Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theoretical foundation of the work

Normative theories of social arrangements emphasized on the freedom, equality and justice in the social order in a society (Venkatanarayana, 2004). There are variations in the approach and conceptual framework among different schools of thought (Sen, 1992). Among these the most influential in twentieth century is John Rawls' "Theory of Justice". It proposes the universal access to what is called 'social primary goods' (like liberties, opportunities, self-respect etc.,) for all individuals in the society equally. One of the important primary good that has to be ensured to every citizen of the society is education (Bojer, 2004, Sen, 1999 and Nussbaum, 2000).

1.1.1 Relevance of Higher Education

Education has been identified as a decisive force in nation building as well as reconstruction of war-torn societies [Anderson, 1991; Bekalo et al, 2003]. More generally, it has been used as a tool for economic, political, social modernization, in particular by developing or transitional countries [Green, 1997; Buchert, 1998]. Education, in general, and higher education, in particular, is highlighted for social and occupational mobility, for elite formation and for intellectual and personal development [Chanana, 2000]. In addition to this, there are several arguments in the literature that justify the role of higher education in a society. Firstly, higher education is viewed as one that generates and transmits knowledge. Expansion of frontiers of knowledge is regarded as the most important function of education. Many societies assigned high value to knowledge for the sake of knowledge, as knowledge was considered wealth [Tilak, 2005; Schultz, 1961, 1972, 1988]. Secondly, higher education is viewed as an instrument of social engineering, socializing individuals to the values of the society – social, ethical, cultural and political, so that societies become more virtuous with more and more people who have had access to higher education [Durkheim, 1952]. Thirdly, the human capital theorist placed emphasis on the role of education in transformation of human beings into human capital,
and instrument of production and economic growth and thereby well being of the people and societies [Becker, 1985; Amsden, 1989; Wade, 1990; World Bank, 1993; Fine & Rose 2001]. Stiglitz (1998, 2003) reaffirmed the importance of education in economic development and argued that the acquisition of knowledge as the most important determinant of growth. Lastly, higher education is producing a wide variety and huge magnitude of externalities [Schultz, 1988; Romer, 1986, 1990; Lucas, 1988] and “technological” externalities [Behrman, 1990], which are necessary for technical progress and economic growth and to arrest diminishing marginal returns. The externalities include improvement in health, reduction in population growth, reduction in poverty, improvement in income distribution, reduction in crime, rapid adoption of new technologies, strengthening of democracy, ensuring of civil liberties, etc. Some of the benefits are inhibiting anti-social behavior and corruption, compliance with cultural norms, smooth functioning of the institutions and upholding the principles of democracy [Drèze and Sen 1996; McMahon 2004].

Higher education is of increasing strategic importance in the new environment of knowledge-based, information technology-based and globalizing economies [Pohjola, 2002; IGIDR 1999-2000]. After all, only those societies could reap gains of globalization that have strong and widespread higher education systems and vice versa [Bezborah, 2006; Bharadwaj, 2006]. Higher education enables an individual to envisage a higher goal through transition from one set of rankings to another set of rankings of priorities transcending a materialistic approach to human life (Majumdar, 2005). Hence, education is equally important man as well as women.

**Education and Women’s Empowerment**

Education is the backbone of social development. Education has a great role to play in decreasing social disparities and promoting social mobility. Women constitute almost the half of the total world population. They play a vital role in the development of society and economy. Education enables women to gain more knowledge about the world outside of her home, helps her to get status, positive self image, and self confidence. Education is about access to new knowledge, information and ideas as well as the capacity to use these
effectively (Kabeer, 2003). These are enhancements of the capabilities that individuals bring to their goals in many areas of life, aside from the labour market. Education is also about jobs. They explain some aspects of the correlation between women’s education and various human development outcomes.

It is evident that economic success everywhere is based on educational success. Education is a basic component of social cohesion and national identity. It leads to an improvement in the depth and quality of public opinion, as well as to more active participation of the marginalized in the democratic process. No society has ever liberated itself economically, politically, or socially without a sound base of educated women. Education has a direct impact on women empowerment as it creates in them awareness about their rights, their capabilities and the choices and opportunities available to them. Studies have indicated that there is a strong correlation between education of women and several developmental indicators such as increased economic productivity, improvement in health, delayed age at marriage, lower fertility, increased political participation, and effective investments in the next generation (Nithya, 2011). Educating girls is one of the best investments that a society can make. An educated woman has the skills, the self-confidence and the information she needs to become a better parent, worker and citizen.

