CHAPTER – II

RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As this chapter relates to the ‘Review of Related Literature’, it is important to note its major purpose which is to determine what has already been done that is connected to the topic under study. This knowledge not only avoids unintentional duplication, but it also provides the understanding and insights necessary to develop a logical framework into which the topic fits. In other words, the review tells what has been done and in so doing also suggests what needs to be done. Being familiar with previous researches also facilitates interpretation of the results of the study. Results can be discussed in terms of whether and how they agree with previous findings. If the results contradict previous findings, differences can be described. If consistent with other findings report would include suggestions for the next step, if not, then the need to include suggestions that might resolve the conflict.¹

The reviewed studies covered in this chapter are with the cited references relevant to the topic under investigation. They are organised into three parts:

1. Studies conducted at the international level

2. Studies conducted at the national level

3. Studies conducted at the local level

2.2 STUDIES CONDUCTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Ding Ling (1942) the well known writer who also worked as editor of the party’s propaganda magazine in Yenan, summed up the double standards of the party in an article she wrote for the Jiefang Ribao in 1942. According to Ding Ling, women were expected to take on new roles as workers and party activists and yet expected to fulfill their responsibilities as wives and mothers. The result was that women were faced with insurmountable problems and derided whatever they did. As she says: “They were damned for what they did and damned for what they didn’t”. She went on to say that male leaders should talk less of theory and more of practice. She ended by saying that “if the opinion she was putting forward was that of a male leader they would have been read with great seriousness but unfortunately, being a woman, her opinion would probably be dismissed”.2

Islam (1983) studied ‘Education as an Agent of Social Change’ in some villages in Bangladesh, found that there was a positive association between education and modernity. Males were more modern than females and high-income respondents were more modern than low-income ones. A negative association was found between education and superstition. Literates were less superstitious than illiterates and males were less superstitious than females. The non-agricultural literates were less superstitious than the agricultural literates. Also the high-income literates were less superstitious than the low-income literates. There was a positive association between education and a change in family and marriage affairs. Literates were more change-oriented than illiterates, income and change-orientedness were positively related. There was a positive

association between education and change in occupational affairs, in hierarchy and mobility in the villages under study. Literates were more change-oriented in this regard than illiterates. There was a positive association between education and participating in polity, civic and rural development. Literates were more participating than illiterates.³

Chowdhury (1986) studied the “Entry to Higher Education in Bangladesh-An Investigation into Students’ Characteristics” and found out that entry into higher education was independent of religion, birth order, age, mother’s education, nature of family, family size, siblings’ education, students’ residence and institutional adjustment for total sample, but it was associated with sex, and home location. Father’s education and occupation, socio-economic status and home environment were found to be associated with entrance into higher education.⁴

Malhotra (1992) studied the impact of education on Nicobarese tribal life and adjustment at the post-doctoral level. This study examined the impact of modern education on the social, cultural, economic, political and religious life of the community, including its family structure and organisation. The sample was drawn from 15 villages of Car Nicobar Island, which included both tribal and non-tribal teachers. The data, collected through questionnaire, interview, observation schedule, Likert’s Attitude Scale and case studies, showed that the spread of education has brought about changes in the traditional

occupations, in the cultural life, in Nicobarese language (dialect), and in their economy and political consciousness, and has also made them more receptive to new ideas.\(^5\)

Ranis (1995) wrote that when Korea was under the colonial rule of Japan between 1910 and 1945; educational spread was not very wide with the result that just about 15 percent of Koreans were fluent in Japanese, the language of instruction, in 1945. For the few girl students who had a chance to study in Japan during this period, the traditional gender roles were altered. In 1969, South Korea made nine years of education compulsory. The emphasis was on raising the educational standards of the whole population and not on the creation of an elite class. While the total enrolment rates rose rapidly between 1953 and 1965 in Korea, this was faster for women than men.\(^6\)

Safa (1995) studied the impact of paid labour on women’s status in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Cuba. According to Safa, increased importance of women’s contribution to the household economy in all the three countries enabled women to challenge the myth of the male breadwinner and male authority to a certain extent. Women have gained more negotiating power in the household than in the public spaces of the workplace and the state. Very often, while men accept the idea that their wives work, most of them do not share housework or childcare. In general, however, more egalitarian relationships in all three countries are found among stably married couples in which both members work and are better educated. Most women have come to consider paid employment as part of their domestic role, because they work for the household and


not for their own self-esteem or personal autonomy. Women are thus still clearly subordinated in the workplace and the polity, and their confinement to the home has been replaced by occupational segregation.  

In Sharma (1995), while speaking of German women, Bury says: “All of these to whatever class of society they belong are adepts in house-keeping, as besides the practical instruction their mothers insist on at home, there are admirable special classes in house-work connected with all schools. Well-frequented household economy schools have been established in Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Wurtenberg where girls and women receive instruction in cooking, preserving, washing, poultry, bee and small animal breeding, milking, hand-work, cloth-cutting, gymnastics and singing, botany and chemistry, hygiene and household book-keeping. Even at the theatres and concert it is a common sight to see German girls and women knitting stockings or doing crotchet work.”

Kabeer (1999) found that children of women loan holders with the SEDP (in Bangladesh- an organisation for promoting small enterprise) were more likely to be at school than children of male loan holders. In addition, women loan holders with the SEDP were more likely to send girls to school than were male loan holders. Kabeer’s analysis of responses by women loan holders of the SEDP reported that most women felt that violence had gone down as a result of women’s access to loans for a number of reasons; the easing of economic stress had reduced one of the causes of violence and the

---

fact that women were now seen to be sharing the responsibility for family provisioning with men rather than constituting part of male responsibility. Women also felt that they had greater bargaining power within the family and could (and did) withhold cooperation if husbands proved extremely abusive.\(^9\)

Cerruti (2000) in her study of married women’s employment in Buenos Aires and Mexico city, where she notes that the remarkable increase in female labour force participation is a result neither of improvements in the conditions of labour supply nor the diversification of the structure of occupational opportunities available for women. It is instead, a response to increasing unemployment and job instability associated with the implementation of structural adjustment policies. She also examines women’s labour force participation in Buenos Aires, Argentina, within the context of unemployment and job instability due to SAP (structural adjustment programmes) since 1991. The author observes that level of female education is positively linked to work participation. Women with children below five years are less likely to participate in work. Female heads show high participation. Stable/high income households do not show much female participation. Poorest households had to send more members out to work to sustain the same level of living.\(^10\)

In countries like Bangladesh, where women abide by seclusion practices, Salway, Rahman and Jesmin (2003) highlight the man’s right of veto over his wife’s economic activities which often meant that the man decided to send or withdraw female members


into or from the labour market as he saw fit. Further, women believed that female wage-work was associated with loss of status and honour and that they preferred not to work. Women’s employment is considered a sign of poverty, and upsets gender roles since it implies an inability of the male to fulfil the bread-winning responsibility. Though gender bound restrictions were challenged, the domination by men and social power structures continued to limit the opportunities of women for independence.  

Manchanda (2005) quoted that in Sri Lanka, two decades of civil war have resulted in cutbacks in health and educational sector as government spending on the military has jumped from 4 per cent in 1981 to 22 per cent in 1997. In the north and east, the school dropout rate is four times above the average (4%). Some 65,000 children do not attend school there. Meanwhile, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continues its policy of recruitment of child soldiers. The Human Rights Watch has pointed to the particular vulnerability of girls to re-recruitment because their short hair made them identifiable as former LTTE (November 2004).

Munshi (2006) wrote down what was quoted that in the hotel and catering industry in Britain, gender stereotyping and sex segregation at different levels of employment activity is evident: “Women work as counter and kitchen staff, domestic and cleaners, while men work as porters and stewards. Over fifty per cent of men employed in the industry are in a professional, managerial and supervisory occupation.” (Kinnaird et al.

---

A distinct gender division is reported by scholars in the form and extent of flexibility in working practices. It is more common for men to have jobs which involve “functional flexibility.” The “operative positions” of cooks, waiting and bar staff, kitchen hands, domestic staff and cleaners are overwhelmingly filled by women, majority of them as part-time employees. They do not have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills and experience to become functionally flexible as full time employees who are more likely to be males. (Urry 1990: 80).

Thakur (2006) took note of the earlier analysis that although the issue of reforming women’s position in society had begun to be debated as early as the 1850s, it was only under the reform currently reflected by Palace Mandarins like Kang Youwei by the 1880s that customs such as foot-binding and the demand for female education reached a peak. By the period of the May Fourth Movement, female participation in education, employment and civil society organisations were on the rise in all the major urban centres. Female education, in turn, received a fillip being linked to enhancing women’s skills for the growing domestic labour market. This period saw the rapid growth of women in the numerous textile mills and factories that dominated Shanghai and other urban cities.

Balatchandirane (2007) was found quoting that after World War I, the need to support a growing population compelled Japan, the adoption of advanced technologies. The changes in technology encouraged and promoted the employment of women. In the

---


14 Ibid. p. 4462.

modern economic growth period of Japan, “…technological innovation and the female employment rate generally move along parallel lines. In fact, when advanced technology was adopted, women often become the core labour force”. This would hardly have been the case if the educational attainments of Japanese women were low. Their contribution to the economic development of Japan was substantial.\textsuperscript{16}

In Balatchandirane (2007), it was quoted that while the participation rate in the paid labour force for Chinese women is one of the highest among the developing countries; the continuation rate of the girl students however drops as one move toward higher education. While social equity considerations would dictate the raising of the educational attainments of women in China there is a very practical and pressing need for it. While the illiterate mothers had an average of 4.7 births according to the 1990 census, mothers who had done primary education had 3.8 births, followed by those with secondary education who had 2.4 and those with tertiary education with 1.9. It is estimated that one additional of schooling leads to a fertility reduction of 3.8 percent. Thus, raising the educational levels of women is exceedingly important if the burgeoning population is to be kept in check.\textsuperscript{17}

Imaoka (2007) focused chiefly on women in ‘lands of extremities’, countries at war and regions stricken by natural disasters. Ordinary women are a major source of emotional strength in society - their smiles bring warmth and relief to those around them, and they possess a generous embrace of tolerance and love for their families and a will that is often stronger than that of men. “I began my first assignment when I visited Kosovo

\textsuperscript{16} As quoted in G. Balatchandirane: \textit{op.cit.}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 47.
following the end of the war there. Houses set on fire, massacre sites in the mountains, dolls with their heads torn off – I was often overwhelmed by the deep-rooted hatred underlying this conflict. The people who were most directly affected by the war did not weep endless tears, however. Those who had managed to regain a sense of stability welcomed home neighbours who had sought refuge in nearby nations and shared with them their joys. I witnessed a diversity of life in what was supposed to be a venue of tragedy, one in which many lives had been lost”.18

Lau (2007) wrote that in Tajikistan, one of the poorest of the fifteen former Soviet republics, crippling poverty has caused about twenty percent of girls to miss school. Massive unemployment has devastated the educated population to the point that many believe that education is pointless, especially when it comes to girls. Recognising the need for education as being socially and culturally relevant, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has worked hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Education and other non-governmental organisations to introduce skill-based education in fifty schools around the country. This plan encourages parents to send their daughters to school, as practical domestic skills and traditional arts and crafts are taught. In addition, the girls also learn reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as about HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict resolution and negotiation. Believing that elimination of gender bias in education is the first step towards empowering women, UNICEF has, since 1986, run a programme called ‘Education as a Preventive Strategy’, aimed at reducing child labour and promoting the value of education.19

Lau (2007) noted that honour crimes are acts of violence committed by family members – often male – against female family members who are thought to have brought dishonor upon the family. The mere perception that a woman has behaved in a specific way to ‘dishonour’ her family name is frequently deemed sufficient to trigger an attack. Jordan’s Queen Rania Al-abdullah, one of the most visible first ladies in the Arab world, is an outspoken critic of honour killings. She is a champion for women’s and children’s issues, refreshing in a region where such rights are not given. ‘The best advertisement for empowering women is an empowered woman,’ she says.20

Lau (2007) Women in Asia have long struggled for equal rights in the work force, in areas including job opportunities, living wages, work hours, occupational safety and employment and maternity benefits. As traditional caregivers in the home environment, their work in the form of household chores and domestic support is unvalued and often invisible. In the work sector, their labour is often unprotected and dispensable, especially during an economic crisis. In recent years, large private enterprises in Laos, including garment factories, have been set up with foreign owners or partners; the majority of employees are young women, many of whom work long hours under substandard conditions for very low wages.21

Mathai (2007) emphasised the need for formal education as it is the greatest tool to break barriers for without education in the modern world it is very difficult to make progress. She exhorted the need to encourage the girl child to go to school and to stay in school, to

20 Ibid., p. 47.
21 Ibid., p. 49.
acquire skills and knowledge. As more women are taking up professions, they also want to have families, and the two should not be contradictory.  

