong economic impact by resulting in an increase in total factor productivity.

Drawing from Amartya Sen's work on 'Human capabilities' and ideas of Aristotle, a new matrix was created to measure human development which emphasized that it is needed to enhance human well-being flourishing and not focusing on growth of national income as a goal. People's choices have to be enlarged and they must have economic opportunities to make use of these capabilities. States and countries would consider developments in terms of whether its people lead a long healthy painless life or they are educated and knowledgeable and enjoy decent standards of living.

Based upon the work of Schultz (1971), Sakamota and Powers (1995), Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997), human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. In short, the human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population.

Human capital theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings. The provision of formal education is seen as a productive investment in
human capital, which the proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more equally worthwhile than that of physical capital

For Babalola (2003), the rationality behind investment in human capital is based on three arguments:

I. The new generation must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations,

II. The new generation should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes and production methods and social services, and

III. People must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches.

According to Fagerlind and Saha, (1997) human capital theory provides a basic justification for large public expenditure on education both in developing and developed nations. The theory was consistent with the ideologies of democracy and liberal progression found in most Western societies. Its appeal was based upon the presumed economic return of investment in education both at the macro and micro levels. Efforts to promote investment in human capital were seen to result in rapid economic growth for society. For individuals, such investment was seen to provide returns in the form of individual economic success and achievement.

Most economists agree that it is human resources of nations, not its capital nor its material resources, which ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development.

Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) state that “Human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and
natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development. 

Robert (1991) developed a human capital model which shows that education and the creation of human capital was responsible for both the differences in labour productivity and the differences in overall levels of technology that are observed in the world. More than anything else, it has been the spectacular growth in East Asia that has given education and human capital their current popularity in the field of economic growth and development. Countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan have achieved unprecedented rates of economic growth while making large investments in education. In the statistical analysis that accompanied his study, the World Bank (1993) found that improvement in education is a very significant explanatory variable for East Asian economic growth.

There are several ways of modeling how the huge expansion of education accelerated economic growth and development. The first is to view education as an investment in human capital. A different view of the role of education in the economic success is that education has positive externalities “Educate part of the community and the whole of it benefits”

The idea that education generates positive externalities is by no means new. Many of the classical economists argued strongly for government’s active support of education on the grounds of the positive externalities that society would gain from a more educated labour force and population (Van-Den-Berg 2001) Smith (1976) reflects such progressive contemporary thought when he wrote that by educating its
people, a society derives no inconsiderable advantage from their instruction. The more they are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. Smith views the externalities to education as important to the proper functioning not only of the economy but of a democratic society.

Another way of modeling the role of education in the growth and development process is to view human capital as a critical input for innovations, research and development activities. From this perspective, education is seen as an intentional effort to increase the resources needed for creating new ideas, and thus, any increase in education will directly accelerate technological progress. This modeling approach usually adopts the Schumpeter (1973) assumptions of imperfectly competitive product markets and competitive innovation, which permit the process of generating technological progress. Education is seen as an input into the intentional and entrepreneurial efforts to create new technology and new products. Proponents of this view of education point out the close correlation between new product development and levels of education. The countries that are at the forefront of technology also have the most educated population (Van-Den-Berg 2001).

The review of empirical tests of the theory by Garba (2002) tells that cross-country regressions have shown positive correlation between educational attainment and economic growth and development. Odekunle (2001) affirms that investment in human capital has positive effects on the supply of entrepreneurial activity and technological innovation. Ayemi (2003) asserts that education as an investment has future benefits of creation of status, job security and other benefits in cash and in kind.
According to Ayara (2002), if education has not had the expected positive growth impact on economic growth it could be due to following three possibilities
(i) Educational capital has gone into privately remunerative but socially unproductive activities; or
(ii) There has been slow growth in the demand for educated labour; or
(iii) The education system has failed, such that schooling provides few (or no) skills

Application of Human Capital Theory to Educational System

Babalola (2003) emphasises that the contribution of education to economic growth and development occurs through its ability to increase the productivity of an existing labour force in various ways. However, economic evaluation of educational investment projects should take into account certain criteria according to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) which are
- Direct economic returns to investment, in terms of the balance between the opportunity costs of resources and the expected future benefits;
- Indirect economic returns, in terms of external benefits affecting other members of society,
- The private demand for education and other factors determining individual demand for education,
- The geographical and social distribution of educational opportunities, and,
- The distribution of financial benefits and burdens of education.

As education plays a significant role in the economy of a nation, educational expenditures are found to constitute a form of investment. This augments individual’s human capital and leads to greater output for society and enhanced earnings for the individual worker. It increases their chances of employment in the labour market, and allows them to
reap economic and no economic returns and gives them opportunities for job mobility.

Education is a source of economic growth and development only if it is anti-traditional to the extent that it liberates, stimulates and informs the individual and teaches him/her how and why to make demands upon himself/herself. Accordingly, a proper educational strategy would manifest itself in four major development-producing capacities. According to Bronchi (2003) the first is the development of a general trend favourable to economic progress. The reference is to social mobility, a general increase in literacy necessary for improved communication.

The second capacity emphasizes the development of complementary resources for factors which are relatively plenty and substitutes for relatively scarce factors. That is, educated people would be more adaptable to varying production needs. The third capacity underscores the durability of educational investment. He argues that education has greater durability than most forms of non-human reproductive capital, which implies that a given investment in education tends to be more productive, other things being equal, than some outlay on non-human capital.

According to Babalola (2003), the main problem associated with the belief that education is good for economic growth and development is how to maintain an equilibrium position. That is, where there will be no evidence of either shortage or surplus supply of educated people. A shortage of educated people might limit growth, while excess supply of it might create unemployment and thus limit economic growth and development.
The theory has been criticized on several grounds. At the individual level, it has become controversial whether or to what extent education or other forms of human investments are directly related to improvement in occupation and income. Bronchi (2003) opined that raising the level of education in a society can under certain instances increase the inequalities in income distribution.

Fagerhld and Saha (1997) claim that when governments adopt educational plans consistent with specific development goals and strategies, they can only be partially certain that outcomes of these will correspond to original intentions, the more political the goals of education, the more problematic the outcomes. In light of this, to view education as a panacea for the attainment of development objectives is risky. Thus, education in general and schooling in particular, cannot achieve of its own desired societal goals without structural reforms.

Another major problem in the application of the theory is its failure to account for a growing gap between people's increasing learning efforts and knowledge base and the diminishing number of commensurate jobs to apply their increasing knowledge investment, especially in developing nations.

However, some advocates of the theory (Bronchi, 2003, Castronova 2002, Crepaz and Moser 2004) assert that these great increases in learning efforts have not led to commensurate economic gains because of the declining quality of education, lopsided and politically motivated system of education.
EMPOWERMENT

The origin of empowerment as a form of theory was traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Freire (1973), when he suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed people of the world through education. But the ‘empowerment’ approach was first clearly articulated in 1985 by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). It was in the ninth plan (1997-2002) the central government of India in its welfare programmes shifted the concept of development to ‘empowerment’.