Education also increases women’s capacity to deal with the world of health service providers. Findings from various studies show that a mother’s education directly relates to whether or not she will attend antenatal clinics, that births will be attended by trained medical personnel, that complete immunization of children will take place and that sick children will receive timely and effective medical care. This is particularly evident in poorer areas where proper health services are not available. In such contexts, education puts women at an advantage in processing and utilising new information and accessing available services when there is none or a lack of such services in closer locales. Education increases the likelihood that women will look after their own, as well as the family’s well-being. A study from rural Zimbabwe had examined the factors that affect the likelihood of women taking up contraception and antenatal care, both these measures having positive implications for the reduction of maternal mortality. The study found that education and paid work positively affected women’s use of contraception and antenatal
care. Women with low levels of education were less likely to seek prenatal care within the first trimester of their pregnancy and to continue to visit antenatal facilities throughout their pregnancy (Kabeer, 2003).

Educational attainment is, without doubt, the most fundamental prerequisite for empowering women in all spheres of society, for without education of comparable quality and content to that given to boys and men, and relevant to existing knowledge and real needs, women are unable to access well-paid, formal sector jobs, advance within them, participate in, and be represented in government and gain political influence. Moreover, the risk increases for society as a whole that the next generation of children will be similarly ill-prepared. As a broad body of empirical work has shown that education and literacy reduce mortality rates of children including the bias toward female child mortality and help reduce fertility rates. The concept of empowerment is related to gender equality but distinct from it. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny (Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender 2002; Kabeer 1999). This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). And for them to exercise agency, they must live without the fear of coercion and violence.

Education may have an impact on power relations within the home. In Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, educated women were found to have more leverage in bargaining within their families and husbands and a greater say in spending household income than uneducated women. In rural Bangladesh, educated women in rural areas were likely to participate in a wider range of decision-making than uneducated women (Kabeer, 2003).

Educated women also appear less likely to suffer from domestic violence. Studies of domestic violence in Bangladesh and India find that women with some education experience fewer beatings from their spouses (Jejeebhoy 1998; Bates, Schuler, and Islam 2004; Schuler 2006). A study from Calcutta in West Bengal notes that educated women
were better able to deal with violent husbands (Kabeer, 2003). Access to secondary stages of education may have an important contributory role in enhancing women's capacity to exercise control in their lives' through a combination of literacy and numeracy skills, and enhanced self-esteem. A similar finding was documented in rural Bangladesh. Research suggests that women put a great deal of emphasis on education for their daughters. This is to ensure that the daughters will be able to stand up to their husbands and have the resources to fall back on should they ever need to become independent.

Freedom and equality (ultimately, human capabilities (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000)) are the rights of every person. These are as necessary as fresh air. No doubt, women's development is a pre-requisite for all round development of the society. Education has always been considered as a powerful instrument for changing the subjugated position of women in society. Keeping this in view, considerable efforts have been made to provide special facilities for education of women. Unfortunately, even today, in most parts of the world, there exist gender biases that seriously disadvantage women.

Constitutional provisions in India, national and International policies were geared towards ensuring distributive justice, balanced regional growth and positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged sections, particularly women. Below I would like to mention here briefly socio legal framework for better understanding of women education.

1.1.2 Socio Legal Framework: Constitutional and Legislation on education of women

A. The Social Context

During 60 years after independence, the Women's question has received a lot of attention as reflected in the national policies, plans, programmes and schemes resulting in advancement of women in all fields. Besides, special committees and commissions on women have been set up from time to time resulting in policy changes and setting up of institutional structures for implementing programmes and schemes. The Constitution of
India not only ensures equality to women but empowers the State to take special measures for protecting and advancing their interests in all walks of life and making necessary legal provisions to this effect. The State has not only taken protective discrimination/affirmative action for removing the cumulative disadvantage of women but also has played a very pro-active role in organizing women for action. Further, India is a signatory to all principal international covenants and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the CEDAW (1979); the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). There are a vast array of welfare measures aimed at the poor, the backward, that is advantaged to include minorities, SC, ST, OBC, BPL families, among others. We need to identify factors that account for differential impact of common constitutional and legal provisions, common policies, programmes and schemes on women.