Internationally, women are most often concentrated in “feminised” professions; such as nursing and teaching, office work, care of the elderly and disabled – termed horizontal occupational segregation – where they tend to remain in lower job categories than men. Typically, because these functions are carried out by women, they are the lowest paid, in addition to offering limited or no opportunity for advancement (World Economic Forum -1971, based in Geneva Switzerland).

2.3 STUDIES CONDUCTED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Hossain’s (1905) Sultana’s Dream has been frequently anthologised and is now well known. First written in English, and then translated into Bengali, it is a feminist fantasy utopia in which women control the state and men are confined to the ‘mardana’. Rokeya and her sisters were prevented from learning Bengali and English so that they would not be contaminated by new ideas. But she was lucky to have a brother who taught her in secret and a husband who believed firmly that educating women was the cure for the ills of society.

Roy (1929) particularly emphasised the necessity for women to work outside the home, to be economically independent and not to regard marriage as a profession. He had realised that the economic bondage of women was ‘the root cause of the troubles of

Indian women’, and clearly perceived that superficial reforms would not serve the cause of their emancipation. He wanted to modernise Indian society by removing worn out customs, which were a fossilised remnants of the feudal age.\textsuperscript{25}

Gopal (1936) quoted that Nehru was rather suspicious of constant evocations of the past: “I must confess to you that I am intensely dissatisfied with the lot of the Indian women today. I have a feeling that these echoes from the past are raised chiefly to hide our present deficiencies and to prevent us from attacking the root cause of women’s degradation in India today”. He wanted women to be assertive and fight for their own rights. This emphasis on equality and independence led him into abandoning some of the existing conventions, regarding nominating a woman to the Congress Working Committee. Faced by the criticism of women’s organisations, he retorted sharply, that “it would be wrong to imagine that your rights will be given to you or that they will drop down from somewhere, if you simply sit at home”.\textsuperscript{26}

Ali (1940) asked, “When will men of India realise that it is of no use asking a third party to play fair when they themselves are willing to close their eyes to all the wrongs the women suffer and have mental reservations when freedom is proposed for womanhood? Sons of slave mothers will always remain slaves mentally, whatever their legal position in life.”\textsuperscript{27}


\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 159.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 161.
The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly observed “In the modern world; the role of women goes beyond the home and bringing up of children. In the struggle for freedom, women fought side by side with men. This equal partnership will have to continue in the fight against hunger, poverty, ignorance and ill health”.\(^{28}\)

Gounden (1965) attempted to estimate the rate of return to different levels of education and also to estimate the contribution of education to economic growth. According to this study, education accounted for around 27 per cent to 46 per cent of labour productivity as per different assumptions about the labour share in national income.\(^{29}\)

Sachchidananda (1965) dealt with the socio-economic aspects of tribal education, describing in detail the close nexus between tribal economy and education. He also discussed the influence of tradition on education. He stressed the importance of imparting the right type of education to step up socio-economic development in tribal areas.\(^{30}\)

Narullaha and Naik (1971) narrated about the traditional Indian society that it was characterised by a highly stratified caste structure, which renders an extremely complex, diverse institutionalised system of inequality. Access to formal education was exclusive and restricted to the upper castes. The education system conspicuously debarred women except in the case of those from higher castes, where some women could achieve ordinary levels of education leading to literacy. In such an arrangement, the family took

---


the responsibility of training women for the predominant roles of housewife and mother.\textsuperscript{31}

Indukumari (1976) found that the number of women who had undergone education beyond secondary school, who had entered or wished to enter into an occupation, or who wished to go for higher education to enter an occupation was found to form a very small proportion. The social-structural and institutional variables were all found to prevent Muslim women from obtaining higher education. Compulsory religious education and early marriage were seen to delay or prevent their entry into formal educational system and also to cause drop-outs. The vicious circle formed by lack of education confining women to roles within the home, which in turn lowered the educational aspiration of women as well as their interest in roles outside the home, was established by the study.\textsuperscript{32}

Lakhar (1976) traced ‘The Progress of Women’s Education in Assam from 1874 to 1970’ and the major findings were that separate schools for girls were opened after the advent of the British and the missionaries. The missionaries were the first to start schools for girls in Assam. As a result of the recommendations of the Despatch of 1854, schools for girls were given liberal grants-in-aid. Consequent to the raising of the marriage for girls, the development of girls’ education received an impetus. In the beginning, few girls attended schools. Teachers were given rewards for securing enrolment of girls. Fees were compulsory for girls in primary schools but in upper primary gradual increase in the rate of enrolment of girls in colleges led to the opening of high schools and colleges


for them. The percentage of girls, however, remained low in educational institutions.

According to the 1961 Census, the percentage of male literates was only 16 and that of females was much lower. In the earlier years, the curriculum for boys and girls was the same but after 1882; a separate curriculum and a separate examination for girls were introduced in Sylhet. Again from 1936, common curriculum and common examination were brought in. The removals of age-limit and the granting of liberal scholarships were further measures taken by the government to encourage girls’ education. The missionaries took a lead in the training of teachers. Training classes were opened at Nowgong and Silchar for vernacular teachers. High school teachers were deputed to Calcutta for training. In course of time, St. Mary’s College (Shillong) started B.T. and L.T. classes and the Gauhati University started the department of teacher training. For supervision, in 1908, the first Inspectress for girls’ schools was appointed, assisted by Assistant Inspectresses. The post of Inspectress was later abolished and the post of a Deputy Director of Public Instruction (Women) was created.33

Devi (1977) studied the ‘Education in Assam during Nineteenth Century’ which revealed that the educational system in Assam was in the formative stage during the nineteenth century. About eighty-five per cent of the population living in villages failed to accept the educational pattern as their own. Tradition and conservatism stood in the way of availing the educational opportunities offered. The progress of education, both at the primary and the secondary stages, was very slow.34

Tribhuvan (1977) in ‘A Study of Educated Scheduled Caste Women in an Urban Setting’ discovered that due to higher education, the scheduled caste women achieved a high status, which was unknown in their family and community. Ninety per cent of the respondents felt that education made them realise that they should change their way of life. A considerable percentage of the respondents expressed dislike for the traditional habits and customs. The respondents reported that education was helpful in reducing the caste barriers and therefore the scheduled caste women could easily adjust themselves to higher-class people. Thus, it was due to education that the scheduled caste members had been accepted at least in the urban society, at par with the members of the higher classes. With the opportunities for education, the scheduled caste women had emerged as a minority class struggling to secure new jobs that would enable them to raise their status. At first the educated scheduled caste women entered the world of employment as strangers or outsiders. However, it could be seen that the traditional outlook particularly toward the educated scheduled caste women taking up various jobs had undergone considerable change, and the attitudes of the higher-caste colleagues were found to be satisfactory. The educated scheduled caste women believed in having their marriage arranged with their consent. Although they did not seem to reject outright all the traditional customs, they followed them only to a limit. Due to the contact with the higher castes, the custom of dowry had been introduced among the educated scheduled caste people whom the educated scheduled caste women disapproved of. Because of education, the educated scheduled caste women felt that they had attained status in their families which was not at all recognised in the past.\footnote{U.D. Tribhuvan: “A Study of Educated Scheduled Caste Women in an Urban Setting”. \textit{Third Survey of Educational Research} (1978-1983), 1986, p. 234.}

Barua (1978) who studied ‘Married Women’s Education’ found that the range of educational qualifications among the married women varied from matriculations to M.Sc., M.A. and B.T. Some of them had added to their educational qualifications after marriage. In all 60 per cent of the women were willing to have further general education even though they were married and 16 per cent did not show willingness to learn. Most of the respondents were found to appreciate the usefulness of the present education system which seemed to exert sufficient impact on their cognitive growth. A majority of them pleaded for a few significant changes in girl’s education. Undergraduates showed a favourable attitude towards general higher education. In all 90 per cent of the respondents were mothers having school-going children. Some of them were acting as home-tutors of their own children. Women’s education had hardly made any significant impact on their day-to-day life, both social and economic.\(^{36}\)

Kumar (1978) concluded that although higher education was not relevant to the needs of tribal community, it helped to upgrade their economic, social and political status. There were some impediments to higher education among tribals, like illiteracy in the family, economic backwardness, inferiority complex which acted as barriers for expansion of higher education. In professional education, tribals dropped out and stagnated most in law courses. The majority of tribals in higher education belonged to literate families with comparatively high economic and social status in their community and had parents/guardians who had no political aspirations but had aspirations for good jobs after higher education.\(^{37}\)


Das (1979) studied the growth and development of women’s education at various levels in the state of Assam during the period 1947-71 and its impact on the social life of the State. The study revealed that Women’s education brought about positive changes in the economic, cultural, political and religious spheres of the social life in the State. A high positive relationship was observed between the expenditure on education, particularly higher education and the enrolment. Majority of the women studied male-oriented curriculum.\textsuperscript{38}

Gorimar (1980) found out and concluded that the novelists under study satirised the methods of imparting academic education. The main thrust of the criticism also supported by the government surveys was that schools did not prepare women for life; they only made them capable school teachers imparting the same dull, irrelevant information to their children. That was not the novelists’ expectation from women’s education. It was the way a woman applied her knowledge and intellectual skills to daily living that determined the value of her education. The approach of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to the education of women was relevant to women of the middle classes today as well as for all times because it made the greatest contribution to moral or value-oriented education as well as the education of the feelings. The education recommended by 19\textsuperscript{th} century novelists and thinkers also promoted self-awareness and self-assessment which would enable a woman to recognise her parenthood as a serious commitment to humanity.

while leaving her the choice of not being dependent of marriage alone for self-fulfillment.\textsuperscript{39}

According to Shankar (1980), despite a declining trend in the employment of women, there had been a remarkable rise in the number of working women in many white-collar jobs. The number of unemployed women was increasing. Women had poor occupational status due to various reasons; such as lack of adequate education, inadequate skill and vocational training. In developing countries, women’s employment was mainly in agriculture and allied activities, whereas in western developed countries it was in the modern sector. Women in Bihar in general, were socially backward, economically dependent, and politically less conscious than men. Education, a prerequisite for employment, required to be ensured for women at all levels. The major educational implication of the study is that education would bring about improvement in the status of working women and enable them to play the desired role in the gigantic task of nation building.\textsuperscript{40}

Vaikuntham (1980) investigated the development of education and the consequent changes in Andhra during 1880-1920. One of the important results of the spread of education was the upliftment of women. Women education got serious consideration of the government and the missionaries in the late nineteenth century. There was an upliftment of Harijans and depressed classes due to the growth of education. Harijans were being slowly assimilated into the mainstream of Hindu society. They began to


receive education and join public services and their status improved considerably during the period by the efforts of the missionaries, government and philanthropists who opened new schools and provided scholarships and better opportunities in life. People began to reject the traditional caste professions and join public services which were based on educational attainments. Education had an impact on the religious outlook of educated people as well.41

Honap (1981) found that family education influenced political values and attitudes more than political knowledge. Family discussions significantly influenced political knowledge and progressive values of the respondents. Participation in extra-curricular activities influenced political knowledge to a moderate extent and had positive influence on the progressive values of the respondents. Exposure to mass media developed political knowledge of the respondents. The Hindus were slightly less conservative and more progressive than the non-Hindus. They were also significantly higher on political knowledge. Brahmins and scheduled caste respondents were more liberal in their attitudes, but the latter was conservative about women’s education and reservation of seats. Brahmins were higher on political knowledge. Higher economic status had no influence on actual participation but was associated with democratic or liberal attitudes. The middle class respondents scored higher on political knowledge than the others.42

Lal (1981) studied the economic aspects of activism by studying the methods of financing university student elections. All these studies lead to the conclusion that

political activism is inevitable; therefore the institutes of higher learning should accept this. Rather these institutes should boldly accept their obligation to provide political socialisation to students and prepare future leaders for the nation.43

Modi (1981) discovered the status enjoyed by a person depended on his educational level. The study of education and landholding showed that the quantity of landholding had no relation with the socio-economic status of the person. Those who were illiterate in the general population thought that their status in the family was determined by the age, but their status in the caste and locality was determined by their economic condition. Those who were educated did not give importance to age but thought education to be determining the social status.44

Phadke and Shukla (1981) found that learning particularly higher education had linkages with jobs. Due to interaction with non-tribal students the thought process had started among tribal students who developed a sense of justice and propriety. College education had influenced the feeling of self-interest of tribal students and they attempted further their prospects by appearing at competitive examinations.45