The concept of ‘Empowerment’ has been variously defined. In the words of Adam (1996), “Empowerment is the means by which individuals, groups, and communities to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives.” Pillai J.K. (1995) opined that empowerment is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life.

For Caroline Moser, empowerment is “the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. It is the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over resources.” According to Bandura (1986), “Empowerment is the process through which individuals gain efficacy, defined as the degree to which an individual perceives that he or she controls his or her environment.”

Janet Price (1992) opines that empowerment moves beyond personal change and growth. It includes participation in the broader field of politics and needs-identification.
Empowerment was most commonly associated with alternative approaches to psychological or social development and the concern for local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2003) The term has become a widely used word in the social sciences in the last decade across a broad variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, social work, education, women studies, and sociology (Lincoln, Travers, Ackers, & Wilkinson, 2002)

The concept of empowerment is conceived as the idea of power, because empowerment is closely related to changing power: gaining, expending, diminishing, and losing (Page & Czuba, 1999) Traditionally, power was understood as an isolated entity and a zero sum, as it is usually possessed at the expense of others (Lips, 1991, Weber, 1946). Recently, power has been understood as shared because it can actually strengthen while being shared with others (Kreisberg, 1992) Shared power is a process that occurs in relationships, that gives us the possibility of empowerment It is conceived as “a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives” (Page & Czuba, 1999)

There are three basic issues for the understanding of empowerment. First, empowerment is multidimensional i.e. it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, political, and other dimensions Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community Third, empowerment, by definition, is a social process because it occurs in relation to others (Page & Czuba, 1999, Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino & Schmider, 2005) Finally, empowerment is an outcome that can be enhanced and evaluated (Parpart et al., 2003) Empowerment as both a process and an outcome
(Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997, Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) has been examined across a variety of disciplines. It is a fluid and often unpredictable process, and changeable over time and place. Empowerment can also be seen as an outcome because it can be measured against expected accomplishments (Parpart et al., 2003). The process can be more instructive than the outcome, as the former is more specific and analytic than the latter which is characteristic. Despite these assertions, most studies on empowerment have focused on outcomes. Some studies (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, Darlington & Michele, 2004) have focused on the process or path of empowerment, but their conclusions were more relevant to the outcome than to the actual ongoing process.

Other studies (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001, Doore, 1988, Friedmann, 1992; Marcmak, 2004, Parpart et al., 2003) show the path of empowerment from certain perspectives. Still, a “common” path has not yet explored. A variety of studies have been conducted on empowerment, but there has been no proper framework on the process and cognitive elements of empowerment in a comprehensive manner (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). This study examines a variety of aspects of empowerment theories across a broad variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, social work, education, women’s studies, health studies, management, and community psychology and tries to synthesis them into a “well-organized” process and the “common” cognitive elements of empowerment.

The studies on empowerment were retrieved from a variety of disciplines, such as political science, management psychology, social work, and social welfare, education, and management.
Empowerment from Political Science perspective

For political scientists, the process of giving power to the people (Angelique, Reischl, & Davidson, 2002, Nelson, 2002) was a major concern. They were especially interested in the progressive social position of the disadvantaged, including women (Gallway & Bernasek, 2004, Gerges, 2004), ethnic minorities (Weissberg, 1999), and the disabled (Kay, 1998). Weissberg (1999) criticized a specific type of empowerment, such as a “mobilizing” social movement, an approach that might be misunderstood as a denial to empowerment. However, in carefully reviewing his work, one may uncover that he presented the path of empowerment. He wrote that destitute people seeking a remedy for their poverty might be better served by learning a trade or taking classes in English literacy and mathematics than by joining a community organization and mobilizing themselves for control over welfare bureaucracies. Weissberg (1999) did not deny the effectiveness of empowerment, he simply emphasized the learning process as a stronger form of empowerment than the joining and mobilizing process. The criticism also revealed his thinking on the correct approach to the process of empowerment: learning physical and intellectual skills, joining community organizations, and mobilizing their skills for upgrading the social status of the disadvantaged over the advantaged.

Banducci, Donovan, and Karp (2004) also found three components of the process of empowerment in their survey study: strengthening representational links, fostering positive attitudes, and encouraging political participation. Shalit (2004) also uncovered three steps in the process of empowerment in his philosophical speculation: strengthening intellectual capabilities, coping with difficulties and problems, and engaging in politics. These three works revealed that empowerment in the field of political science was initiated by
strengthening physical and intellectual capacities and finally orienting those toward gaining of power

Empowerment from the perspective of Social Welfare and Social Work

Empowerment has been a vital issue in social welfare and social work. Various studies on empowerment in these fields have been reported (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003, Secret, Rompf, & Ford, 2003), but studies on the processes leading to empowerment are rare. Cheater (1999) conducted case studies on a wide range of societies and discussed what is actually gained when people talk about empowering others. Cheater (1999) argues that traditionally disempowered groups gain influence when power relates to economic development. However, he did not specify the actual path of empowerment. Friedmann (1992) argues that poverty should be seen not merely in material terms, but as social, political, and psychological powerlessness. He described the path of empowerment in terms of two steps: first mobilizing the poor and then transforming their social power to political power. According to Friedmann, people in need can alleviate their poverty by mobilizing themselves for political participation on a broader scale; poverty is seen here as a form of social, political, psychological disempowerment.

Empowerment from Education perspective

In the field of education, empowerment was professed as a means of liberating oppressed people. Freire (1973), one of the founding scholars of empowerment theory in education, presented three progressive steps of empowerment: “conscientizing,” inspiring, and liberating. According to Freire, the oppressed or the disadvantaged can become empowered by learning about social inequality (i.e.,
conscientizing), encouraging others by making them feel confident about achieving social equality, and finally liberating them. His theory has been utilized in women’s studies. In fact, the roots of the feminist pedagogy lie in his work (Freire, 1971, Weiler, 1991). Parpart et al. (2003, p. 4) argue that “empowerment must be understood as including both individual conscientization (power within) as well as the ability to work collectively which can lead to politicized power with others, which provides the power to bring about change.” Their progressive steps of empowerment are identical to those of Freire “Power within” is consistent with conscientizing, “power with” is compatible with inspiring, and “power to” is in accord with liberating.