Indian women appear to have come a long way from an obscurantist past and complete subordination to a position where theoretically they are the equals to men and there is a vast array of laws, policies and programmes trying to contend with the cumulative disadvantage of women arising out of the predominant patriarchal family and kinship structures, customs, traditions and beliefs. Yet at the level of reality, the promise of equality and dignity remains an unfinished agenda. There are gains in educational participation but the gender gaps are substantial. Women have higher longevity now but tremendously high MMR and higher female infant and child mortality persists in most parts of the country. Millions of girls and women are missing between each census. The child sex ratio (females per thousand males) in the age group 0-6 years, has touched an all time low and the entire north western region has turned out to be a major killer of females- born and unborn. Crimes against women are on the increase with more and more laws but negligible enforcement. Women are making a mark in all fields among the middle classes and the elite. At the grass root level, the elected women’s representatives are coming into their own, slowly but surely, but the Parliament and the State legislatures remains a male bastion.
B. The Legal Framework

In post independence India, a large number of constitutional and legislative measures and many forward looking policies and programmes have been directed at integrating women in the mainstream of national development. The State guarantees equal opportunities to women and forbids discrimination in all matters relating to employment and appointment to any public office.

Under the protective discrimination clause, the State has passed several social and labour legislation and drawn up special programmes and schemes for the protection, welfare and development of women and children. There are laws to protect women and children from hazardous work; laws providing maternity benefits and child care services, and equal wages for work. Additionally, women have reserved quotas and seats in many educational and training institutions, development schemes, and local bodies and in government jobs.

The Constitutional Provisions

Fundamental Rights

Article 14 confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste and sex. Article 15 (3) makes a special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matters of public appointment for all. Article 21 provides for protection of life and personal liberty. Article 23 prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labour. Article 24 prohibits employment of children in factories etc. Article 51 (e) makes it a fundamental duty of all Indian citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional and sectional diversities, to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Article 21 A (The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002) makes education is now a fundamental right of all children of the age of 6-14 years. The added a new to direct the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in
such a manner as the state by law determines. A new Fundamental Duty Article 51 A (k) in part 4 makes it a duty of a parent or a guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as case may be, ward between the age of 6 & 14 years.

**Directive Principles of State Policy**

The Directive Principles of State Policy have been the guiding beacons for social policies and legislation. Article 39 (a) the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Article 39 (d) directs the State to ensure equal pay for equal work for men and women. Article 39 (e) states that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused. Article 39 (f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. Article 41 points to the right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. Article 42 enjoins to the State to ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. Article 44 directs a uniform civil code for the citizen. Article 45 (amended in 2002) give a directive to the State to provide early childhood care and education for all children till they attain the age of 6 years. In Article 47 the State is further committed to raising the nutritional levels of health and living standard for the people.

**International Policies and India’s Constitutional Provisions, Policies and Programmes for Women**

United Nations Human Rights Instruments

♦ Universal Declaration of Human Rights - adopted in 1948


♦ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - adopted in 1965 / entered into force in 1969, monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
∗ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – adopted in 1979 / entered into force in 1981, monitored by the Committee on CEDAW

∗ Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - adopted in 1984 / entered into force in 1987, monitored by Committee Against Torture (CAT)


UN Conferences on No Discrimination

∗ World Conference on Education for All (1990) Jomtien
∗ Second UN World Conference on Human Rights (1993) Vienna
∗ International Conference on Population and Development (1994) Cairo
∗ World Summit on Social Development (1995) Copenhagen
∗ Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) Beijing
∗ World Food Summit (1997) Rome
∗ Education for All Dakar Framework (2000) Dakar

Constitution of India Guarantees

∗ Equality before Law for Women (Article 14)

∗ The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them [Article 15 (I)]

∗ The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children Article 15 (3)]

∗ Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16)
♦ The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39 (a)]; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39 (d)]

♦ To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities [Article 39A]

♦ The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42)

♦ The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46)

♦ The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of Public Health (Article 47)

♦ To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51(A) (e)]

♦ Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat [Article 243 D (3)]

♦ Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the panchayats at each level to be reserved for women [Article 243 D (4)]

♦ Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a municipality [Article 243 T (3)]
Reservation of offices of chairpersons in municipalities for the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and women in such manner as the legislature of a State may by law provide [Article 243 T (4)]


Hence, the Constitution of India not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination policies in favour of women for removing the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them.

1.1.3 Women and the Five Year Plans

Following Indian policies, there has been a progressive increase in the plan outlays over the last six decades of planned development to meet the needs of women and children. The outlay of Rs. 4 crores in the First Plan (1951-56) has increased to Rs. 7,810.42 crores in the Ninth Five Year Plan, and Rs. 13,780 crores in the Tenth Five Year Plan. There has been a shift from “welfare” oriented approach in the First Five Year Plan to “development” and “empowerment” of women in the consecutive Five Year Plans.