Bose (1982) recommended participation of educated females in the labour force and their absorption in the work force should be increased. Because of the fact that students generally and female students particularly depended on their parents for information and advice about careers, it was desirable that parents be kept informed about the availability

45 C.L. Anand and P. Buch: op.cit., p. 158.
of jobs in different sectors. The content of higher education should be made more responsive to the world of work. The content and curriculum of higher education should be so revamped that recipients of such education might find their educational background relevant and adequate for their job requirements.\textsuperscript{46}

Shanta (1982) found that private investment on education was most profitable at the secondary level for women. Professional education yielded better returns than graduate and postgraduate levels. Higher education had not been able to develop adequately a commitment essential for desired social and economic changes though its performance was better with respect to orientation of women towards the desired changes. Education was, in general, a profitable investment for the women at the primary, secondary and vocational levels. With higher levels of education, the proportion of women favouring coeducation for girls and higher education for their daughters increased. Highly educated women favoured the reading of political literature, participation in political campaigns, becoming active members of parties and reservation of seats for women in the State legislature.\textsuperscript{47}

Bhattacharjee (1983) found out that parental illiteracy was one of the major factors which stood in the way of education in the state during the period 1930-1950. In the fifties, due to increasing interest of parents in education, the children of the period could avail of the opportunities for education. Parental education operated against wastage in the education. Parental occupational status determined the education of the children at all


periods during the years covered by the study. Parental economic status determined the level of education of their children. Parental illiteracy and ignorance, indifference to the need for education, economic hardships, the fact that the vast majority of the people were cultivators and inadequate educational facilities, were a few important factors which were detrimental to the educational growth of the state.48

Karlekar (1983) quoted the possibility of girls getting education is determined by factors such as when the girl is likely to get married whether she will be required to look after siblings; whether she is expected to help in household chores; the length of the course; and so on. Thus non-pedagogic considerations affect the goals of education for women. In a society where marriage is obligatory for a woman, a situation is created in which she will pursue her studies as long as her marriage is not settled. Srinivas mentions: “Colleges and universities provide respectable waiting places for girls who wish to get married”. 49

Nambissan (1983) examined the role of education in promoting the occupational mobility of the tribals in respect of the Bhils of Rajasthan. The author took care to take into account the nature and magnitude of inequality of educational opportunity between the tribal and the non-tribal community. Tribals with better economic status had easier access to a school. People who were exposed to outside influences through entering into

---

service had entered professions having higher status. Education became viable in respect of educational mobility only after completion of middle school.\textsuperscript{50}

Bhattacharya (1984) examines the nature and degree of mobility promoted by education over three generations in West Bengal. The sample consisted of 225 families, 21 educational institutions and 51 work organisations of four regions The significant finding was that education did not promote social mobility among the lower social strata and was somewhat evident in middle classes The system of education was stratified and it reinforced the prevailing social stratification.\textsuperscript{51}

Patel (1984) studied the ‘Development of Education among Tribal Women in Gujarat’ and some of the major findings of the study were: Up to the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century, the spread of education among tribals was insignificant and that too only at the primary level. A major spurt in the spread of tribal education in Gujarat came in the twenties due to the activities of a band of devoted social workers. After independence, there had been a rapid expansion of educational institutions and enrolment of tribal students at different levels of education. However, there had not been many special programmes to motivate tribal girls to take education. There was a trend of general increase in enrolment of tribal girls at all levels of education. A considerable amount of variation in the context of wastage and stagnation among tribal girls was marked with variations in development area and the types of school attended. Tribal parents’ indifferent and apathetic attitude

\textsuperscript{50} Quoted in Sachchidananda: \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 1419-1420.
towards education together with their poor economic conditions seemed to be the major causes for irregular attendance, absenteeism and dropping out from school.\textsuperscript{52}

Rajlaxmi (1984) in ‘A Study of the Social, Economic and Political Aspects of the Growth of Higher Education of Women in the Madras Presidency’ found that on examination of the economic background of women scholars, it revealed that in the beginning, only high officials’ daughters went in for higher education, but towards the end of the period petty officials’ daughters also started taking college education by availing of the educational concessions of the government. They were followed by daughters of the ‘land-holders’ but in the case of artisans and manual labourers, there was not much improvement. Professional education was popular among economically well-off sections of the society. An analysis of the education budgets revealed that expenditure on higher education of women in the all India education scheme was not an important segment but was so in the scheme of provincial government expenditure on education. The total cost per female student was found to be higher than that per male student both in arts as well as in professional colleges throughout the period. It was observed that towards the close of the period, higher education ceased to be the privilege of the advanced communities. Thanks to the efforts of the pioneers in the field of education and social reformers, girls from Muslims, depressed and socially backward communities were able to avail of opportunities of higher education. The educated women of the presidency were instrumental in getting various social legislations enacted at the central as well as provincial level to improve the status of the women. It was found

that, in the political history of Madras Presidency, lasting impressions were made by educated women.\textsuperscript{53}

Choudhury (1985) has been directly focused on the theme: Education is an important instrument of social change and modernisation. The study covered tribes belonging to different economic settings in North Bengal. The study showed that education had an effect on various aspects of tribal life to varying extents. Educated tribals had more modern attitudes towards occupation, family, marriage, religion and politics. The educated of all categories did not favour the joint family or participation in common endeavours but considered education as an important means of social improvement.\textsuperscript{54}

Sabnis, Mahurkar and Waghmare (1985) tried to find out whether social status of scheduled caste men and women had improved as a result of graduation and whether their attitude towards self had changed. The respondents were keen that the reservation backlog should be immediately filled and that a change should take place in the attitude of both upper castes and the scheduled castes themselves. Improvement in economic conditions helped them to raise their social status.\textsuperscript{55}

Norton and Glick (1986) find that mothers in one-parent families are becoming increasingly younger and the relatively high divorce rate among women who married at


\textsuperscript{54} Sachchidananda: op.cit., p. 1420.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 1422.
an early age. The women of younger age group are less experienced, have less job skills and face a lot of economic deprivation.\(^{56}\)

Panchamukhi (1986) quoted the World Development Report 1980: ‘Every individual is born with a collection of abilities and talents, education, in its many forms, have the potential to help fulfil and apply them.’ In this sense, education has a definite economic function to perform. It would raise the economic capabilities of the educands and hence the rewards from the use of these capabilities. Thus, if ‘properly’ phased, the policy of supply of education should be a potential redistributive agent to reduce the socio-economic inequalities in the country.\(^{57}\)

Santha (1986) perceived that men had a more positive attitude towards the role of women in the economic, political and social spheres than women. Women had a more positive attitude towards their role in the educational field than men. Women did not differ in their attitude irrespective of their age and attitude in the economic sphere. In the social sphere, women graduates had a more significantly positive attitude than women non-graduates. Women above 30 years had a higher positive attitude in the political sphere than women below 30 years. But education did not influence the attitude of women in the political sphere. In the educational sphere, age did not influence women’s attitudes but graduate women had a higher positive attitude than non-graduates. The implications of the study are that men do expect women to assist and to share the


\(^{57}\) P.R. Panchamukhi: *op.cit.*, p. 266.
responsibilities in as well as outside the home. Therefore there should not be any differentiation between girls and boys or men and women in receiving education.  

Desai and Raj (1987) narrated that though the liberal reformers recognised the value of education for girls, its content and the levels to which girls were educated was very much determined by their limited notion of women’s role in the family. They believed that in the gigantic task of transformation of society in which educated middle-class men were involved, women if given education, would not only appreciate the changes taking place in the society but would also collaborate in hastening the process of change. They never envisaged any change in the traditional wife/mother role of women. However, it goes to the credit of these social reformers that they were able to generate a climate of acceptance of the value of giving education to girls.  

Desai and Raj (1987) noted the demonstrative effect of education providing opportunities of better jobs create a feeling among poor people that, if education is given to girls, they will be able to improve their status. Maidservants, particularly, aspire for their daughters to have jobs other than domestic work. Unfortunately, the increasingly higher minimum educational requirements for any kind of employment leads to frustration, as many of the girls are unable to complete their education. It may also be mentioned that the objectives of education are different for different classes; they are also dependent upon levels of education.

---


Panchamukhi (1987) studied the employers’ responses conducted in labour-market situations, and metropolitan which revealed that employers do not assign much weightage to the degrees and certificates of the candidates who seek jobs in different concerns in these two employment markets. Different levels and categories of education are increasingly devalued, indicating that, for doing the same job, higher and higher levels of education are employed, implying a redundancy of higher levels of education for the purpose of the job. Also, unemployment among the educated is spreading far and wide, with a shift in the employment pattern from the primary to the secondary and tertiary sector. This in itself could be an indication of the limited usefulness of education so far as employment is concerned. Even where education is likely to have better nexus with employment, educational opportunities are not found to be adequate as is revealed from a micro study of the tea garden labourers of Assam (Dutta, 1985).

Panchamukhi (1987) discovered that apart from the economic advantages from education, the more important factors behind the desire to seek higher education were found to be non-economic in nature, such as attainment of knowledge, character building, eradication of social evils, etc. This indeed seems to redeem the country’s emphasis on higher education. In order to achieve socio-economic equality there ought to be properly graded ‘educational equality’. Obviously, in a country with extreme socio-economic inequalities, the policy of absolute educational equalities cannot lead to desirable results. In order to ensure that education is equitably distributed, it must be unequally distributed. This statement appears to be self-contradictory on the face of it. However socio-economic

---

equality and educational equality demand unequal treatment of unequals at the hand of education.\(^{62}\)

Patil (1988) found that education can help women progress, develop professional ability, skills and mental ability. Education also enables women to become responsible mothers and to rear their children in a scientific way. Education helps widows and divorced women in earning a livelihood and to develop social adjustment attitude among women. Certain expectations of the protagonists as regards the positive impact of education of women were upheld by a large majority of the respondents and included girls entering higher education in equal numbers as boys, girls developing professional abilities due to industrial education and participate more and more in cottage industries and small industries. Education is making widows and divorcees self-sufficient and giving women a high degree of self respect and respect for hard labour.\(^{63}\)

Rani (1988) discovered that postgraduate students-both male and female-had low political awareness. Their attitude towards democracy was unfavourable. Postgraduate students from rural areas were low in their political awareness as compared to their urban counterparts. The political awareness of postgraduate students was not related to their attitude towards democracy.\(^{64}\)


Tripathi (1988) discovered that the proportion of employment for educated persons in the total employment increased more than the increase for the proportion of employment for other than educated. The increase in the educated labour force has been so rapid due to expansion of higher education that employment for educated persons has not kept pace with the increasing supply of educated persons. Proportion of educated unemployment to the total unemployment has increased and the proportion of unemployed of other than educated has declined (1971-1981).65

Chanana (1989) observed inter-generational mobility in education among women from mere literacy or very little education for girls of the first generation to at least undergraduate degrees for the third generation girls. Attitudes to employment have changed but not radically and daughters are trained for a career only under certain circumstances. The small family norm has come to be accepted by the second generation, while in the first generation, the number of children depended on the economic factor. According to older respondents the position of the wife had moved from complete subservience to their having an upper hand over their husband. The second and third generation respondents, too, felt the change in the opposite direction although the husband-wife relationship was not one of complete equality. In fact, most did not perceive the need for it to be equal. They accepted the traditional dichotomy of roles into masculine and feminine. The decisions were taken at the familial level and not by individuals.66

---

Deka (1989) found the expansion of higher education in India had been phenomenal. Professional and technical institutions had increased slowly in Kamrup District due to the slow industrialisation of the State. As regards female education, it appeared that a large percentage of females were still attending co-educational institutions. From the examination results it appeared that the pass percentage of female candidates at college level was higher than that of males. In the development of higher education in the area under study, local authority and the government played a minimal role. In the rural areas higher education was not practicable. The haphazard growth of new colleges in rural areas created different problems in the society, mainly the problem of unemployment. The analysis revealed that the appalling standards of the colleges were mainly due to two factors, viz. poor quality of students admitted and the high student-teacher ratio.\(^{67}\)

Elangovan (1989) tried to study the problems faced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in pursuing their higher studies. He found that the factors related to teachers, parents, community, students and economic status, and also other factors come in the way of their academic career. The students did not perceive their teachers to be sympathetic to them at all. They also felt that communal clashes in colleges and hostels and late receipt of scholarships are some examples of the various constraints that they have to face.\(^{68}\)

Eusebius (1989) found that at the time of independence the entry of women in higher education was nominal in India. During the post-independence period, there was a sharp


\(^{68}\) Quoted in N. Shukla: *op. cit.*, p. 577.
rise in the number of intermediate and degree colleges for women. During the First Five Year Plan, Uttar Pradesh launched a vigorous drive to give a boost to higher education. There was a decided rise in girls’ enrolment in colleges and universities. During the Second Five Year Plan, prominence of higher education in rural areas was aimed at. Budget allocation for professional and vocational education in Uttar Pradesh received a boost. The Indian Education Commission (1964-1966) proposed stipends for girls belonging to rural and a deprived background. In spite of all the progress made, problems of dearth of trained teachers, poverty and social restriction continued to plague higher education amongst women in Uttar Pradesh, in this period.69

Jaiswal (1989) found that women scientists and engineers had better socio-economic background than men. Men even with lesser educational attainment and relatively inferior socio-economic background were placed at better occupational positions compared to that of women. Significant differences were found in the academic achievement of men and women. The inter-occupational mobility differed along sex. More men than women were fully satisfied with their working hours. High career commitment has been found more pronounced amongst men compared to women.70

Sobhavathamma (1989) found that married working women had a larger share of domestic work as compared to non-married working women. More employed women had a preference for a small family due to dual responsibilities, married working women expressed that they faced difficulties in meeting demands of both profession and family.