Empowerment from the perspective of Health Studies

In health studies, empowerment has represented a promising intervention target for substance abuse prevention activities, weight reduction, smoking cessation, and moderate drinking. Gibson (1995) conducted a fieldwork study to describe the process of empowerment as it pertains to mothers of chronically ill children. She found that four components of the process of empowerment emerged: discovering reality, developing necessary knowledge, fostering competence, and employing confidence to make their voices heard. Peterson and Reid (2003) conducted a path analysis to explore the process of empowerment in community. The target population of this study was a sample of randomly selected urban residents who participated in an evaluation of a Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Community Partnership. Peterson and Reid (2003) found four interrelated steps led to empowerment. They were alienation, awareness, participation, and a sense of community. This study included meaningful discussion on the process of empowerment, the authors used empirical research to explore the path of empowerment. Their findings explain the need for
developing substance abuse prevention initiatives that "increase participation in substance abuse prevention activities, with particular emphasis on incorporating strategies designed to improve sense of community" (Peterson & Reid, 2003.) Therefore, there exists both similarity and difference in the two works. The similarity is that the first step toward empowerment is discovering realities, such as alienation and awareness of limited power. The difference is that the empowerment practices in Gibson's work (1995) are oriented toward employing the confidence for making their voices heard whereas those in the work of Peterson and Reid (2003) are oriented toward building a community.

**Empowerment from Management perspective**

In the literature on management, employee empowerment has been an important issue and has been generally perceived as one of those business-management buzzwords, which authors say companies can use to navigate the demanding world of global competition (i.e., by empowering their employees) (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001, Terblanche, 2003). There is also an argument that "the effectiveness of empowerment practices are contingent on the degree of operational uncertainty that prevails" (Wall, Cordery, & Clegg, 2002, p. 146).

Most researchers in this field opine that empowerment programs can transform a stagnant organization into a vital one, if traps or misconceptions (e.g., managers view empowerment as a threat and employees mistake empowerment for discretionary authority) are avoided (Dover, 1999). Carson et al. (1999) conducted research on the relationship between employee empowerment and work attitudes, however, their concern was not with the path of empowerment, but the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitments on work-related outcomes. Other management theorists (Blanchard et al., 2001, Terblanche, 2003) describe the path towards empowerment as...
involving three steps. The first step is information, which managers must share liberally with employees to help create a sense of ownership. Next is setting up understandable boundaries that will make employees feel both comfortable and challenged. The third step is having managers develop teams that eventually replace the old hierarchical structure. They state that the empowerment process starts with information on managerial issues in organizations and ends with team-building.

**Empowerment from Community Psychology perspective**

Literature on empowerment is most frequently reported in the field of community psychology. According to some authors, the path towards empowerment involves two steps, namely relationship building and community building (Rossmig & Glowacki-Dudka, 2001) and social conflict and social support (Ibanez et al., 2003). Other authors describe the path as involving three steps (Banyard & LaPlant, 2002, Goodkind & Foster-Fishman, 2002) The first promotes an interpersonal sense (of empowerment), or encourages participation. The second step builds community connections or integrates diversity. The final step promotes social action for community building or fostering involvement in community. There exist a couple of common points in the processes of components leading to empowerment in the field of community psychology. Firstly, empowerment practices in a community have led to changes from community diversity to community integration. Secondly, the intermediate step before community integration or community building is participation in or involvement with community activities.

**Synthesized Process of Empowerment**

Most authors worked on the premise that individual, managerial, social, or political disturbances do exist and are ongoing at the very first step of empowerment, whether specifically mentioned or not. Blanchard
et al (2001) and Terblanche (2003) mentioned sharing information on managerial problems in a roundabout way, while Freire (1973), Peterson and Reid (2003), and Weissberg (1999) specifically mentioned the existence of powerlessness or alienation. Doore (1988) gave an implicit message that empowerment starts with the existence of disturbances by mentioning "healing illness." Second, empowerment goes a step further by letting the disadvantaged learn about social inequality (Weissberg 1999), "conscientize" themselves (Freire, 1973), and grow their power within their inner systems (Parpart et al., 2003). Third, the people having once gained an awareness of their limited power and the potential for change lead others to join their movement (Weissberg, 1999) and mobilize in collective action (Friedmann, 1992, Weissberg, 1999). Power grows through mobilizing such collective action or sharing power with others (Parpart et al., 2003). Fourth, some authors (Freire, 1973, Friedmann, 1992, Marciniak, 2004) assumed a turning point that transforms the process of mobilizing collective action into that of creating a new world. This step is like "the tipping point that little things can make a big difference" (Gladwell, 2000, p. 261). This "point" can be called the maximizing step. The final stage of the path was "transforming" (Friedmann, 1992) old institutions and structures into new ones, or "creating" a new world (Marciniak, 2004) or a new social order by "liberating" the disadvantaged (Freire, 1973). The final step was closely related to the "power to" bring about change (Parpart et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be said that the path of empowerment can be synthesized into five progressive steps: social disturbances existing, conscientizing, mobilizing, maximizing, and creating a new social order.

The existence of individual disturbances and/or social disturbances was the first step of empowerment. It can be said that the existence of a sense of powerlessness was agreed upon the premise that can cause social disturbances. The disturbances have usually risen to the
surface as a group of empowerment agents recognized the disadvantaged and the oppressed. In the first step of empowerment, both the oppressed and the empowerment agents have discovered the reality (Gibson, 1995) surrounded by psychological and/or social pathologies, such as disadvantages, oppression, alienation, and stratification.

The second step of empowerment is described as the process of ‘conscientizing’, which means that people have to gain an awareness of their limited power and the potential to change the circumstance (Robins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998, p 91) or raising power within (Parpart et al., 2003). Conscientizing is the process of increasing awareness of how social and political structures affect individual and group experiences and contribute to personal or group powerlessness (Freire, 1973). In this process, the group and people in general conceptualize and understand the social stratification and oppression. They strengthen their “power within” (Parpart et al., 2003) by developing necessary knowledge and fostering confidence in the possibility of change (Gibson, 1995). Stratification refers to the way in which human groups in society are differentiated from one another and are placed in a hierarchical order. Powerlessness relates to the inability to manage emotions, skills, knowledge, and material resources in a way that will lead to effective performance of valued social roles and personal gratification (Solomon, 1976).

The third step of empowerment is the process where the people take initiatives in empowering the oppressed or the disadvantaged by asking them join their movement (Weissberg, 1999), and then mobilize collective action (Friedmann, 1992, Weissberg, 1999) to free the disadvantaged and oppressed from their social oppression and/or discrimination. At this stage, empowerment entails being assertive and taking more aggressive action in the face of opposition and open
conflict People get to understand how to mobilize collective support and get down to action. This stage is characterized as the one of organizing collective action by sharing power with support groups (Parpart et al., 2003).

Empowerment does not stop at the third stage. It grows and becomes maximized by sharing power with the people at the fourth stage. In this stage, power is shared with increasing number of people. The more power is shared, the greater the empowerment becomes circular in nature. At this point, empowerment reaches the point that the people feel able to utilize their confidence, desires, and abilities to bring about “real change.”

Maximized human empowerment can be practiced at the final stage to overcome social oppression and achieve social justice. Societal aspects of oppression and stratification can be transformed into a new social system in which such pathologies can be effectively removed. A new social order is created in this final stage of empowerment.

Thus, different people use empowerment to mean different things. However, there are four aspects which seem to be generally accepted in the literature on women’s empowerment.