Perspectives on Advancement of Women through Five Year Plans are given below for better understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Five Year Plan (1951-56)</th>
<th>It was mainly welfare oriented as far as women’s issues were concerned. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) undertook a number of welfare measures through the voluntary sector. The programmes for women were implemented through the National Extension Service Programmes through Community Development Blocks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)</td>
<td>Efforts were geared to organise “Mahila Mandals” (women’s groups) at grass-roots levels to ensure better implementation of welfare schemes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third, Fourth, Fifth and other Interim Plans (1961-74)</td>
<td>They accorded high priority to women’s education. Measures to improve maternal and child health services, and supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers were also introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Period</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)</td>
<td>This is regarded as a landmark in women's development. The Plan adopted a multidisciplinary approach with a three-pronged thrust on health, education and employment of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)</td>
<td>Development programmes for women were continued, with the objective of raising their economic and social status and bring them into the mainstream of national development. A very significant step therein was to identify and promote &quot;beneficiary-oriented programmes&quot; which extended direct benefits to women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)</td>
<td>It attempted to ensure that the benefits of development from Plan different sectors did not bypass women. Special programmes were implemented to complement the general development programmes. The flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment were monitored vigilantly. Women were enabled to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process with reservation in the membership of local bodies. This approach of the Eighth Plan marks a definite shift from 'development' to 'empowerment' of women.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) | The Ninth Five Year Plan envisaged:  
- Empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities as agents of socio-economic change and development.  
- Promoting and developing people's participatory institutions like Panchayati Raj institutions, cooperatives and self-help groups.  
- Strengthening efforts to build self-reliance.  
- The convergence of services from different sectors.  
- A women's component plan at the Central and State levels. |
| Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) | The Tenth Five Year Plan was formulated to ensure requisite access of women to information, resources and services, and advance gender equality goals. |

**Source:** India, Planning Commission. (2002); Different Five Year Plans. New Delhi

Advancement of Women through Five Year Plans in India took place in every respect. For example, enrolment of women in higher education has been increased in recent periods. The present status is described below.
1.1.4 Higher Education and Gender: Present Status in India

As an independent group, women constitute 48% of the total population of India. They not only constitute valuable human resource of the country but their development in the socio-economic arena sets pace for sustainable growth of the economy. To understand their current status in higher education, the present researcher examined the following key issues:

- Growth of Higher Education in India
- Student Enrolment in Higher education in India
- Status of Women in Higher Education
- Women and disciplinary choices
- Gross Enrolment in Higher Education and Inclusive Growth

These are explained below one by one.

- Growth of Higher Education in India

Since Independence Higher Education has grown steadily over the years. The growth is evident in the form of institutional growth as well as enrolment growth. The data relating to the growth of institutions and their intake capacity are presented in table 1.1.

**TABLE 1.1**

Institutions of Higher Education and their intake capacity (1950/51 to 2010/11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of University level Institutions</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Colleges</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>3227</td>
<td>4738</td>
<td>7345</td>
<td>11146</td>
<td>31324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Teachers (in thousands)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Students Enrolments (in millions)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UGC Report, 2010
From the data it may be observed that the number of university level institutions in India increased from a mere 28 in 1950-51 to 45 in 1960-61 to 93 in 1970-71 and rapidly increased to 123 in 1980-81. The growth of these institutions is found to be very rapid during the post liberalization period and the numbers of university level institutions are estimated at 611 in 2010-11.

With regard to the number of colleges also the growth is found to be steady during the first three decades and is found to explosive during the liberalization period. The total number of colleges increased from 578 in 1950-51 to 1,819 in 1960-61 and further to 3,227 in 1970-71. However, the growth of colleges is found to be explosive during the liberalization period and the total numbers of colleges are estimated at 31,324 in 2010-11. With regard to number of teachers also the same trend continued. The total number of teachers working in higher education institutional increased from 24,000 in 1950-51 to 244,000 in 1980-81 and further increased to 588,000 by 2010-11. The growth in terms number of students enrolled in higher education institutions is also found to be very rapid during the liberalization period. The total number of students enrolled in higher education institutions is found to be 0.1 million 1950-51 to 2.7 million in 1980-81 and further increased to 13.6 million by 2010-11. Thus, it is clear that higher education witnessed a rapid growth in terms of number of institutions, teachers and students enrolled during the liberalization period compared to the pre-liberalization period.