Clash of personal interests between the spouses had been experienced by a majority of
the respondents. It has been found that the attitude of women towards hitherto male-
dominated occupations has changed. More and more women respondents were found
taking up these occupations.\textsuperscript{71}

Ghosh (1990) said that attempts have been made after Independence to set up a suitable
system of education to respond to the changing social patterns and needs of the society.
Every significant change in society, either on the national or the international scene, may
demand some identification in the educational system has not yet been able to shake off
its colonial heritage completely. Illiteracy is the stumbling block in our political,
-economic and social progress. The educated girls in our society, in spite of being highly
educated, consider marriage as the most important event in their lives and all other
achievements are supplementaries for a good conjugal life. Educated girls are in favour
of freedom of choice and do not want to live absolutely under the dictates of their
husbands or in-laws. There is increasing appreciation for educating girls both in rural and
urban societies, but parents do not educate them for wage-earning for the family. The
majority of the respondents denied the fact that education was responsible for the
breakdown of joint families. All girls want their education to be utilised and to become
economically self-independent. Girls do not consider employment as a constraint to a
happy and healthy family life. An educated wife gets more respect and regard in
comparison to the uneducated one. Most of the married men favour educated spouses.
Our society has entered into an era of unprecedented social change and the educational

\textsuperscript{71} I. Sobhavathamma: “A Study of Educated Working Women in Chittoor District”. \textit{Fifth Survey of
system is also changing but the education in India is still passing through the stage of trial and error.\textsuperscript{72}

Kakati (1990) found that though husbands and parents were in favour of employment of their wives and daughters, still working women could not draw sympathy from family members in sharing of household activities. The difference between working and non-working women was found insignificant. In matters of decision-making power, role of employment was found significant. Working women as compared to non-working women were playing the role of decision makers to a greater extent. Employment of women influenced significantly their freedom of movement outside the home. Working women’s freedom of movement was found to be positively associated with their age, education, occupation and income.\textsuperscript{73}

Kantamma (1990) discovered that the higher the education of women, the greater was their participation in decision-making, inter-spouse communication and a progressive opinion on different issues.\textsuperscript{74}

Kaul (1990) found that the voluntary training agencies were playing a positive role because they were providing income generation opportunities to women. Women generally had very few vistas open to them where they could earn a decent livelihood. Thus these training agencies were providing earning opportunities to even those women


who were not qualified for professional jobs or had any formal training to take up various jobs.\footnote{Quoted in U. Nayar: “Education of Girls and Women”. \textit{Fifth Survey of Educational Research} (1988-1992), Vol. 2, 2000, p. 1710.}

Safa (1990) discovered that women are increasingly moving beyond home and neighbourhood into social and political movements. The organisations they form are recognised by governments, non-governmental organisations and churches and women are seeing themselves as having important roles.\footnote{Quoted in S.R. Bakshi: \textit{Empowerment of Women and Politics of Reservation}. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2002, p. 21.}

Eagly and Karan (1991) narrated that in situations of leadership, women avoid appearing more decisive or more knowledgeable than others. Studies of leadership reveal that women are much more likely to become social leaders, responsible for maintaining and supporting good relationships in the group by expressing by agreement and showing solidarity, rather than task leaders responsible for getting others to complete the task.\footnote{Quoted in R.J. Pendanam: \textit{Liberating The Feminine: An Overview of Psychology of the Feminine in Women, Men and Nature}. Delhi: Media House, 2007, pp. 51 and 92.}

Mahesh (1991) noticed the level of political participation was very low among rural women, irrespective of marital status, religion, caste and occupation. Political participation was high in nuclear families than in joint families. The higher the educational level of rural women, the higher was the level of their political participation. Around 89\% respondents had lower level of obligatory and spectator political
participation and all of them had very low level of voting and campaigning participation.  

Mutalik (1991) observed that education had significant correlation with the acquisition of social awareness. Education and level of social awareness was low among low caste groups. Highly educated women belonging to high economic status had higher level of social awareness but readiness for action is absent in them, meaning thereby it was necessary to motivate these women for action.

Nayar (1991a) discovered that gender stereotyping of vocational, technical and professional courses continues both within the formal and non-formal sectors of education and training. Gender stereotypes are harder to break for men. Vocational, technical and professional educations of women appear to have advanced relatively faster in the major industrial states of India. All vocational, technical and professional institutions and training is urban located, urban led and excludes rural girls and women completely. Low participation of women in formal and non-formal training needs more in-depth work. Gender sensitisation of planners and curriculum developers can yield positive results in breaking stereotypes and getting girls and women to enter non traditional vocations. Career guidance and counselling are needed not only for girls, but also for the teachers and parents as well. Besides expanding educational facilities, quality teaching of science and mathematics to girls needs to be improved as many get discouraged and give up these subjects as soon as they can. Some states continue to

---


make the mistake of allowing girls to take home science or domestic accounts as in-lieu subjects. School textbooks should be screened for poor presentation of women in domestic roles only and alternately present women in a wide range of occupations including some very offbeat ones.  

Banda (1992) found that the traditional roles of women have changed considerably but constitutional guarantee of equality between sexes and changed roles do not find adequate reflection in the textbooks. There is inclusion of some positive aspects of the status of women in respect of self-reliance, mutual cooperation, understanding, women as a source of inspiration, as a symbol of love and sacrifice. On the other hand, the respondents found the textbooks were male-oriented, contained derogatory remarks against women showing them as dependent and perpetuating false beliefs and sex stereotypes, carried illustrations diminishing the status of women and that the authors and illustrators (artists) were primarily male. The study strongly endorsed the inclusion of equality of sexes as one of the ten core values in the National Curricular Framework (NCERT) in response to the call for removal of gender disparities and making education a vehicle of women’s equality and empowerment in the National Policy on Education 1986. The study recommended rewriting of textbooks to reflect the considerable progress and contribution of women to the socio-economic and educational fields and making schools the agents through which positive attitudinal changes towards women can be brought about.  

---

59
Debi (1992) viewed that a private demand for education of women was not a positive function of the family’s per capita income. Educated women contributed more in improving the family’s socio-economic status than educated men. Education of the female members depended upon the level of education of the parents. The cost of education of women in all categories of population was lower than the cost for male education. The rates of return on education tended to decline for the high and higher levels of education. The private rates of return were higher than the social rates of return. Despite lower educational levels of female members and despite the high contribution of female education to the socio-economic status of the household and the entire region, female education continues to be neglected even in the richer families. This suggested that for improving the educational scene and the educational status of women, social barriers needed to be overcome.\textsuperscript{82}

Mujoo (1992) found that the middle classes were increasingly participating in higher education to maintain the tradition of educational attainments in their families. All mobility that had occurred was only towards non-manual occupations. All the families were increasingly shifting to government services from all other occupations. Outflow tables of income mobility indicated an upward mobility and sometimes also immobility and a little downward mobility. Provision of free higher education did not necessarily lead to social and economic mobility of the weaker sections.\textsuperscript{83}


Rajalakshmi (1993) has shown how education of women could bring about changes in the society engineered by the educated women themselves. Similar regional studies on the model provided by Rajalakshmi should be undertaken to fill in the gap.84

The State of World Population Report (1994) states very clearly: “Empowering women means extending choices; choice about if and when to get married, choice about education, employment opportunities, controlling the social and physical environment; choice about if and when to get pregnant and ultimately about family size. Empowerment requires that husbands, partners, family members and communities help to promote a healthy environment free from coercion, violence or abuse, in which women are free to use community services on a basis of equality” .85

Joseph (1995) argued that one-third of the total seats of the Panchayats at all levels are reserved for women and one-third of the elected offices of chairpersons at all levels are also reserved for women. The women and the people belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes were always a neglected class who seldom has had chances of holding many positions of power. Now for the first time, key offices of the Panchayati Raj institutions have been reserved for them. This is a provision for empowering the weaker sections of the society. But illiteracy rate is the highest among the women and the people belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes. Unless illiteracy is eradicated, the empowerment of

---

the people envisaged by the formation of the Panchayati Raj institutions will remain just a dream.\textsuperscript{86}

Paul Schultz (1995) reported a strong association between economic growth and investment in women’s human capital. Of the several dimensions of the development of women, education has been one of the most important. Education is regarded as a crucial step in emancipating women and preparing them for an effective role in social, economic, political and public life.\textsuperscript{87}

Pillai (1995) expressed that more and more women are now actively participating in the political process but only a few women hold elected positions, fewer still are so placed as to be able to influence in political thinking. There is greater awareness among women of the power that the right of franchise has given to them, but the extent of awareness varies significantly between different groups and different religions. The levels of literacy and urbanisation have an impact on the awareness, but the political parties have generally been indifferent towards women and treating them more as appendices to men.\textsuperscript{88}

Pillai (1995) reported that women are more adjusting, sensitive, compliant and this could be an asset in the new concept of participative management, feel many women managers. As women are good at communication, the degree of confrontation is much lower, making them easy to work with. Thadani, Director NIIT feels that discrimination against women particularly at senior levels is disappearing and if a person is sincere,

\textsuperscript{88}J.K. Pillai: \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
hardworking, earnest and willing to learn, then gender is irrelevant. Thus, in today’s corporate world, professionalism is replacing gender as a criterion for employment and women can look forward to a brighter future in management positions.\textsuperscript{89}

Pillai (1995) expressed that the main force behind women’s studies is the movement to assert the interests of women as a sex. It does not mean women wanting to be men or women wanting to dominate men but it is a demand to restore to half of humanity its rightful place in society, to restore to women their humanity. Most of the studies from most of the countries on women professionals, in general, report that the aspiration level of women is not very high and that is the reason why most women end up at middle level leadership and hardly 1\% rise to the top. Women are quite satisfied with their achievements even if they do not rise to the top. They have anxiety and fear of success and hence try to avoid success. They are not too much concerned about salary or promotion and are more interested with the atmosphere of the work place and personal relationships.\textsuperscript{90}

Pillai (1995) suggested that women themselves must make a commitment to their own advancement. They must have the appropriate credentials; understand the organisational structures and political processes of the institution. They should develop their own networks – organisation based, personal as well as professional. To facilitate learning the rules of the game, they should have inner circle support by way of a mentor, man or woman.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., pp. 161-162.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., pp. 82 and 113
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p.92.
Pillai (1995) emphasised that in traditional Indian societies, women were economically and socially dependent on their fathers till marriage, on the husbands after marriage and on the sons later. They were mostly confined to household affairs and they were not allowed to participate in the political and economic affairs of the society. But with independence and attempts at modernisation, sex bias and discrimination have been done away with, and the concept of equality of the two sexes have been widely propagated and honoured.92

Pillai (1995) felt that women also need to learn to cope with stress, combine and organise family responsibilities with office work effectively, to relax as well as be efficient. A good manager has to win friends and influence people. It is not enough to do a good job but a woman has to outperform others, make her success known, try and act as some one with management potential, convey such attributes as smartness, positive and confidential manner, achieve credibility as efficient, reliable, sensible and practical, develop resilience to criticism and be willing to take risks.93

Pillai (1995) commented that governments may offer several welfare schemes for women like: float anti-poverty programmes, launch projects for their upliftment and enact legislation to safeguard women’s rights. The Government policies can only facilitate the process, reduce the hurdles and create an atmosphere conducive to transformation. But it is the women who have to empower themselves. Unless they

92 Ibid., p. 99.
93 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
themselves become conscious of their oppression, show initiative and seize the opportunities, it would not be possible to change their status.94

Pillai (1995) felt that more and more linkages are being developed between education and work. There is a great need to create labour force which would be capable of work in the growing complexity of technological application; proper attitudes and skills for employability have to be developed among the youth; there is a shift in proportion of women leaving the home and entering the work force.95