Firstly, to be empowered one must have been disempowered. It is relevant to speak of empowering women, for example, because, as a group, they are disempowered relative to men.

Secondly, empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party. Rather those who would become empowered must claim it. Development agencies cannot therefore empower women—the most they can achieve is to facilitate women empowering themselves. They
may be able to create conditions favourable to empowerment but they cannot make it happen

Thirdly, definitions of empowerment usually include a sense of people making decisions on matters which are important in their lives and being able to carry them out. Reflection, analysis, and action are involved in this process which may happen on an individual or a collective level. There is some evidence that while women's own struggles for empowerment have tended to be collective efforts, empowerment-orientated development interventions often focus more on the level of the individual.

Finally, empowerment is an ongoing process rather than a product. There is no final goal. One does not arrive at a stage of being empowered in some absolute sense. People are empowered, or disempowered, relative to others or, importantly, relative to themselves at a previous time.

By considering different dimensions, the concept of 'Empowerment' can be 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. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly, at the psychological level it involves women's ability to assert them and this is constructed by the 'gender roles' assigned to her.
Components of empowerment

Empowerment theories are not only concerned with the process of empowerment, but also with results that can produce greater access to resources and power for the disadvantaged (Freire, 1973, Parpart et al., 2003, Robins et al., 1998, p. 91) The analysis of the work reviewed thus far can be used to organize a theory of the cognitive elements of empowerment

Although much of the research and literature on empowerment deals with the individual in his immediate environment, there is clearly a branch that focuses more on the wider community (Itshaky & York, 2000) Empowerment is operative at various levels, personal or individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and collective. Boehm and Staples (2004) focused on personal and collective dimensions, while Dodd and Gutierrez (1990), Lee (1994), and Gutierrez (1990) examined personal, interpersonal, and institutional or political dimensions. It can be said that the interpersonal dimension is included in the collective dimension because the term *interpersonal* has a connotation of collectiveness. The institutional or political dimensions can be represented as part of the collective dimension. Therefore, the components of empowerment can be examined in the context of both personal and collective aspects

Personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves, as well as the knowledge, capacities, skills, and mastery they actually possess (Staples, 1990, p. 32). Collective empowerment refers to processes by which individuals join together to break their loneliness and silence, help one another, learn together, and develop skills for collective action (Boehm & Staples, 2004, Fetterson, 2002). In a way, empowerment develops from individual and social conscientization or a critical consciousness to collective action (Boehm
In addition, the processes of the components leading to empowerment include both individual and social factors. Strengthening intellectual capabilities and the power within (Parpart et al., 2003) can be seen as individual factors in the process, whereas mobilizing collective action and maximizing power can be referred to as social factors. Personal empowerment sometimes conflicts with the development of collective empowerment, when empowerment is not effectively operating. Although individuals can become more empowered personally through the process of personal development, they cannot always become effective in helping to build their group's collective empowerment. Personal empowerment should be consistent with collective empowerment to improve the value of social and economic justice more effectively (Staples, 1999).

**Components of Individual Empowerment**

Individual empowerment develops when people attempt to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making abilities (Becker, Kovach, & Gronseth, 2004). Some authors conducted their research by viewing a single component, such as self-determination (Fetterman, 1996, Sprague & Hayes, 2000), self-confidence (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005), and the promotion of competence (Breton, 1994). Other authors conducted their studies by viewing multiple components, such as academic success and bicultural identity (Diversi & Mecham, 2005), mastery and self-determination (Bohm & Staples, 2004), self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making ability (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004; Kovach, Becker, & Worley, 2004), personal sense of control and efficacy (Speer, 2000), self-efficacy, critical consciousness, and development and cultivation (Lee, 1994), meaning, competence, self-determination,
impact (Spreitzer et al., 1997), and advocacy and consciousness raising (Moreau, 1990)

Self-determination is most frequently reported in the literature and considered as a single and critical component of empowerment (Sprague & Hayes, 2000). Fetterman (1996) advocated that "self-determination, defined as the ability to chart one's own course in life, forms the theoretical foundations" of the components of individual empowerment (p. 92). Four dimensions of self-determination which need to be considered are: (a) consistency and perseverance in activities, (b) the courage to take risks, (c) initiative and proactivity, and (d) the ability to voice one's opinion. Mastery, in addition to self-determination, was also explored as a component of individual empowerment in an empirical study (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Mastery is defined as full control over someone or something, and through in-depth understanding or greater skills, can be a variety of types, such as physical mastery, mastery of emotion and behavior, mastery of information and decision making, mastery of social system, efficient mastery of time, mastery as connected to autonomy and individual freedom, and planning mastery, thus enabling consumers to prevent negative situations and to actualize positive ones (Boehm & Staples, 2004).

According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), it involves a fit between the needs of one's work role and one's values, beliefs, and behavior (Brief & Node, 1990). Competence is a belief that one possesses the skills and abilities necessary to perform a job or task well (Gist, 1987) and is similar to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1977). Self-determination is the belief that one has autonomy or control over how one does his or her own work (Deci & Ryan, 1985, Wagner, 1995). Self-determination is consistent with notions of personal control (Greenberg & Strasser, 1991,
Impact is the perception that one has influenced strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work or in society to make a difference. Impact is different from self-determination; self-determination refers to an individual’s sense of control over his or her own work, whereas impact refers to the individual’s sense of control over organizational outcome.

The components of individual empowerment might be expressed along with the array of Thomas and Velthouse (1999) and Spreitzer et al. (1997). When the conceptual interrelations between the components of individual empowerment are carefully reviewed, it can be said that they are not significantly different, but rather consistent with one another.

**Components of Collective Empowerment**

Collective empowerment develops when people join in action to overcome obstacles and attain social change (Staples, 1990). Groups become empowered through collective action, but that action is enabled or constrained by the power structures that they encounter (Parpart et al., 2003). Fewer studies are done in the area of the components of collective empowerment. Some authors conducted their research in terms of a single component, such as social cohesion (Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino, & Schnider, 2005), community engagement (Baillie et al., 2004, Zaldin, 2004), and coalition building (Boydell & Volpe, 2004). Other authors conducted their studies in view of multiple components, such as collective belonging and involvement in and control over organization in the community (Boehm & Staples, 2004); building community and culture building (Fetterson, 2002); intellectual understandings of power and social change (Speer, 2000); self-awareness, group support, and advocacy (Bellamy & Mowbray, 1999); identification with similar others, reducing self-blame for past events,
and a sense of personal freedom (Gutierrez, 1990), and leadership competence and political control (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991) The literature shares similarities regarding the following three issues:

First, the notion of collective belonging, namely referring to “belonging to the social networks of their peers, and an emphasis on autonomy while being part of the collective and social solidarity vis-à-vis establishment” (Boehm & Staples, 2004), was one of the most frequently reported components of collective empowerment in the literature. The notion was described as community belonging (Itzhaky & York, 2000) and identification with similar others (Gutierrez, 1990).