- **Student Enrolment in Higher education in India**

Data relating to the student enrolment in higher education in India are presented in Table 1.2

### TABLE-1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
<th>Increase over the preceding year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>1953700</td>
<td>160920</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>2426109</td>
<td>52568</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>2752437</td>
<td>103858</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>3605029</td>
<td>200933</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the data it may be observed that the total enrolment of students in higher education increased from 19.5 lakh in 1970-71 to 27.5 lakh in 1980-81, to 49.2 lakh in 1990-91, to about 84 lakh in 2000-01 and further to 146.4 lakh by 2009-10. The decadal growth of student enrolment in higher education was found to be fluctuating during the pre-reform period and achieved steady improvement during the post reform period except during the year 2000-01. The decadal growth of student enrolment was estimated as 9 percent in 1970-71, 3.9 percent in 1980-81, 7 percent in 1990-91, 4.3 percent 2000-01 and 6.1 percent by 2009-10. From this it may be concluded that the student enrolment in higher education though declined during the pre-liberalization period, increased continuously since 2000-01.

- **Status of Women in Higher Education**

Due to the efforts made by the government and the University Grants Commission over the years, women education in India has grown both in terms of number of women’s colleges and proportion of women enrolment in higher education. The data relating to a number of women colleges and women enrolments are presented in Table 1.3

**TABLE 1.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
<th>Women Enrolment</th>
<th>Percentage of women</th>
<th>No. of Women’s Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>396745</td>
<td>43126</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>1049864</td>
<td>170455</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>1792700</td>
<td>394594</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>2426109</td>
<td>595162</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>2752437</td>
<td>748525</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>3510697</td>
<td>1058612</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above data it is observed that the total number of women's colleges in India increased from 430 in 1970-71, to 609 in 1980-81, to 874 in 1990-91, to 1578 in 2000-01 and further increased to 2565 by 2009-10. Women enrolment as a proportion of total enrolment has witnessed a steady growth during the last four decades. The proportion of women enrolment in the total enrolment increased from 10.9 percent in 1950-51, 16.2 percent in 1960-61, to 22 percent in 1970-71, 27.2 percent in 1980-81, to 32.5 percent in 1990-91 to 39.36 percent in 2000-01 and further increased to 41.41 percent in 2009-10. From this it may be concluded that there has been a phenomenal growth in women enrolment in higher education particularly during the liberalization period in India.

- **Women and disciplinary choices**

Even after significant expansion in the post-independence period, access to higher education in India continues to be affected by the disciplinary choices.

**TABLE 1.4**

**Women Enrolment (Faculty Wise): 2010-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Percentage of women enrolment out of total women enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>45.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>19.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Commerce/Management</td>
<td>15.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engineering/Technology</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Veterinary Science</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MHRD Annual Report, 2010-11
It is evident from Table 1.4 that four out of ten students in higher education were in the faculty of arts, enrolled for courses in the humanities and social sciences including languages in 2010-11. Nearly two out of 10 students were in science courses. The ratio for commerce has decreased 15.91 per cent in 2010-11. On the whole, 84 per cent of total enrolment was in the three faculties namely, arts, science and humanities in 2010-11 while the remaining 16 per cent were in the professional courses. Enrolment in engineering and technology accounted for only 7.69 per cent of the total enrolment. In a country, which depends on agriculture and allied occupations, enrolment in agriculture was just 0.27 per cent and in veterinary science, it was a miniscule, 0.07 per cent (Table 1.4).

- **Gross Enrolment in Higher Education and Inclusive Growth**

Though Gross Enrolment in Higher Education has improved significantly during the post-reform period compared to the experiences of the developed as well as developing countries, India is far behind the other countries. According to Mid-Term appraisal of 11th Five Year Plan the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in India was still about half the world’s average Gross Enrolment Ratio (24 percent) and about two thirds that of the developing countries (18 percent) and much lower than that of developed nations (58 percent). Further, access to Higher Education was not uniform and equitable in spite of the consistent efforts of the Government of India. The Gross Enrolment Ratio among different social groups and between different regions was not found to be uniform. It is evident from the data of NSS 61st and 64th rounds with regards to Higher Education. The data relating to Enrolment and Enrolment Ratios are presented in table 1.5 and 1.6.
Table 1.5