Sharma (1995) emphasised that every woman shall have a right to leisure. With the exception of a very few women who belong to the upper rich in this country, the Indian woman does not enjoy much leisure. Her life is that of a long drudgery. What with cooking, washing, grinding corn, drawing water and looking after the children, she has hardly time to spare for other things. This is neither good for her health nor for her development, as she hardly finds time to improve her mind. She has no time for cultural pursuits with the results that her life becomes drab and the home of which she is the centre is without joy. A person without leisure is virtually a slave. It is by regulating the home life, providing amenities of life and providing labour-saving devices that we can solve this problem to a large extent. Organising crèches and infant schools is also a way to help the women in looking after their children.96

94 Ibid., p. 62.
95 Ibid., p. 67.
96 S.R. Sharma: op. cit., p. 43
Sharma (1995) asserted that the woman shall have a right to limit her family. It is the woman who has to shoulder the responsibility of bearing children, looking after them and bringing them up in a civilised way. The right to decide the size of the family should therefore belong to her. The woman should be conscious of this right which she must learn to exercise for her own good, for the good of the family and for the good of the country.\textsuperscript{97}

Sharma (1995) affirmed that Indians believe in the divinity of motherhood and wife is considered not as a tool or an ornament in the household, but as a real companion and minister of the husband. The influence of a cultured wife over her husband is simply indescribable. Wife is not the slave of a husband. She can elevate and ennable her husband’s life. In case the wife is a woman of high principles and lofty purpose, then man would find in her a great source of help for carrying him through all the difficulties of earning livelihood and facing this world with all the temptations.\textsuperscript{98}

Sharma (1995) envisaged that in this new age it is not possible to confine women exclusively to their homes and families. Education is making great strides everyday. Women are now given franchise and they are sure to take active part in many social, political and industrial activities in the world which is a fulfilment of the aspirations developed in the home.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 46.  
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., pp. 48, 52 and 53.  
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p. 62.
Jackson (1996, 1998) argued that gender and poverty are distinct forms of disadvantages, which should not be collapsed into the notions of ‘feminisation of poverty’ or ‘women are the poorest of the poor’. These notions overlook the gender mediation of poverty and also women’s subordination which is not necessarily only linked to poverty. Development programmes, which subscribe to this perspective have exclusively focused on reducing poverty among women, with the assumption that reducing poverty would automatically take care of gender issues. Women’s participation in micro-credit programmes as a poverty reduction strategy is often encouraged with an instrumentality to achieve smaller families, improve contraceptive use and child survival.¹⁰⁰

According to Krishnaraj (1996) in mainstreaming gender concerns, there is an exclusive focus on women as agents of change. We should also be addressing men and masculinity because gender issues are not only women’s problems and femininity does not exist in isolation from masculinity. The image and power of one determines the image and power of the other. Such false polarity is perpetuated despite evidence that personality traits lie in a continuum – men and women both partake of characteristics in varying degrees according to one’s own personal history. Masculinity is associated with control and aggression. Women are taking sole responsibility to confront violence against women. It is time men joined the struggle to eliminate this violence.¹⁰¹

Clara (1997) showed that the return to education of males was higher than that of females, for all types of graduates. This is somewhat an interesting finding especially in

the context of an educationally developed state like Kerala. This might raise a question such as: is there over investment in women’s education in Kerala causing lower rates of return on investment in their education? 102

Oxaal (1997) mentioned that as education invests the woman with an increased income earning potential, it acts as a key input of poverty reduction. In fact education has been found to be the best means of poverty reduction. This coupled with the fact of the ‘feminisation of poverty’ only points to the crucial role that education plays in the elimination of low economic status of women. Investing in women’s education is the best poverty counter measure.103

Paranjpe, Sandhya (1997) noted that women are considered to be the custodians of family honour and integrity. Hence, the family controls female sexuality by restricting women’s mobility and their visibility in the public arena inclusive of the field of education. This placed severe constraints on the schooling of girls. Formal education requires girls and women to move into public domain and interact with men and often engage in activities that are not under the close supervision of the family. The stated goals of education also emphasise preparing girls to perform roles other than those of mother and wife. These conflicting expectations enable the education system to function in a de facto manner such that while it appears to promote women’s education, the content of the educational process and more importantly the transaction reflects the expectation of the more powerful systems such as family and caste.104

102 Quoted in P.R. Panchamukhi: op. cit., p.342.
103 Quoted in J.B.G. Tilak: op.cit., p. 40.
104 Quoted in B.K. Anitha: op.cit., p. 220.
Sharma (1997) quoted: “Higher education can help nations to achieve higher quality of life; the role of higher education in national policy, particularly regarding planning for future; the analysis of the gap between the policy (government and institutional) and practice. Likewise, analysis of extra-national forces that influence the developments of higher education becomes important”. 105

Kapoor (1999) found that education gives women the means to move from traditional thinking and adopt attitudes and approaches which are more egalitarian in nature. But this cannot be achieved through education alone. The social background enabling factors in conjunction with education constitute a critical amalgamation which fosters egalitarian. The type and level of education an individual or girl receives, does not depend only upon merit. The inherited advantage of each individual influences his or her pattern of upbringing, work aspirations access to a particular type of education and ultimately the position he/she is able to secure in the world of work. The parents’ educational occupational standing is crucial in influencing and motivating an individual particularly a girl to be educated and the level of education which she could aspire to reach. Parents who have received quality education and now occupy prestigious position in the occupational hierarchy are in a position to appreciate the intrinsic worth of education and therefore encourage their children to pursue it. 106

Sen et al. (1999) emphasised that the educated woman has realised she cannot remain confined to the four walls of her home if she has to play her multi faceted role. She

realises she is in level with man, his equal and not his subordinate. In fact the Indian woman is moving towards an ideal balance of traditional and progressive values. More and more women are taking advantage of higher education. It is now being increasingly realised that education is the major instrument which societies can use to direct the process of change and development towards desired goals. It provides for vertical mobility and can thereby help to equalise status between individuals coming from different social strata. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights regards education as one of the basic rights of every human being. The movement for improving women’s status all over the world has always emphasised education as the most significant instrument for changing women’s subjugated position in society, the better a woman’s education, the greater the availability of social opportunities.\(^{107}\)

Sen et al. (1999) asserted that as women have increasingly become employed outside the home, they have begun to share the duties and responsibilities of the traditional male provider role. However, men have not adopted the duties and responsibilities of women’s traditional family work to the same degree as women have been sharing the provider role.\(^{108}\)

Sen et al. (1999) discovered that due to so many constraints, many working women are less available to perform their traditional activities including child care, care of other dependants such as elderly parents, the provision of social support and many other family obligations like attending guests, paying courtesy visit to relatives’ houses,

\(^{107}\) A. Sen et al.: op. cit., p. 129.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., p. 188.
attending wedding/birthday parties etc. Although most of these are viewed as family-related activities, yet they are much less important for the professional women.\textsuperscript{109}

Sen et al. (1999) expressed that the concept of equality thus had to be widened to cover a whole range of inequalities in such a way that the space for feminine assertion which any one structure contained, would be preserved, while inequalities would be removed. At the same time, demands for equality with men grew slightly less important than before, as more and more demands for the right to control over one’s own life began to be made. Economic independence began to be seen as a partial means to this end, which had to be complemented by a series of rights in other spheres, among which, one of the most important was the woman’s right to control over her own body. The late twentieth century feminists asserted that a woman’s body must not be treated as the subject of social control. Putting it in another way, the focus of campaigns for an improvement in women’s lives has changed from needs to rights and within this from the restricted right to parity in selected areas to the larger right of self-determination.\textsuperscript{110}

Sen et al. (1999) narrated how women sacrifice all their happiness and comforts for the sake of families, especially their children. These working women are handicapped to such an extend, they do everything for others and nothing for themselves. They do not have any pocket money for themselves even to meet some of their personal needs. A working wife has to remain tight lipped; she is even scared of correcting her husband

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pp. 146-147.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 17.
because she may be misunderstood anytime for opposing her husband’s desires and wishes due to her economic independence.\textsuperscript{111}

Sen et al. (1999) feels that the emergence of women in the economic scene as entrepreneurs is a significant development in the emancipation of women and for securing for them a place in society. They can contribute to the economic productivity of the nation as well as serve the society at large by opening new vistas for the educated unemployed youth, needy women and handicapped people. The association of women with economic enterprises should also usher in an era of clean business ethics.\textsuperscript{112}

Sen, et al. (1999) emphasised that educating women will not only enable them to get better jobs and even be economically self-sufficient or independent, but the whole society will gain. They will get married in late age; plan small families; rear, nurture and educate their children. Women’s education must be practical and well-adapted to their needs especially in relation to health, nutrition and legal rights.\textsuperscript{113}

Sen, et al. (1999) reminded the fact that the Constitution of India and the legal codes bestowed upon women the privilege of equal rights with men, the same facilities of education, the same opportunities of profession and employment. But the bulk of Indian women are deprived of this boon of raised status, mainly because majority of them are devoid of education, even the elements of literacy. Although education is regarded both as an end in itself and as a means of achieving an end, education has always been

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 198.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 31.
emphasised as the most significant instrument for improving the status of women in society. Women need to understand that education is the most powerful weapon to come out of superstition, social evils, outdated customs, narrow vision and wrong notions.\textsuperscript{114}

Madheswaran and Shroff (2000) showed that there was a significant earnings differential between the two sexes of scientific and technical personnel with equal qualification in the private sector. They observed that the differences were not due to labour market alone but due to the existence of a pre-market discrimination practice in the household resources with respect to education, health and nutrition between the two sexes. The socio-economic status of the households also influences the entry of students into a particular branch of education. For example, Kumar et al., (1997) observed that in Kerala, children who were not able to take admission in regular courses got admission in self-financing courses. They observed that social background mattered less in taking admission into these courses. The students mostly from middle income households pursued professional education courses in Kerala.\textsuperscript{115}

Agrawal et al. (2001) assessed that an increase in the female literacy and educational level will have wide, positive effects on combating exploitative practices manifest in spheres like marketing labour, as also enhancing professional capabilities in day-to-day economic chores like collection of minor forest produce as also population control, morbidity, health care, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., pp. 28-29.
\textsuperscript{115} P.R. Panchamukhi: op.cit., p. 345.
\textsuperscript{116} S.P. Agrawal et al.: op.cit., p. 94.
Agrawal et al. (2001) stressed that with greater access to education, employment and contraception, many women are choosing to marry later and have fewer children. Those who wait to marry and begin child-bearing have better access to education and greater opportunities to improve their lives. Women’s increased accesses to education, to employment and to contraception, coupled with declining rates of infant mortality, have contributed to the worldwide decline in fertility.\(^{117}\)

Agrawal et al. (2001) realised that real development cannot take roots if it bypasses women, who not only represent nearly half of the country’s total population but also represent the very kernel around which societal re-orientation must take place. The Government has directed all its efforts towards removing various gender-biases and thus guarantee women equal status in the real sense as is enshrined in the Constitution of India.\(^{118}\)

Agrawal et al. (2001) quoted that non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Creation of an educational and social environment, in which women and men, girls and boys are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential, respecting their freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and where educational resources promote non-stereotyped images of women and men, would be effective in the elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men.\(^{119}\)

Kumar (2001) examined the relation of gender and stratification in Science, it attempted to offer empirical evidence of gender inequities in the academic hierarchy as an important aspect of social organisation of Indian science. A few studies carried out in this subject have assigned reasons such as career interruption due to marriage and child bearing responsibilities. Some have also pointed out that the long years of investment in education coincide with the conventional age of marriage for girls (Chanana 2001). Some have suggested that women are unable to meet the rigorous standards and stress of science oriented professions.  

Mongella (2001) said that an educated woman almost always has more value and status in the eyes of her husband, her family and her community. She is more likely to share in family decision about how many children to have, how to bring them up, how to spend money, how to organise domestic life.  

Bakshi (2002) expressed that a woman who does step forward in protest of her condition makes herself a target of social disapproval, which can result in ostracism, harassment, violence against her or her family members, or perhaps the worst recrimination for a family at the economic edge of survival - loss of employment.  