Second, Boehm and Staples (2004) presented three components: (a) collective belonging, (b) involvement in, and (c) control over organizations in the community. The authors examined empowerment from the consumer’s and social worker’s points of view. Twenty focus groups, composed of four different consumer populations and social workers serving them, were examined. Content analysis was conducted with data collected from the discussions among the 20 focus groups with three facilitators to explore the three components. The notion of collective belonging has already been described as a single component of collective empowerment. One of the other two components, the notion of involvement in the community, was also one of the most frequently reported components of empowerment. That notion means taking part in community activities or events that may lead to effecting change in /affecting the power structure in communities (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Involvement in the community was described as community engagement (Bailie et al., 2004, Zaldin, 2004) and coalition building (Boydell & Volpe, 2004). Control over organizations in community (Boehm & Staples, 2004) was considered as one of the critical components of collective empowerment. The notion means a
component of gaining forces to influence representative groups, plus efficacy of those organizations. Control of organizations in a community refers to group support and advocacy (Bellamy & Mowbray, 1999) and political control (Itzhaky & York, 2000, Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991).

Finally, the notion of community building was one of the critical components of collective empowerment. Community building refers to creating a sense of community among residents that will increase its ability to work together, solve problems, and make group decisions for social change (Fetterson, 2002, Mattessich & Monsey, 1997). The authors describe it as social cohesion (Peterson et al., 2005) and a sense of personal freedom (Gutierrez, 1990). According to Gutierrez (1990), the goal of collective empowerment practices is to help communities develop the ability to change negative situations and prevent the recurrence of the problems that created the situations. This goal cannot be accomplished without the establishment of community building.

It can be said that the components of collective empowerment consist of four factors: collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organization in the community, and community building.

Thus, the process of empowerment can be synthesized into five progressive stages: an existing social disturbance, conscientizing, mobilizing, maximizing, and creating a new order. Empowerment has two interrelated aspects that can be summarized as personal empowerment and collective empowerment.

It can be said that empowerment can be a remedy for individuals and groups with disadvantages and oppression by conscientizing themselves, mobilizing others with their shared consciousness, and
Throughout history, there has not existed a society without problems. It is obvious that people are better off than in the past, and that empowerment has contributed to accelerate the speed of betterment. People at the margins are still in pain, but they “have greater autonomy today than they did a generation ago.” Such empowerment can be a guideline that can “build a company of citizens” (Manville & Ober, 2003) in this society. Women being the marginalized section of the society, it is important to look into the aspects of women empowerment.

**Women Empowerment**

UNIFEM (The United Nations Development Fund for Women) defines women’s economic empowerment as ‘having access to and control over the means to make a living on a sustainable and long term basis, and receiving the material benefits of this access and control. Such a definition goes beyond short-term goals of increasing women’s access to income and looks for longer term sustainable benefits, not only in terms of changes to laws and policies that constrain women’s participation in and benefits from development, but also in terms of power relationships at the household, community and market levels’ (Carr, 2000)

In 1970s, when women’s empowerment was first invoked by Third World feminist and women’s organizations, ‘it was explicitly used to frame and facilitate the struggle for social justice and women’s equality through a transformation of economic, social and political structures at national and international levels’ (Bisnath and Elson). But in the 1990s, many agencies used the term ‘women’s empowerment’ in association with a wide variety of strategies including those which focused on ‘enlarging the choices and productivity of individual women, for the most part, in isolation from a feminist agenda, and in the context
of a withdrawal of state responsibility for broad-based economic and social support' (Bisnath, 2001) It is frequently cited, for example, in the context of providing micro credit to women and there is an extensive literature debating the effectiveness (or not) of this strategy in terms of empowering women. It does seem clear that many women have benefited from increased access to and control over cash but evidence also indicates that ‘female targeting without adequate support networks and empowerment strategies will merely shift the burden of household debt and household subsistence onto women’ (Mayoux, 2002,).

According to Bina Agarwal ‘if self-help groups were de-linked from their single point focus on credit and invested with more transformative agendas such as finding innovative ways of improving women’s situation economically, challenging social inequality, improving women’s voice in the public sphere and so on, they could prove more effective vehicles for empowerment’ (Agarwal, 2001) She argues that any strategy that seeks women’s empowerment should have, as a central component the enhancement of women’s ability to function collectively in their own interest

Srilatha Batliwala points out that, empowerment is not a necessary result of economic strength (Rich women suffer domestic abuse and rape too) The process of empowerment involves, first, women recognising the ideology that legitimizes male domination and understanding how it perpetuates their oppression

Batliwala recognizes that women have been led to participate in their own oppression and therefore sees external change agents as necessary for empowerment Women need access to a new body of ideas and information that not only changes their consciousness and self-image but also encourages action. Empowerment is conceptualized as ‘a
spiral, changing consciousness, identifying areas to target for change, planning strategies, acting for change, and analyzing activities and outcomes' (Batiwala, 1994)

For Nelly Stromquist, empowerment is a socio-political concept that includes cognitive, psychological, economic and political components. The cognitive component refers to women's understanding of the causes of their subordination. It involves 'understanding the self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural or social expectations' (Stromquist, 1995, p 14). It includes knowledge about legal rights and sexuality (beyond family planning techniques). The psychological component includes women believing that they can act at personal and social levels to improve their condition. It involves an escape from 'learned helplessness' and the development of self-esteem and confidence. For the economic component, she argues that, although work outside the home often implies a double burden, access to such work increases economic independence and therefore independence in general. The political component includes the ability to imagine one's situation and mobilize for social change. 'Collective action is fundamental for the attainment of social transformation,' (Stromquist, 1995)

Jo Rowlands considers empowerment in the context of social work and education where 'there is broad agreement that empowerment is a process, that it involves some degree of personal development, but that this is not sufficient, and that it involves moving from insight to action' (Rowlands, 1997)

She developed a model of women's empowerment with three dimensions—personal, close relationships and collective. At each level, inhibiting and encouraging factors influence a set of core values and
lead to changes. The importance of context is understood and the model is intended to be used to identify specific items within each category appropriate to local circumstances. For example at the level of personal experience/history the core values she identified during her Honduras-based research were self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of agency, sense of 'self' in wider context and dignity. Inhibiting factors included machismo, fatalism, active opposition by partner, health problems and poverty. Encouraging factors included activity outside the home, being part of a group, travel, time for self and literacy. Changes were expressed as increased ability to hold and express opinions, learn, analyse and act, organize own time and obtain and control resources.

In the words of Naila Kabeer (1999), "empowerment refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability." This definition makes clear that only those previously denied such abilities can be considered to be empowered and also that the choices in question are strategic. Kabeer defines strategic choices as ones 'which are critical for people to live the lives they want (such as choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children etc)' as opposed to 'less consequential choices which may be important for the quality of one's life but do not constitute its defining parameters'. It is worth noting that this use of the term 'strategic' is different from that popularized by Moser where women's 'strategic' interests are those which challenge their subordination as women while their 'practical' interests are those which help them to carry out their gender assigned roles more easily.