Enrolment and gross enrolment ratio (18-23 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSS 61st round (2004-05)</th>
<th>NSS 64th round (2007-08)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>GER(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) General and Reserved Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>1898.51</td>
<td>8.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>5027.4</td>
<td>11.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7787.2</td>
<td>22.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15480.1</td>
<td>14.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) General and Minorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1308.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-muslim</td>
<td>14170.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15479.7</td>
<td>14.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source UGC report, 2011 (GOI)

Table 1.6

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Rural and Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSS 61th round(2005-06)</th>
<th>NSS 64th round(2007-08)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.42</td>
<td>16.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source UGC report, 2011 (GOI)

From the data it may be observed that the total enrolment in higher education has increased from 15.48 million in 2004-05 to 18.62 million in 2007-08. Similarly the Gross Enrolment Ratio also increased from 14.19 percent to 17.21 percent during the same period. However, the data reveals that there are significant variations in Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in terms of different social groups. While the Gross Enrolment Ratio among Scheduled Tribes decreased from 8.44 percent in 2004-05 to 7.67 percent in 2007-08, Gross Enrolment Ratio with respect to others category increased from 22.52 percent to 26.64 percent, that of OBC's increased from 11.48 percent to 14.72 percent and that of Scheduled Caste increased from 8.72 percent to 11.54 percent during the corresponding periods. It is also observed that there are significant differences in the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education with respect to Muslims and Non-Muslims.
The Gross Enrolment Ratio among Muslims increased from a mere 8.5 percent in 2004-05 to 9.51 percent in 2007-08, the Gross Enrolment Ratio among non-Muslims increased from 15.1 percent to 18.54 percent during the same period. Further, significant Rural-Urban divide is also found in terms Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in India. While the Gross Enrolment Ratio among rural students increased from 8.42 percent in 2004-05 to 11.06 percent in 2007-08, the Gross Enrolment Ratio among Urban students increased from 16.18 percent to 19.03 percent during the same period. From the above analysis, it may be concluded that there are significant differences in Gross Enrolment Ratio among different social groups as well as between the rural and urban areas. This calls for more vigorous measures to achieve more equitable and more inclusive growth in higher education in India.

1.1.5 Status of women in India

The root to inequality lies inherently within the society. It is imperative that gender discrimination in educational status is a multifaceted social phenomenon because the education system of a country does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender relations and cultural diversities as well as uneven economic development also deeply influence issues relating to access and equity in education. Our society has been characterized with deeply entrenched social inequalities between various social groups and castes since ancient times. Though India was widely acclaimed as a land of knowledge and wisdom during ancient times yet access to education was limited to select strata of the society(Prakash,2007). In many low-income societies, the lower value placed on education for girls and women, based on perceived outcomes and the roles of women in society, underscores the differential participation of men and women in higher education (Kwesiga, 2002). Gender has been identified, as a crucial category, which in addition to race, ethnicity, class and caste, deserves attention in the education-equality paradigm [Abu-Ghaida and Klasen, 2004; World Bank, 2001; UNESCO, 2003; Muller, 2005]. In order for new knowledge societies not to recreate and reinforce systematic social inequalities, some consideration of how
higher education is gendered is important. It should encompass the issue of disparities and inequalities that exist within different groups and even within the same sex.

Women, who constitute around fifty percent of the total population of the nation, face many types of inequality. Professor Amartya Sen (2001) pointed out many faces of gender inequality for which burden of hardship falls disproportionately on women. These are: 1. Mortality inequality (due to gender bias in health care and nutrition), 2. Natality inequality (due to sex selective abortion and female infanticide), 3. Basic facility inequality (due to education and skill development), 4. Special opportunity inequality (due to higher education and professional training), 5. Professional inequality (due to promotion), 6. Ownership inequality (due to land and property), 7. Household inequality (due to household activities). Right from birth and sometimes even before birth, differential treatment is meted out to the boy and girl and the girl child is rarely allowed to develop at par with her brother [Bardhan, 1974, 1984, 1988; Miller, 1981; Dreze and Sen, 1989; Coale, 1991]. Right from birth and sometimes even before birth, differential treatment is meted out to the boy and girl and the girl child is rarely allowed to develop at par with her brother [Bardhan, 1974, 1984, 1988; Miller, 1981; Dreze and Sen, 1989; Coale, 1991]. This imbibes in the women a feeling of dependency, lack of self-confidence and limited decision making capacity. Devoid of equal opportunities from birth, women despite having equal potentialities as men, very often, are not able to have an active life and remain confined to household activities, which are invisible in nature and does not merit for earning wages [Mohanty and Tripathy, 2005; Lakshmanasamy, 2006]. It is no wonder that contribution of women, who might be working longer hours than men is frequently not recognised and they occupy a lower status in society (Boserup, 1970; Bhave, 1985). In spite of the formal recognition of equality of opportunity, women suffer from considerable discrimination in higher education as well. A major hindrance to the higher women participation is the Indian sex role ideology directed by the traditional norm of patriarchy [Bhat, 1999]. Professor Amartya Sen (2001) in his inauguration lecture for the new Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University pointed out the, “Special opportunity inequality: Even when there is relatively little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities of higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional
training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world, in Europe and North America. But higher education should contribute much more effectively in abolishing gender inequality [Basu and Foster, 1998; Sharma, 2006]. The effects of gender inequality, which can impoverish the lives of men as well as women, can be more fully understood by taking detailed empirical note of specific forms of inequality that can be found in particular regions [Barker, 1993, 1998; Chottapadhyay and Daflo, 2001; Sen and Senguta, 1983; Sen and Kynch, 1983]. Women's access and participation in higher education is determined by several factors — socio-cultural, political-economic, ideological and legal perspectives. These extra educational factors play a detrimental role in their lives overriding the impact of education. But there may be some internal factors as well deep rooted in the psyche of the social system which are equally significant. One of these internal factors is gender stereotyping which is also responsible for the marginalisation of girls in education.