Bakshi (2002) stressed that conventional role stereotypes; not only facilitate male dominance in the field of public power, authority and decision-making but also ensure that women are safely at home, taking care of the future generations of mothers and

120 Quoted in B.K. Anitha: op.cit., p. 217.  
122 S.R. Bakshi: op. cit., p. 103.
leaders. Even if women do work outside the home, the pervasive influence of an ideology which stresses the glorification of motherhood, successfully limits involvement with a non-home-oriented life.\textsuperscript{123}

Bakshi (2002) quoted Narmad…First educate women and then find out if they can acquire as much fame as men. By educating a woman, the man will benefit. An educated wife will help her husband, he will be able to talk to her and share his joys and sorrows. An educated man cannot share his life with an illiterate wife. Education will make a woman a better wife, a better daughter-in-law and a better mother. She will, by her learning and wisdom contributes to family peace and happiness.\textsuperscript{124}

Arora (2003) assessed that majority of the professional women considered themselves highly self-sufficient and efficient at their work and were confident about themselves in managing the various work situations. They exhibited a high sense of self-efficacy, meaning a belief that they can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the desired outcome. They are people with high expectations, are more likely to take risks, set more difficult goals, persist longer at chosen activities and be more involved in what they do.\textsuperscript{125}

Arora (2003) concluded that the decision to work can be influenced primarily by non-economic considerations but the desire to continue to work is primarily a measure of the level of motivation. Professionals derive satisfaction of economic needs for security,

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 218.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 155.
affiliation needs, feelings of self-respect and prestige, opportunity for independent action and decision making, sense of recognition and achievement from their work.126

George (2003) concluded that women’s right is a human right and so women’s liberation is a human liberation. Though it is very true, as Paulo Freire would say that the oppressed have to be agents of their own liberation, it is crucial that women and men join hands in the efforts to build gender justice. Partnership with men is an existential imperative. Building gender justice requires the inclusive efforts of all in the society and not just of women alone.127

Panda (2003) noted that in Kerala, more than 35 per cent of women reported experiencing either physical or psychological violence within their marriage. This is despite the fact that Kerala has high levels of women’s literacy, favourable sex ratios and a generally enabling environment for women. The regression analysis to identify major causal factors finds strong negative correlation between property ownership, particularly house ownership, and violence, followed by the husband’s employment status. Even if a woman does not use the exit option, the very existence of immovable property in her name could deter the husband from violence.128

Rayan (2003) reiterated that women are awaking up to their human and christian dignity and rights. Their empowerment is not their work, nor men’s, nor of the church. Women and men, and the church as a whole, have to wake up afresh to the way God has

126 Ibid., p. 229.
empowered women, along with men, from the beginning. One of the foundational truths of Faith, highlighted in the very opening chapters of the Bible, affirms that God made the ‘human’ (this ‘earthling’) in God’s own image and likeness, as God’s ambassador and viceroy to God’s own world. This human image of God was created male and female, man and woman, each being equally God’s representative, or both together (Genesis 1:27). Women’s awakening today challenges the church and helps her resist every temptation to ignore, bypass or downplay this clear revelation, this faith-affirmation of the God-given equality of women and men.\textsuperscript{129}

Bandyopadhyay (2004) recorded that there is a strong association between level of educational attainment and employability of people in available job market. People with more education have more chance to get a job as per their requirement and also in the field of their own interest. This results in job satisfaction as well as improvement in quality of life and reduction in livelihood insecurity. The nature of education system also gets affected by emerging fields of specialisation required for present job market. Education of women contributes to their economic and social upliftment and prepares them to cope with the changing situation in job market. Concerns were expressed for fulfilling the needs of professional development of women.\textsuperscript{130}

Bandyopadhyay (2004) asserted that education and training are considered key to empowerment of every individual, including women. It is thus required to see that the educational policy needs to provide adequate opportunities to women enabling them to

\textsuperscript{129} S. Rayan: “The Significance of Women’s Awakening in the Church”. In M. George, \textit{Birthing a New Vision: The Empowerment of Women Religious in India}. A Newsletter from Streevani, Pune. 2003, p. 8.

take part in the process of decision-making. Access to information technology and its proper use make women confident enough to become economically as well as politically active. Access to higher education for women is crucial in this context. So literacy and school education, proper policy planning and implementation for making higher education more inclusive are necessary for meeting the strategic interests of women that ultimately results in their empowerment.\footnote{Deshpande (2004) reported that the 2004 general election did not have many women contestants. Inspite of the celebrations of women’s empowerment and the reservation policy, it appears that the structuring of political parties remains the main obstacle in women’s political recruitment. Throughout the past years the average percentage of women members of parliament has been below eight. This is mainly because political parties do not offer candidature to women. Parties argue against nominating women candidates because they doubt their winning ability. Calculations from the official data of the Election Commission clearly negate these apprehensions, as party nominations for men and women are totally disproportionate. Therefore the doubts about women’s winning ability do not hold.\footnote{R. Deshpande: “How Gendered was Women’s Participation in Election 2004?” \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol. XXXIX, No 51, 2004, p. 5433.}}

Deshpande (2004) commented that the structuring of political parties remains the main obstacle in women’s political recruitment. Political parties do not offer candidature to women. Parties argue against nominating women candidates because they doubt their winning ability. Calculations from the official data of the Election Commission clearly negate these apprehensions, as party nominations for men and women are totally disproportionate. Therefore the doubts about women’s winning ability do not hold.\footnote{Ibid., p.4.}
negate these apprehensions. Election data since 1998 onwards show that the success rates of men and women candidates do not differ in a major way and in many cases women candidates are more successful than their male counterparts. These observations cannot be far fetched as party nominations for men and women are totally disproportionate. Therefore the doubt about women’s winning ability does not hold. It also means that both men and women voters are not apprehensive of women candidates. Of course, it is too simplistic to assume that women would en masse vote for women or would prefer women candidates to men candidates, at least at the national and state level elections. Instead the patterns of women’s voting reveal a definite, focused understanding of the political choices they have.133

Hust (2004) raised an important question that everybody is complaining about corruption, and women with their one-third representation and resource-poor conditions within the home and outside, are expected to carry out the heavy burden of ending corruption. This is an “overly idealistic hope” (Hust 2004:200) and should not be put solely on the shoulders of women. This has resulted in silencing, even ousting many women leaders (sarpanchs) by the male patriarchs of the village. Ending corruption, like ending violence, is a task for the entire system of macro-governance and community management.134

An ILO study (2004) observed that the situation of economic security is worsened by the fact that policies and institutions do not realise that promoting women’s control over their incomes and resources would help boost growth and development; that this is one

---

133 Ibid., p. 5433.
of the main forms of gender inequality across the world and systematically neglected in social policy and income statistics. Access to capital can enable women to get control over land and related productive assets. “Without reasonable income security, people lack real freedom to make rational choices and be socially responsible. Without collective and individual voice, the vulnerable will remain that way” (ILO 2004:275).\textsuperscript{135}

Kumari (2004) presented that in some parts of the country like North Eastern States, women have access to economic power to some extent, but with regard to political power they are under-represented in almost all the political parties and political domain like parliament, cabinet position and legislative assembly. Many of them, after being elected in panchayat, cannot exercise their power and authority and even face humiliation in this male dominated as well as caste ridden society in spite of existing constitutional laws, special provisions and different Acts. Finally, it was mentioned that, in the empowerment of women, human development perspective is very crucial for which education and training have immense significance.\textsuperscript{136}

Kumar and Shaffioddin (2004) revealed that at national level, more than a third of the women are chairpersons of Panchayats at different levels. This is happening due to the enactment of legislation to create opportunities for women’s political participation at the grassroots. The 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} Amendments to the Constitution have resulted in the entry

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 4698.
\textsuperscript{136} Quoted in M. Bandyopadhyay: \textit{op. cit.}, p.17.
of nearly a million women in to Panchayats and Local bodies. 1998 data reveals that almost all the states are meeting the quota of 33% women at all three levels.\footnote{A.V. Kumar and M.D. Shaffioddin: “Participation of Women in Governance in India: An Overview”. University News: A Weekly Journal of Higher Education, 42(50), 2004, p. 13.}

D’Souza (2005) summed up that by its very nature; women’s politics represent the interests of the marginalised, because at its heart it is a search for human transformation. They are raising their voices against discrimination and injustice in social, economic and political spheres. Politics for them does not mean only activities of electing representatives and governing. It also includes efforts at raising consciousness and changing the unequal power structure for a just and equal system.\footnote{P. D’Souza: Woman: Icon of Liberation. Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 2005, pp. 176-177.}

D’Souza (2005) stressed that there can be no empowering either of oneself or of others unless we let go of our own need to dominate. This is a real challenge for women in leadership positions, especially for those who take up professions and posts so far considered to be male strongholds. That is why women’s groups are searching, experimenting and preparing new ways of handling power, encouraging women to act from the centre of one’s being rather than from neurotic needs of seeking approval or complying with expectations. It is only when women are confident and comfortable with their personal identity of being woman that they become capable of nutritive power, a power that engenders growth and releases the power within others. They become capable of a different kind of leadership-based not on principles of domination, hierarchy and
violence but rather on principles of inclusion, solidarity, communication and circularity which believes that the good of all is better than the good of a few.\textsuperscript{139}

D’Souza (2005) asserted that since the 1990s, women’s organisations in India have been increasingly demanding reservation of seats for women in the legislatures. On 12\textsuperscript{th}. September 1996 for the first time in the history of the country, a bill to reserve one-third of the total number of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies was introduced. It held out hope that the most marginalised, of whom women constitute a significant percentage, could at last have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Since then, the bill has been introduced several times, generated heated discussion, undergone several modifications, has been vehemently opposed and passionately defended. But as yet its passage has not seen the light of day.\textsuperscript{140}

D’Souza (2005) stressed that the basic fact of the subordination of women in society acts as a structural constraint and dissuades women from participation in politics in different ways. Due to the gender-based division of labour, the all-consuming burden of keeping the hearth and home going, leaves women with little time for outside preoccupations, while men are able to take part in routine political activities without feeling guilty of neglecting the family. Many decisions are taken behind the scenes and power games are controlled by monetary deals. Since women have little control over finances, they are not considered worth betting on. In such a political climate, participation in politics is not an

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., pp.157-158.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., pp. 190-191.
attractive proposal for women, particularly when the cultural norms for ‘good’ women have overtones of non-material, clean, honest features.\textsuperscript{141}

D’Souza (2005) clarified that while the government and the social sector may be able to ensure that a significant percentage of women enjoy access to important basic resources, gaining control over resources and their benefits, is an uphill task. It is women themselves, who will need to get themselves organised, assert their rights and gain control over their lives rather than expect justice from patriarchal institutions whose very identity is linked to the subordination and exploitation of women.\textsuperscript{142}

D’Souza (2005) observed that a majority of women do not see gender equity as a desirable objective. They may realise only their family, community or caste identities, or yet again they may just perceive existing inequalities as God-given truth. As a result they are hesitant to articulate their own rights and needs politically. Having been taught from a very young age to put their trust in men, they have allowed men to represent their interests and solve their problems, without realising that often this involves a ‘conflict of interests’ for men.\textsuperscript{143}

Goswami et al. (2005) had this to say that not all customary laws are gender-sensitive. However, traditional norms or laws that debar women from participating in polity need to be changed, and fast. This debarment is almost absolute, especially in the traditional institutions of governance, like the village councils. Many tribal women’s groups have

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p. 160.
not supported the Women’s Bill because they feel that even if there was reservation for women, a woman would never win any election because the results of elections are determined by the support or lack of support of village councils. The village councils, being extremely patriarchal, would never support the candidature of a woman. This reflects the unequal social positioning of women and the non-recognition of their autonomy and their exclusion from decision-making, especially in communities governed by customary laws, in spite of the fact that women have always played and continue to play key roles in all the civil society movements of the region.\(^{144}\)

John (2005) quoted that raising the age of marriage (through the Sarda Act of 1929), and the first debates over a possible common civil code, are the views on marriage and family life that emerge from a little known document collectively authored by a team of prominent women leaders and activists in the early 1940s, *Women’s Role in a Planned Economy*. A remarkable modernist text, its authors sought to place the ‘individual’ at the heart of the new nation-in-the-making under a socialist state, with the economic rights of women as workers providing the securest foundation for a new free society. This included not just public forms of employment, but significantly enough, recognition of the work performed by women in the home, the right of unwed mothers, and the need to secure adequate wages and working conditions for domestic servants. Questions of ‘social status’ are treated only subsequently, and especially where marriage and family relations are concerned, the text repeatedly draws attention to the centrality of the individual. “That so many Indian marriages are seemingly ‘happy’ is mainly due to the fact that women on account of their social and religious traditions try their best to adjust

themselves to conditions whatever they may be even at the risk of self-repression” (WRPE:163).145

Kelkar (2005) expressed that perhaps because of women’s gender responsibility of provisioning the household (acquiring and processing food), women tend to spend more of the income they control for household consumption goods. This is in contrast to the behaviour of men who tend to spend more of the income they control on themselves, alcohol entertainment etc. and consequently neglects the consumption needs of children and others in the household. What this shows is that the well-being or poverty-reducing impact of an increase in household income is greater when the increased income is controlled by women than when it is controlled by men. The poverty-reducing impact of development interventions increases when women’s agency is enhanced within the household.146