Kabeer argues that the ability to exercise such choice is made up of three interrelated and indivisible elements—resources, agency and achievements—all of which need attention before assertions about empowerment can be made. Resources are identified as not only...
material but also human and social and as including future claims and expectations as well as actual allocations. ‘Access to such resources will reflect the rules and norms which govern distribution and exchange in different institutional areas’ (Kabeer) Agency is the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them. As well as observable action it includes an individual’s sense of agency (or power within). Agency which is usually thought of as ‘decision-making’, can also involve ‘bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance’ (Kabeer).

Kabeer finds that many aspects of behaviour are in fact governed by rules and norms, some of which have a role in defining and maintaining the social order. Prominent among such norms are those which determine appropriate behaviour for men and women. These gendered identities are developed throughout life and cannot easily be shaken off because of some relatively minor change. As pointed out by Agarwal, ‘social norms are not immutable, and are themselves subject to bargaining and change, even if the time horizon for changing some types of norms may be a long one. Indeed a good deal of what is socially passed off as natural and indisputable, including women’s roles and modes of behaviour may be the outcomes of past ideological struggles’ (Agarwal, 1997).

Empowerment is a long run process. This process is neither easy nor does it follow a linear pattern, contend the authors. Instead ‘it takes twists and turns, includes both resistance and consent, and ebbs and flows as groups with different relations to the structures and sources of power came into conflict’ (Agarwal, 1988).
As Hall (1992) writes, “It is not women’s purpose to take power from men; rather, the goal of women is to develop their own power while respecting men for who they are.”

Holland et al identifies two components of female empowerment. The first is intellectual empowerment (which refers to the knowledge and expectations which a woman holds) and the second is experiential empowerment (the capacity to control behaviour). These two concepts are independent of each other, and the authors argue that “empowerment at one level does not necessarily entail empowerment at another” (Holland et al 1991).

As Schecter (1982, 109) writes: “Its premise is to turn individual defeats into victories through giving women tools to better control their lives and joining in collective struggle.”

**Indicators of Women Empowerment**

From the theories on empowerment, several empowerment indicators are identified specially with regard to women empowerment. It includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators which help to measure women empowerment.

**Qualitative indicators are:-**

- Increase in self-esteem, individual and collective confidence
- Mastery and self determination
- Ability to voice one’s opinion
- Increase in competence and self identity
- Sense of personal freedom
- Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition, reproductive rights, law and literacy
- Change in roles and responsibility in family & community
• Visible decrease in violence on women and girls
• Responses to, changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows and gender
• Visible changes in women's participation level attending meeting, participating and demanding participation
• Increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective
• Increase access to and ability to gather information
• Formation of women collectives
• Community engagement, social cohesion and collective involvement
• Positive changes in social attitudes
• Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household
• A woman's decision-making over her work and income

**Quantitative indicators are-**

• Demographic trends - Maternal mortality rate, Fertility rate, Sex ratio, Life expectancy at birth, Average age of marriage
• Number of women participating in different development programmers
• Greater access and control over community resources/government schemes-crèche, credit cooperative, non formal education
• Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level
• Change in literacy and & enrollment levels at schools, colleges and universities
• Participation levels of women in political process
• Increased number of women work force
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Education is the basic requirement and the 'Fundamental Right' of the citizens of a nation. While Higher Education is important in building up a quality human resource base for the nation, the Basic or Elementary Education system holds much more significance. In fact, since the inputs of the Higher Education system are nothing but the outputs of the Elementary Education system, the latter serves as the base over which the super-structure of the whole education system is built up. Attainment of basic education is important both due to its impact on the living standards of the people and also in augmenting their capabilities. Possession of reading and writing skills empower an individual to participate in modern economic processes, and transform his embodied capital into higher earning and better living.

Empowerment is inextricably linked to education. Education is not only a crucial part of all empowerment programmes but it also acts to empower in itself. Education is crucial to develop a sense of self-worth and empowerment. In the educational literature, much is made of the substantive and symbolic concepts, which the term 'empowerment' encloses. The idea is that empowerment can refer both to a substantive form of change at the individual level and a more symbolic form of change at the societal level.

In addition, education is an important instrument with which people can improve their lives and which helps empowering vulnerable groups. It is an instrument that has a significant impact on women's empowerment. It plays a critical role in achieving many key dimensions. Few studies have been conducted to understand the links between education and women empowerment.
Nuss and Majka (1985) found mixed evidence of the impact of economic development on women's education. Their findings suggest that women do not completely integrate into all areas of education, especially agriculture and engineering, thus hindering their economic empowerment. Jain and Nag (1986) found that access to modern education would not only enhance women's status but also of their children as there is an inverse relationship between fertility rates and female education. So, women education can play a significant role in controlling population growth which is a major hurdle in the way of attaining economic growth of countries like India.

Sanad and Tessler (1988) point out that, women who are least educated are more likely to disapprove of women's economic participation. Griffin (1992), in his study of the links between empowerment and experiential learning, suggests that education empowers everyone through a respect for each individual and his/her personal targets. However, he seems at odds with the idea that a substantive change at the level of the individual will be reflected in substantive social change.


Kishore and Gupta (2004) revealed that average women in India are disempowered relatively to men and there had been a little change in
her empowerment over time. According to Blumberg (2005) economic empowerment of women was the key to gender equality and also for the well being of a nation. It would enhance women’s capacity of decision making as well. Desai and Thakkar (2007) in their work discussed women’s political participation, legal rights and education as tools for their empowerment.

Education results in positive externalities. Not only does it have an intrinsic value in the sense of the joy of learning, reading etc, but it also has instrumental, social and process roles. Moreover, education may spread through interpersonal motivation. When one individual sends her child to school, her neighbour is likely to do so as well. Women’s education too, often spreads this way, more specifically, through same sex effects. i.e. an educated woman is far more likely to send her daughter to school than an uneducated woman.

While some scholars like Amartya Sen (1999) argues that education increases women's agency and empowerment, some other authors (Stromquist 1992 and 1995, Jayaweera, 1997, Longwe, 1998) are very skeptical in relation to the powerfulness of formal education to change people's lives, particularly women's. For the latter authors, the role that this type of education plays in the process of women's empowerment is limited because it tends to reproduce, among other things, the economic and social structures that perpetuate unequal gender relations.

Education and revenue don't cause to empowerment if necessary base for presence of women are not facilitated by social institutions. Based on some researches, educated and jobholder women even have worse condition than non-educated and housekeeper women in some countries (Mason, 2002); namely in this ground cultural expectation and
prescription are strong determinant. There is probability that with existent institutions, Iranian educated and jobholder women could not gain necessary freedom and empowerment (Shafiq, 1991).

Education is actually a key means of empowering women and is in itself a human right. Educated girls lead better lives. Education is especially central to women's empowerment in so far as it enables women to become more productive both inside and outside the household. 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 (Cheston and Kuhn 2002, Albee and 1994, UNFPA 2006).