Indian students are nurtured in a society where the lower status of women is normative. Continual exposure to strongly differentiated gender roles is likely to shape student's beliefs about how well males and females perform across a variety of domains. Gender roles are defined by behaviors, but gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity (Brannon, 2004). Gender stereotypes are very influential; they affect conceptualizations of women and men and establish social categories for gender. These categories provide not only descriptions of how people think about women and men but also descriptions about what women and men should be, and even when beliefs vary from reality, the beliefs can be very powerful forces in judgments of self and others which means that gender stereotyping places limits on what traits and behaviors are allowed (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Therefore, the history, structure, and function of stereotypes are important topics in understanding the impact of gender on people's lives.

Gender stereotypes may have positive or negative effects. Negative gender stereotypes endorsement systematically robbed of women's confidence to think and learn without fear of failure; they are subsequently paralyzed by their own low self-image. It is said that women do three-fifths of the world's work, earn one-tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of the world's assets (Ramachandran, 2002). Women's work — especially
in the home and in a range of informal sector home based work – is invisible. As a result their contribution does not show up in national statistics. They are denied access to information and alienated from decision-making processes (The Hindu, 7 August 2011). Even when they relate to government schemes, they do so as passive recipients. Victimised by age-old beliefs that purport to address their health, education, and employment needs, they are forced to view their environment with fear and suspicion.

In the changing global scenario, importance of Higher Education in generation and dissemination of knowledge and promoting economic growth assumes special significance (Chakraborty, 2009). In fact, only those societies could reap gains of globalization that have strong and widespread higher education systems and vice versa (Bezborah, 2006; Bharadwaj, 2006; Tilak, 2005). In India, there has been rapid expansion of higher education system in terms of enrolment, number of institutions, growth rate, etc. since independence (Kapur and Mehta, 2004). The system has undergone a unique transformation from elitist to an egalitarian one (Power, 1997). Therefore, all sections of the population are expected to gain as a result of the expansion of the system. However, the disparities between the disadvantaged groups viz. Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) and non-disadvantaged groups (OTHERS) have continued at each educational transition stage (Breen and Vaid, 2008). Within these disadvantaged groups, women suffer an additional disadvantage (Chanana, 2000; Vaid, 2004; Ghose, 2008; Raju, 2010).

1.1.6 Policy Framework for Higher Education in India

After independence, India has accepted the democratic values and planned efforts are made for the social and economic development for all sections of the society (Kumar, Patel and Mehta, 1999).

It is necessary to recognize that the present approach towards higher education is governed by the “National policy on Education” of 1986 and Program of Action of 1992. The 1986 policy and Action Plan of 1992 was based on the two landmarks report namely ,the “University Education Commission” of 1948-49 (popularly known as
Radhakrishnan Commission, and the "Education Commission" of 1964-66, (popularly known as Kothari Commission Report). These two landmark reports in fact laid down the basic framework for the National policy for higher education in the country.

The University Education Report had set goals for development of higher education in the country. While articulating these goals Radakrishnan Commission on University Education, 1948-49 put it in following words:

"The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavor to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values."

Education Commission (1964-66), also observes and states,

"One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity enabling the backward and under privileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their conditions. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of talent must ensure equality of opportunities to all sections of the society."