Kelkar (2005) noted that civil society groups expressed concern at the incidents of violence against women, that as long as there is gender-based violence, it is difficult to claim progress in human development. Gender equality requires protection from gender-based violence in domestic and public spaces, “Violence and aggression against women in public is seen as linked to the rise of conservative forces in society that aggressively and consciously act to prevent women’s public appearances and participation” (Shaheed and Zaidi 2005, 14). 147

146 G. Kelkar. op. cit. p. 4695.
147 Ibid., pp. 4697-4698.
Kelkar (2005) observed that few instances of men are taking up some domestic responsibilities, particularly when women are away on training or doing some subsidiary domestic work like cleaning food for cooking, though not taking responsibility but these are still very few instances. More widespread is the acceptance of some disruptions of family life, such as meals being late when there is a meeting. But overall, it is still true that women are almost entirely responsible for domestic work, which means that the price they have to pay for some improved well-being and increased self-respect and influence in household matters, is that of increasing their hours of work.148

Lingam (2005) opined that the notion of ‘empowerment’, specifically of women has significantly impacted the paradigms of development. ‘Empowerment’ includes control over resources physical, human, intellectual and financial, ideology, beliefs, values, attitudes and broadly over one’s life options. It is understood as internal transformation of one’s consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology. Within the scope of these issues, education at all levels has been observed to be an important instrument for social transformation.149

Nongbri (2005) noted that Education of Women commensurate with the worldwide emerging demand for empowerment of women, India recognised that women education has become pertinent. It has become the critical precondition for empowerment of women. Considering the grave situation of continued victimisation of women and girl children and the critical needs of education in life, the Government of India has implemented various policy measures to promote and accelerate women’s education in

148 Ibid., p. 4696.
149 L. Lingam: op. cit. p. 117.
India including education of girl child on a holistic approach both at the Central and State levels, to expedite women literacy ratio as well as to reduce school dropout rates.\textsuperscript{150}

Phadke’s (2005) paper examined the limitations of the demand for safety and extends an argument that what women need in order to access public space as citizens is not so much the provision of safety as the right to take risks. When a woman is raped, one finds that the concern is less about bodily or mental harm to the woman and more about its repercussions on her identity and relationships. Families appear to be more concerned with the “reputation” of their women rather than justice as has been demonstrated in numerous such incidents where women (and/or their families) prefer not to press charges.\textsuperscript{151}

Rao (2005) concluded that women’s groups do provide a forum for women to come together, share ideas, exchange information and develop a support network. Yet strategic shifts in access to resources and benefits can only emerge if men too support such a shift and take on a more equal share of both productive and reproductive work. In the context of structural reform, poor men too are facing a crisis in terms of accessing productive assets, markets and income, leading to a crisis of masculinities that is often reflected in growing trends of violence against women. If gender equality is indeed to be achieved, there is need to pay attention to the interests of women, but also to men and to shifts in gender relations occurring on account of contextual changes.\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{152} N. Rao: \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4707.
Srivastava (2005) wrote that Higher Education plays a vital role in developing the integrated powers. It has a function to generate new knowledge through research and making continuous efforts to eliminate obsolete curricula and courses and making those relevant in terms of model development, so that knowledge and skills provided to students reflect the needs of the employment market. It has been realised that social change can take place only if both men and women are educated. Conscious endeavour to improve the content and process of education from gender bias and sex stereotyping, and making the curriculum at all levels of education gender sensitive and gender friendly, so that gender justice, gender harmony and gender peace are achieved. 153

Anitha (2006) projected that Indian society still reflects the predominance of the traditional role of females as wives and mothers. The social role of girls remains accentuated in the educational years. Hence pursuing a career does not necessarily redefine her traditional familial responsibilities. Because of this, women are at a disadvantage resulting in relatively lower performance in career in comparison to men. This is further underscored by norms that are male. As a result women occupy less powerful positions in the hierarchical structure of their career ladder leading to a lower representation of women in decision-making positions; the absence of women in these decision-making bodies perpetuates the existing inequality. 154

Begum (2006) narrated that an inkling into women’s position in the past is provided by the general perception that women are fickle minded, weak and unfit to take up any role

---

outside the family. Thus inferior roles were assigned to female in relation to male. The biological differences, women bear children and are on the average, physically weaker than men – reinforced by the cultural norms and the value systems, placed women secondary to men. Today, woman has realised that she cannot remain forever confined to the kitchen and the four walls of her home. She wants to play a multifaceted role to offset the challenges emerging out of the socio-economic changes, taking place in the country. In fact, Indian women are striking balance between traditional and progressive values of the society in transition.\textsuperscript{155}

Krishnaraj (2006) expressed that women’s agency subserves others’ welfare than her own. If she earns more she spends more for the family. Unfortunately, economic ‘empowerment’ which is no doubt a necessary condition for further emancipation is never sufficient. In policy this agency approach without an awareness of woman’s gender construct uses woman as instrument rather than as a liberatory process for herself. The refrain goes like this: “educate a woman because she will send girls to school; she will reduce fertility; she will use her earnings to promote family welfare as opposed to men who may not do so”. Women are good investment for development. Do we also ask whether the investment is good for her? Today, increasingly, the burden of supporting families behoves on women either because men are involuntarily unemployed or because men choose what kind of job they would prefer and are voluntarily unemployed.\textsuperscript{156}


\textsuperscript{156} M. Krishnaraj: \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4442.
Balatchandirane (2007) asserted that educated women process information better and also use goods and services more effectively. Such women are also in a better position to provide health care, educate their own children and bring down their fertility to desired levels. Women’s productivity is increased, their bargaining position is strengthened and the options open to them increase, when they have access to education. If the non-market factors like health, nutrition and children’s education, which are related to human resource development and other factors like fertility, infant and child mortality, which have a bearing on population growth are taken into account, these add up to a sizeable outcome arising out of women’s education. In other words, if we were to look upon the impact of education on women outside of the narrow criterion of economic productivity, then the returns to investment on female education will outstrip those on male education (Behrman, 1993, pp. 394-5).  

Balatchandirane (2007) confirmed that educated women have healthier children. When women are educated it has a great impact on the children’s health and education than when men are educated. There is a close correlation between infant mortality and the ratio of women’s secondary education to men’s. Educated women also have fewer children. Children of literate mothers in India were found to spend two more hours per day studying than the children of illiterate mothers.  

CBCI (2007) expressed that the dignity of woman and her vocation in life is respected, going beyond mere stereotypes. We ensure that students and the whole institutional community accept and practise gender sensitivity, equity and equality, in the class, in

---

158 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
norms for selection of student leaders and in our attitudes which get manifested in our language and behaviour. We take firm action when gender-based discrimination occurs. Our aim is to promote a gender-empowered society in India, to redress, in some measure, the great suffering of millions and thus contribute to restore gender justice.\textsuperscript{159}

Gupta (2007) viewed that the process of modern education inculcates the values of personal and economic independence, self-reliance and assertiveness, the socialisation process encourages women’s dependency, submissiveness, conformity and passivity. Whereas the women are expected to be self-sacrificing, meek and quiet at home, the same women are expected to be independent, self-confident and assertive at their places of work. If women remain at home they are called ‘drags’ and if they choose to work out, they are considered ‘tough’. They have to undergo a lot of mental stress.\textsuperscript{160}

Gupta (2007) concluded that the inclusion of gender as an issue for development assumes the inherent inequalities, which persist in the ‘top-down’ or ‘trickle-down’ approach. It visualises both men and women as contributive partners in development. It gives expression to the emergence of creativity, self-reliance, blossoming of thoughts, drawing on external and internal resources to secure self-determination, self-identity and personality development on the basis of ‘being model’ of development in lieu of ‘having

\textsuperscript{159} Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) Commission for Education and Culture. \textit{All India Catholic Education Policy - 2007}. New Delhi: CBCI Centre, 5.7, p. 51.

model’ of development which promotes consumerism, unhealthy competition and conflicts.161

Gupta (2007) pronounced that in partnership model, both men and women have to give regard to one another. In this scenario, there would be fewer gender based division of labour as parenting and house-making would be a joint-responsibility, family structures would be extended and inter-generational communities and eco-cities would be based around ‘extended family estates’ (Jones, 1996:38). What we need is not to recognise only the ‘sameness’ or ‘exclusiveness’ of the men and the women, but also the appreciation of one another’s independent existence as equivalent. The transition from womanhood to personhood signifies change in that direction.162

Gupta (2007) assured that women’s empowerment is possible only if we pursue the path of holistic development in which full justice is meted out to women in all walks of life, where women share not only the obligations but also power on an equal footing with the men folk, where gender divisions no longer exist and where both men and women are equally free to engage into leisure activities they enjoy the most, where politics is made possible for women because of parallel shifts in child-rearing, domestic responsibilities and caring of the elderly and sick. Only such an approach towards the women can enhance their self-respect, self-reliance and self-dignity. Education in general and higher education in particular, can play an increasingly vital role in inculcating the right values in commensuration with the new status of the women.163

161 Ibid., p. 290.
162 Ibid., p. 298.
163 Ibid., p.294.
Gupta (2007) quoted (late) Pope John Paul II who said that like men, women are also created by God. Both are equipped with reason, free will and conscience. Men and women have been created as two persons having separate identities with full potential to reach what it means to be ‘human’. It is education, formal as well as informal that makes a man or a woman a human. Therefore, communion and complementarity of men and women is a cause for celebration and not despise. What really matters is who you are rather than what you have.\textsuperscript{164}

Gupta (2007) shared about the concept of empowerment which signifies greater access to knowledge and fiscal resources, on the one hand and greater autonomy in personal matters and sharing of power at the domestic and political level, on the other. It implies greater control over the circumstances that influence ones life and greater freedom from the shackles of customs, faiths, beliefs and traditions. Education can definitely play a vital role in this empowerment process. Power is not a commodity to be transacted. It cannot be given as alms. It has to be acquired, exercised, sustained and preserved. Women need to empower themselves with the help of education and they deserve to be empowered not as a favour to themselves but as the right step towards meting out full justice to themselves. It is a pity that the hard work put in by the women towards homemaking, child-care and elderly-care remains unpaid and unrecognised even in the heydays of market economy.\textsuperscript{165}

Mathai (2007) agreed that quite often, people say that women do not support women and this is true of most people and most groups who have been oppressed for a long time.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., p. 299.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., pp. 286-287.
You accept the position that the oppressor has kept you in. When one of you breaks out and challenges the status quo, then others in disbelief, perhaps in fear or maybe jealousy, say you should not be so daring, so ambitious.¹⁶⁶

Mukhim (2007) expressed that women still have to take on the parallel roles of wives, mothers and kitchen mistresses even if they have a well-placed job outside the home. A woman’s option to work is still considered secondary. What a man earns is considered the main income. So unless these mindsets change and women assert their right to earn and for shared parenthood within the home, economic empowerment will still be an ideal that we can only be striving for but will never achieve.¹⁶⁷

Raju (2007) understood that gendered construction of roles does pose several constraints on how women workers were perceived by prospective employers. Several of the constraints such as household work burden, marriage and reproductive roles, lower skill formation, restricted mobility that are inter-linked with late working hours, work safety etc. influenced employers willingness to hire women workers, still employers acknowledged several positive attributes i.e. commitment, lending dexterity and creativity to work, decorum and honesty of women workers. They also pointed out that, women workers tend to stay in parent firms that trained them countering in the process the problem of ‘poaching’ that often acts as a barrier for employers, to train the workers beyond the bare minimum requirement of their enterprise (Ahuja 1998).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ W. Mathai: op.cit. p. 06.
Rao (2007) attributed greater role for the family, especially the eldest male members and the traditional norms for the subject choices made by the women students in Higher Education. Interestingly when it comes to the choices made for the sons, the parents would think in terms of the future employability of a particular subject and in the case of daughters, the focal attention will be on the abilities of pursuing a particular branch of study and so called ‘harshness’ or ‘softness’ of the discipline.  

Urfjell (2007) in his address said that the key issues are the rights and opportunities for women to participate in national and local government on equal footing and take part in economic and social independence. Gender equality is actually redistribution of power. Power needs to go from men to women, along with a redistribution of resources, care and responsibilities. Women must organise themselves; they should be backed by informed men. At the same time, women must engage in political dialogue with governments on gender rights and equality. International human rights instruments and action plans on women’s rights and gender equality must form the basis of action. The CEDAW and the Action Plan drafted at the Beijing Conference in 1995 are also important. As regards the role of men, they can play an important role in promoting women’s rights and equality. Men doing their share in taking responsibility for house-work and family care are showing the way.  