Research has shown that women contribute a higher share of their earnings to the family and are less likely to spend it on themselves (Dwyer and Bruce, 1988). Research has suggested that as the share of the family income contributed by woman increases, so does the likelihood that she will manage this income (The World Bank, 1991). However, the extent to which women retain control over their own income varies from household to household and region to region. One study found that fewer than half of women gave their earnings to their husbands (Dwyer and Bruce, 1988). The study also showed, however, that many women still sought their husbands’ permission when they wanted to purchase something for themselves. In northern India, where more stringent cultural restrictions are in place, it is likely that few women control family finances.
Concerning 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 (Moghadam 2003, Eckert et al. 2007, Morrison et al. 2004, Rihani et al. 2006).

With respect to women's health and well-being, education gives women the knowledge to demand and seek proper health care. Thus, it is evident from different studies 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 (McAlister and Baskett 2006, Task Force on Education 2005a, 2005b, Eckert et al. 2007). It is also found that educated women are likely to maintain better conditions of nutrition and hygiene in her household and thereby improve her family's health (Sen 1997).

Besides, 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 (Lewis et al. 2008; Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005b, ICRW 2005, Malhotra and Mather 1997, Odutolu et al. 2003; UNDAW 2006, Aksornkool 1995, UNICEF 2005).
In addition, education is essential to sustain gains concerning women's empowerment for future generations, through its intergenerational effects. Mothers' education shows universally positive impacts on children's schooling. The effect is more pronounced for girls than for boys and is significantly stronger than the effect of fathers' education, particularly where girls' enrollment lags behind that of boys. This 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" (Lewis et al. 2008, Schultz 2002, Task Force on Education 2005b, Moghadam et al. 2003, Blumberg 2005, UNFPA 2005, UNDP 2003, Sweetman 2008; Care 2005). 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.

**Education and Economic Empowerment of Women**

Education contributes to economic empowerment in several ways. The linkage between education and economic empowerment of women can be seen from different dimensions such as education and women's economic participation, women's competitiveness and educational level - economic empowerment (World Economic Forum 2005).

**Education and Women's Economic Participation**

Economic participation of women refers to their presence in the workforce in quantitative terms. It concerns not only the actual number of women participating in the labour force, but also their remuneration on an equal basis (WEF 2005). Education is essential for women's economic participation, as it affects many related aspects.
Other things remaining unchanged, higher educational levels increase the likelihood of women's labor force participation. Although a general expansion of education tends to lower the overall level of labor force participation because it raises the average age of labor force entry, education positively affects female labor force participation in the long run. The relationship between education and female labor force participation on an individual level is summarized by standing three hypotheses: the opportunity cost argument, the relative employment opportunity argument, and the aspiration argument.

First, education gives people a positive incentive to seek employment, since education is an investment that is positively correlated with earnings' potential. Consequently, it raises the opportunity cost of economic inactivity. Second, 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. Third, 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 (Morrison et al. 2004, Psacharopoulos 1988; ICRW 2005, Mehra 1997, Nam 1991).

Education affects women's labor force participation, not only directly but also indirectly through its effects on women's household responsibilities. The higher fertility reduces women's employment while there is a strong link between female education and lower fertility which is virtually universal (England et al. 2004; Murphy and Carr 2007, Rihan et al. 2006, Gupta and Malhotra 2006, Care 2005, Lewis and Lockheed 2008). A World Bank 100-country study found that for every
four years of education that girls attain, fertility rates drop by roughly one birth (Rihan et al 2006) This 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 5-10 per cent (Heckman 2008, Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005a, 2005b, Woodhall 1973, UNDP 2003, Lewis and Lockheed 2008, Rihan et al 2006) It is estimated that one extra year of education increases female labor force participation by three years (ILO 2004)

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 (Azmat et al 2006; GFW 2004)

In addition, higher levels of education tend to lower labor market risks. The higher educated tend to face a more stable labor market (Obadic and Poric 2008, Walter and Xie, 2008) They are more likely to keep their jobs and experience shorter unemployment spells. This is found to be especially true for women. Education increases women's propensity to remain in the labor market. Although they may interrupt their working careers while they have young children, better educated women can pay for childcare and keep their careers (Woodhall 1973, UNIFEM 2005, ILO 2008b)
Higher levels of education expand job search methods as it leads to more job search options, more efficient and better mobility prospects. Job search methods have a significantly impact on the probability of being employed and mobility prospects. Expanding search options especially through formal methods is more important to women who usually find it more difficult to access employment and lack enough effective social contacts.

As pointed out by several writers, women's education has significant positive effects on job search. 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 (Hooft et al. 2005, Stevenson 2008, Boheim et al. 2002).

The highly educated may have access to a geographically larger labor market and respond to advertisements placed in the national or international media (Boheim et al. 2002).

The higher educated people find jobs relatively often along formal channels (Koning et al. 1997, Boheim et al. 2002). This is very important for women who usually lack good effective social networks. For instance, evidence from ILO School to Work Transition surveys (ILO 2008b) shows that in a number of countries, young women have a more difficult transition to work than young men. One of the main reasons explaining this difficult transition is that they have more limited access to information channels than young men.
Higher educated women have more opportunity to use the internet in job search which are more easily to use, efficient, require no social contacts, expand employment opportunities and improve mobility prospects. Internet job search rises with education (Kuhn and Skuterud 2000). By being available to everyone at low cost, it is more helpful to women. In addition, the Internet is perceived to have made job search more efficient for workers. It reduces the cost of on-the-job search (Marquez et al. 2004, Stevenson 2008, Patrinos 2007, Kuhn and Skuterud 2004).

**Education and Women's Competitiveness**

Education is also a powerful path for enhancing women's economic opportunity. The economic opportunity concerns the quality of women's economic involvement, beyond their mere presence as workers - wages, upper mobility, representation in managerial and scientific jobs, etc (WEF 2005).

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 increases 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 loosing 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 (ILO 2004, 2008b, 2008c, Bisnath 2001, Heckman 2008, Zambrano 2005, Obadic and Poric 2008, Dougherty 2003, England et al. 2004).
Strengthening women's competitiveness in the labor market yields high returns for women's pathways to the labor market in many ways.

Education improves women's chances in labor markets. Education here refers not only to getting mere education, the most important is the level of education. Post-primary education has the greatest pay-off for women's empowerment in that it increases income earning opportunities (ILO 2008a; UNFPA 2005). Compared to women without any formal education, those with middle school education and above are more likely to hold paid jobs.

Empirical evidence from Latin America, Asia, and Africa shows that better schooling for girls increases female entry into formal or wage employment (Gupta and Malhotra 2006, Nam 1991, Glick and Sahn 1997, Morrison et al 2004, Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005b). In addition, it is found that higher levels of education increase the gains from formal labor force participation more for women than for men.