The National Policy on higher education of 1986 translate this vision of Radhakrishnan and Kothari Commission in three important principles goals for higher education which include Greater Access, Equal access (or equity) and promotion of social Values. The central focus of National Policy on Education (1986) is, therefore,

"the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far."

Accordingly, efforts have been made to ensure greater access to the disadvantaged groups by making provisions for fee concessions, scholarships and reservation (Power, 1999), but, to what extent they have progressed is a question of worth investigating. One of the
major objectives of higher education is to develop an inbuilt mechanism for empowerment, the parameters of empowerment being a positive self-image, self-confidence, ability to think critically and equal participation in the development process (Rukmani, 1999). This ideal of “Equality of Opportunities” in the Indian Constitution and the idea of empowerment prompted us to undertake the present study. The present work aims to examine the extent to which the higher education system in a rural university has been successful to reach that goal.

1.2 Need for the study

The literature on the determinants of educational attainments has mainly focused on enrolment and primary education. Generally employing limited dependent regression models, studies have identified factors like family income or wealth, parental education, empowerment and education of mother, credit constraints, family size, caste affiliations, place of residence and educational infrastructure as determinants of enrolment and primary school completion rates (Akhtar, 1996; Deolalikar, 1997; Tansel, 1998; Brown & Park, 2002; Connelly & Zheng, 2003; Boissiere, 2004; Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). These studies have also found the presence of strong gender differences. In India, education of girls has historically lagged behind that of boys (Aggarwal, 1987; Agrawal & Aggarwal, 1994). In addition, studies have shown that certain communities and classes fare much worse than the others (Sundaram, 2007).

Unfortunately, gender disparities at higher levels of education have been limited studies in the Indian context. Vaid’s (2004) analysis of trends in gender discrimination across the schooling career of children finds that transition probabilities of girls increase, relative to that of boys, at higher levels of education. Chakraborty (2009) found household economic status; educational profile and gender of the household head, potential cost of schooling, family composition in terms of the number of children and distance are the important determinants of higher education and participation in certain subjects similar to a study of Chanana (2004). Ghosh (2007) considered that ‘perceptions of improved employment prospects’ are also important determinant for accessing higher education. Sundaram’s study (2007) of higher education focuses on disparities across social castes,
but ignores gender dimensions. Thorat (2006) observed gender differences in access to higher education. But probably to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study which has examined that gender stereotyping as an important determinant factor for accessing higher education. Overall, studies have tended to neglect the study of gender stereotyping at higher levels of education in Indian context. This lacuna acts as the motive for the present study.

1.3 Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to examine women’s access to higher education in relation to enrollment and subject choice in Vidyasagar University (West Bengal) with a view to understand the dynamics of gender stereotyping in our society.

More specifically, the main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the enrolment status of male & female students in the university during the period of 1990-2008.

2. To analyse the trend in the enrolment of post-graduate students in different streams of study across gender and social groups.

3. To examine the nature and extent of gender stereotyping among post-graduate students in relation to role in domestic, social and professional life as well as gender specificity personality traits and behaviours.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the nature and extent of women’s access to higher education in relation to enrollment and subject choices across gender?

2. What is the nature and extent of gender stereotyping in relation to domestic, social and professional arena as well as gender specific personality traits and behaviours among the post-graduate male and female students?
3. Do gender stereotyping, if any, has any impact on women’s access to higher education?

1.5 Operational Definitions of the terms used in the study

**Access:**

The first and foremost indicator (Chanana, 1993; Indiresan, 1995 and Kumar et al., 1995) of educational process is the students’ enrolment. Here, Access is viewed from Postgraduate students enrolments stated for the period under consideration. Access is measured here as % of enrolments, Growth index & Disparity index.

**Gender Stereotyping:**

Gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity (Brannon, 2004). Gender stereotypes provide not only descriptions of how people think about women and men but also descriptions about what women and men should be, and even when beliefs vary from reality (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). In this study gender stereotyping has been assessed following the model of Deaux & Lewis (1984) with the components of traits, behaviors, and occupations through in terms of responses of postgraduate students to four semi-structured interview schedules and one checklist on gender discrimination (NCTE, 2003).

1.6 Delimitations

The research work has been delimited to the following aspects---

**Time:** The work covers the period from 1990-2008

**Space:** The research work has been confined to one Rural University in West Bengal, named Vidyasagar University.

**Extent:** The sample includes the post-graduate students studying through regular system in the said university.