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 (ILO 2008c, 2007, UN Commission for Social Development 2008, Mehra 1997, Basch 2007, ILO 2008b). 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 25.0 per
cent more likely to be formally employed (ICRW 2005, Pattnos 2007, Buvmic et al. 2008, Morrison et al. 2004, ILO 2007) Higher education levels are essential for women to get high quality jobs.

Besides, education has a strong bearing on individual earnings as higher human capital increases the wage rate (Walter and Xie 2008; Koning et al. 1997) The rate of return to education is higher on women’s education than on men’s. Returns to secondary education in particular are higher for women (Psacharopoulos 1988, Rihan et al. 2006) 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 (Glick and Sahn 1997, Johnson et al. 2003) 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 per cent (Pattnos, 2007)

Another study has found returns to female secondary education in the 15–25 per cent range (Rihan et al. 2006) Comparing returns to women’s education with men’s education, one study (Pattnos 2007) estimates that returns to education for women are higher than for men (9.8 per cent vis-a-vis 8.7 per cent) Another study (Dougherty 2003) estimates that the rate of return to schooling appears to be nearly two percentage points greater for females than for males. This is especially true in developing countries where returns to education are generally higher than in industrial countries (11.0 per cent vis-a-vis 7.0 per cent) (Pattnos 2007) Returns to women’s education in developing countries are largely positive and in some cases exceed those observed in developed countries. Even in the agricultural sector, where most farmers in developing countries are women, education raises productivity, and the returns to women’s education exceed returns to men’s education.
In East Asian economies, women's relative gains in education and experience explain much of the gain that women experienced after 1990 in their relative wages (Zveglich et al. 2004).

The field of study also plays a critical role in determining returns and the gender pay gap. A study of the gender pay gap in some Asian economies (Son 2007) found that the unexplained gender pay gap may be attributed to the fact that men and women make different education choices. They study different subjects, and boys’ chosen subjects often lead to more lucrative careers. High-educated women face less market discrimination than those with less education. Thus, the pay gap in one country may be less than in another owing to women's higher relative levels of education (Woodhall 1973, Blau et al. 1996, Glick and Sahn 1997, OECD 2004, Dougherty 2003; ILO 2004, Joshi 2002).

Education is a critical path to gender equality in the labor market. In addition to the previously mentioned effects, women's education reduces occupational segregation. Occupational segregation by gender may exert a negative influence on male-female wage differentials and on the possibility of promotion in careers followed by women. Economic theory suggests many explanations of occupational segregation, which can be appended to the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, the employers’ perception that women are on average less qualified than men may contribute to segregation. Different levels of education result in vertical segregation. This is expected, educational requirements of clerical occupations for instance are much lower than those of professionals.

A study analysing the recent patterns of occupational segregation by gender in the EU countries vis-à-vis the US (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 (Fields et al. 1991, Son 2007, Bjelokosić 2007). 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 (Morrison et al. 2004).

Thus, 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 (Fortin et al. 2002, Koning et al. 1997, UNIFEM 2005).

**Education Level, Quality and Women's Economic Empowerment**

If the end goal is to empower women, getting education is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. The effect of education on women's economic empowerment is determined mainly by the level and quality of education they get.

Women's education level affects both women's economic participation and opportunity. The level of education affects women's economic participation through determining both the likelihood of women's labor force participation and their competitiveness in the labor market.
Secondary and higher levels of education provide the highest returns for women's empowerment in terms of employment opportunities (Govinda 2008). In addition, for women to be more competitive, they need secondary education and training in skills that are appropriate for the market place. Being literate or having only primary education is not enough to enhance productivity or obtain better-paying jobs. Secondary or higher levels of education are needed to improve options and outcomes for women as secondary and higher levels of education have the greatest payoff (ICRW 2005; UNIFEM 2004, Gupta and Malhotra 2006).

The level of education determines women's economic opportunity. The quality of jobs and wage returns women manage to get depends mainly on their level of education. The education level has a significant impact on women's opportunity more than it has for men.

A study (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005b) estimates that women receive only slightly higher returns to their investment in education (10.0 per cent) than men (9.0 per cent). Returns vary, however, by the level of education. Women experience higher returns to secondary education (18.0 per cent) than do men (14.0 per cent), but lower returns (13.0 per cent) to primary education than do men (20.0 per cent). Women have higher rates of return than men to post-secondary education (Boothby et al. 2002).

Another study (ICRW 2005) found that in India, the wage benefit for women with secondary education was double than for men. Lower returns to primary education for women in developing countries are actually a major policy concern. These results are consistent with results of studies in developed countries. The rate of return to university education is found to be higher for women than for men in most OECD
countries (Ono 2001). The benefit of a university education on hourly wages is more apparent for women (Leary et al. 2004) Thus, women's higher education is essential to reduce the gender pay gap.

Education quality is determinate for women's economic empowerment. It affects both economic participation and opportunity, directly and indirectly. Education quality indirectly affects women's economic participation and opportunity through affecting the likelihood of enrolment and the education level.

Empirical evidence suggests 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’ enrolment 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 (Lewis et al. 2008, Govinda 2008, Bergmann 1996, Abbas 2007).

On the other hand, access to high-quality education increases the likelihood of achieving higher levels of education. It influences earnings by affecting college choice behavior. High quality high schools increase the probability of college attendance, which generates a persistent wage gain relative to wages that an individual could expect to earn with no college (Task Force on Education 2005a, Strayer 2002).
In addition, education quality directly affects both women's economic participation and opportunity through affecting skills they acquire. Low quality primary education means students completing primary education may not be fully literate or able to contribute economically to the fullest of their potential. For instance, while access to education has climbed slowly in African countries, standardized tests show that many do not learn very much. The key lies in the quality of education provided. Thus, general or vocational training that is poor fails to liberate women economically (ICRW 2005, Rihani et al. 2006, UNICEF 2003).

Thus, education quality affects also women's labor market outcomes in terms of job quality and occupational segregation. Without quality education, chances of getting a decent job are low (ILO 2008b). In addition, variations in types of human capital are as important as variations in quantity to explain wage differentials (Pouliakas et al. 2008; Strayer 2002). Indirect discrimination against girls in education results in stereotyping them as less interested or capable in certain subjects. Besides, school quality affects a high school student's choice of college (ILO 2008b, Strayer 2002). College choice, in turn, affects post-school occupational status.

CONCLUSION

After reviewing all the studies it can be said that education is a critical path to achieving women's economic empowerment through the labor market. However, there is also recognition that education is an insufficient condition for women's empowerment. The impact of women's education is greater in settings that are already relatively egalitarian. Education alone may not be transformative in the absence of other normative shifts and changed power relations. In such settings, it
takes more than education to reach thresholds of change (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005b, UNFPA 2005, ILO 2008b). However, women's economic empowerment cannot be achieved without ensuring the access of girls to education, not only to basic education but also to higher levels of education and improving quality of education provided to them. These changes are necessary conditions for women's economic empowerment.
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