Chowdhury (2008) responded when interviewed about the ‘Indian Woman Graph’: “It’s like the Himalayas-up and down, up and down. There are areas where we have done well.

---


Girls’ education has become important now even amongst the most traditional communities. Women are outstripping men in competitive examinations. Given the opportunity, they will equal or excel. It is now politically correct to talk and address women’s issues. You have corporate social responsibility coming forward for women. You have industries hiring women. Banks are giving soft loans. State governments allocate land for women’s entrepreneurship. Micro-credit is a silent revolution. There are villages where domestic violence has come down because women have access to micro-credit. In the past, whenever I asked men to take women they said no. What a nuisance, this, that… Now the same men say we want this many women. They say production is always steady with women, they do not take cigarette and beedi breaks”.

Goyal (2008) took note that the wave of development—showing signs of uplifting women—makes it imperative for both sexes to share the so-called male and female values, with men contributing more to nurturing the home than they have done before and women becoming more active outside the home. But for this to happen the softer qualities that have in the past been associated with women have to be valued more widely. Valuing their special qualities is perhaps necessary for social survival. Development alone is not the answer as sex-selection techniques are used more often among the better off instead of the weaker sections of society. The girl child has to be saved—a feat possible only when “female values” get their due respect. It is only then that a new generation of working women will be born.

Pai and Khatri (2008) narrated that today’s urban Indian woman is shedding inhibitions, opting for a career and is making independent decisions. Almost 16 percent urban Indian women (17 million women) work outside their homes today and this proportion will increase significantly in the coming years as a result of higher education levels, urbanisation and a gradual change in perception. Women are now a critical consumer segment for marketers to tap, not only for household and conventional women’s products but also for technology products like mobile phones, financial products and services.\footnote{A. Pai and D. Khatri: “She Buys to Conquer” \textit{India Today}. Vol. XXXIII, No. 18, 2008, p.46.}

Shah (2011) felt it was tough act for working women to balance home and work: “Spouses should understand that it is a juggling act for women and that they have to be supportive. Working women face a lot of domestic hiccups and often have to make a tough decision where they have to work or stay at home. HR policies in their favour would help go a long way and they don’t have to quit their job especially post-delivery.” Shah added: “I think as long as the deliverables are clear and the women are performing, flexibility should be allowed.”\footnote{As quoted in New Delhi, “Flexible HR policies make working attractive for women”. \textit{Shillong Times}. Dated: 08.03. 2011, p. 5.}

\section*{2.4 STUDIES CONDUCTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL}

Bareh (1974) opined that the Khasis took themselves quickly to western education. Many scholars, writers and learned people came out. According to the erstwhile census reports, Khasi women took the lead in female literacy. Education lays impetus to social transformation. True, both administration and education played a vital role in eradicating
ill-fated practices and customs such as sorcery, human sacrifice and superstitious beliefs in tribal areas.\textsuperscript{175}

Bareh (1974) said that wealthy parents nowadays do give shares to their sons although in smaller proportions against the larger reserved for the daughter and entitling such recipients to transmit the property thus bequeathed to his wife’s kinship lineage. Sons otherwise get only small gifts with personal belongings taken out when they are married. Nowadays, if a man shares with his mother any business, he gets a dividend. The father has the right to transmit his self-acquired property after his marriage to his children.\textsuperscript{176}

Cixous (1986) wrote: “Every woman has known the torture of beginning to speak aloud, heart beating as if to break, occasionally falling into loss of language, ground and language slipping out from under her, because for woman speaking – even just opening her mouth – in public is something rash, a transgression”.\textsuperscript{177}

Dkhar (1991) found that the first college in Meghalaya was established in 1924 and the university in 1973. The pace of development of colleges was slow between 1924 and 1972, the year when Meghalaya became a full-fledged state. The development was faster thereafter. Scheduled Tribes students formed from 40% to 70% of enrolment in the various streams of study; Scheduled Castes students formed in between about 1% to 10% in the different streams of study. The percentage of pass at the undergraduate level varied

\textsuperscript{175} H. Bareh: Meghalaya. Shillong: North-Eastern India News & Feature Service. 1974, pp. 94 and 98.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., p.70.
\textsuperscript{177} Quoted in S. Bhattacharjee: “Women’s Writing and Empowerment: Reading Silences in Deshpande’s That Long Silence” in Aureole, Women’s College. Shillong: Upper New Colony, Laitumkhrah, 2008, p. 20.
widely among the colleges, with the percentages being higher in the science courses. The pass percentage was higher at the honours and postgraduate levels (PPG 0164).¹⁷⁸

Simon (1991) noted that the inclination of younger people to seek white-collar jobs has no doubt been influenced by security of service and the generous provisions made to employees such as Dearness Allowance, Compensatory Allowance, advances for house building, leave travelling concessions and generous leave rules including maternity leave. The number of women engaged in these services is quite substantial. Teachers, doctors, advocates and engineers constitute the most important section of the learned professions. With the increase of literacy, an increase in their number has been inevitable.¹⁷⁹

Agarwal (1994) discovered that even in matrilineal communities such as the Garo and Khasi, ‘property rights did not alter the overall gender division of labour’ or ‘guarantee women the same sexual freedom as men’. Husbands, brothers and maternal uncles had the ‘formal managerial authority over land’ and furthermore, customary institutions and juridical power were a male monopoly; even the Khasi women heiresses did not have the kind of local influence, the chiefs commanded.¹⁸⁰

Nongbri (1998) said that the tribal women’s ‘greater economic independence and freedom of movement’ compared to ‘their counterparts in non-tribal societies cannot be disputed,’ but it is ‘naïve to equate this with superior social status.’ She argues that a ‘closer look would show that gender inequality is not alien to tribal societies but it is

obscured by their poor economic conditions which forces men and women to cooperate and share in joint economic activities.\textsuperscript{181}

Dutta (1999) stated that the position of Khasi women is not as supreme as it has been portrayed; the females were made custodians of the family property and not the rightful owner. The women’s authority was shared by the Maternal Uncle and so the actual position of the male was not unlike that of the women in a patrilineal society; land though was owned by women in the traditional matrilineal society, they have no right to dispose it. Further, the women had a limited voice in family matters as well as in politics, so why should they be projected as most powerful.\textsuperscript{182}

Gassah (1999) opined that the traditional pattern of family has changed. There are various other changes due to the impact of such forces like Christianity, formal education, new means of communication, mobility of individuals, employment opportunities, etc. Women in the society have therefore to adopt and adapt themselves to the changing environment.\textsuperscript{183}

According to Lyngdoh (1999), the Khasi society is undergoing a transitory period and a process of change. Education was introduced in the hills by the British, which is an important agent of change. Changes were brought in the socio-economic and political fields, and the Khasi who had been able to maintain social and political isolation were opened up to the outside world. However, inspite of the rapid changes, the Khasi

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, p. 2558.
\textsuperscript{182} Quoted in M.B. Challam, The Dynamics of Family System in a Matriliny of Meghalaya, 1999, p. 56.
matrilineal system of descent, succession and inheritance exist till today withstanding the forces of change.\textsuperscript{184}

Mukhim (1999) noted that the Khasi Matrilineal society has evinced keen interest in sociologists and media persons across the globe. Fritz was of the opinion that Matriliny is a fine structure that probably needs some modifications to keep up with the changing times. Being part and parcel of a matrilineal set up, Fritz felt that the women of Meghalaya should not give up their valuable rights. “If aberrations exist within the matrilineal system they can and should be removed. But certainly that does not warrant a complete switch-over to patriliny, more so when women in the rest of the world are fighting for greater liberty and equality of status with men”, maintains Fritz.\textsuperscript{185}

Rynjah (1999) noted that the paternal mother had a super right and a highest place of honour in the family of her daughter-in-law’s place, in which without her presence the naming ceremony cannot go on and even the name to be given came from her side. Vice versa, the issues had an imbibed duty to her in her death ceremony, homage and tribute to paternal mother in token of the birth right brought forth by their father. The sacred duty and pious tribute thus signified that even though the system is matrilineal yet the patrilineal aspect also finds a proper place in the Khasi custom and tradition.\textsuperscript{186}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{185} P. Mukhim: “Crisis of Authority in the Khasi Matrilineal Society”. In M.B. Challam (ed.), \textit{The Dynamics of Family System in a Matriliny of Meghalaya}, 1999, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{186} S. Rynjah: “The Khasi Family Dynamic Role of Father and Maternal Uncle”. In M.B. Challam (ed.), \textit{The Dynamics of Family System in a Matriliny of Meghalaya}, 1999, p. 46.
\end{flushleft}
Rynjah (1999) continued that in the present day generation of the Khasi, a confused idea to the institution of the family of the house of the youngest daughter (*khatduh*) was wrongly understood and wrongly interpreted directing only to the factor of wealth and property and also misleading by accounting that the *khatduh* is the owner. The focus thought and divine intention envisaged by the custom had not been fathomed for consideration. This is one vital phase of the changing value, for which the present generation is directing at and at the same time went to attack by having the lineage rooted out and changed.\(^{187}\)

Rynjah (1999) noted that in a land where women are also free to do and practise any trade and profession, the present age offers many varieties of employments. Hence our womenfolk are also working mothers side by side along with our menfolk. In this aspect also, our women are fore-runners to work in offices, banks etc. Thus besides the household chores, they are now also supplementing to the family incomes, savings etc.\(^{188}\)

The State Action Plan on National Policy for Empowerment of Women MEGHALAYA (2003) stressed that Women’s equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making in political process at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies, as also the advisory Commissions, Committee Boards, and Trusts etc. Affirmative action such as reservations/quotas, including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary on a time bound basis. Women friendly personnel policies will also be drawn

\(^{187}\) Ibid., p. 48.  
^{188}\) Ibid., p. 50.
up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.\textsuperscript{189}

The State Action Plan on National Policy for Empowerment of Women MEGHALAYA (2003) also said that early marriage and co-habitation is increasing in Meghalaya particularly in the rural areas and among school dropouts. Therefore, it may be suggested to authorise local \textit{durbars} to register such marriages and be authorised to issue certificates of registration at their levels and make the same valid that in case of separation; women victims can claim maintenance from the father of their children.\textsuperscript{190}

The State Action Plan on National Policy for Empowerment of Women MEGHALAYA (2003) went on to say that violence against women and girls, whether occurring in public or private life, is a human rights issue. The government is a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is thus committed to the cause of eliminating discrimination against women. The inclusion of two very definite, though more insidious acts of violence against women – domestic violence and sexual harassment at work- within the ambit of the public discussion on violence, has definitely strengthened the case for the protection of women against crime in society.\textsuperscript{191}

State Action Plan on National Policy for Empowerment of Women MEGHALAYA (2003) stated that women in Meghalaya are not deprived of titles to landed property due


\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 100.
to the fact that the people follow the matrilineal system of society handed over by traditional and the customary laws. The landed property belongs to the women and the property passes on only from the mother to the daughters. Only self acquired property may be shared among the sons. Women in the State are not in disadvantaged position and all Housing Programme being implemented in the State do reach to benefit the women also.  

The State Action Plan on National Policy for Empowerment of Women, Meghalaya (2003) encouraged that it is important to look seriously into the issues of violence against women being used as a tool to restrain them from entering mainstream politics. The number of women in leadership position at local, village, district and national levels has to consistently rise.  

Behal and Warjri (2003) argued that in the state of Meghalaya, which follows a matrilineal system, the condition of women is at times more precarious than their counterparts in patrilineal societies. A significant reason for this is the fact that women here experience not only the universal discrimination experienced by all women, but also the additional burden of living under the assumption that women control everything, which in turn gives rise to the false perception that women do not need any special measures to ensure their rights.  

---

192 Ibid., p. 82.
193 Ibid., p. 28.
Behal and Warjri (2003) continued that women have attributed the reasons behind violence mainly to alcoholism, drug abuse, lack of responsibility-sharing by the male member of a family, multiple partner relationships, desertion and disowning children born out of wedlock. A deeper analysis however indicates that these are but manifestation of unequal gender relations which prompt gender based violence.¹⁹⁵

Behal and Warjri (2003) stressed that women in Khasi society are still largely subject to a number of patrilineal characteristics and features such as the fact that most of the tribal and local councils are monopolised by men. Authority and jural power in public decision-making bodies still rests with men as a gender, (even if not with men as individuals). Women as a gender are typically excluded from such bodies. This has meant that despite men’s restricted access to property ownership, their rights (as a gender) of control over that property, on the one hand, and their access to public bodies, on the other, has often enabled them to consolidate social prestige and political power.¹⁹⁶

Phanbuh, et al. (2003) recorded that the National Literacy Mission and Total Literacy Campaign have made considerable contribution towards improving literacy rate of women. However due to absence of follow up activities these efforts could not be sustained and as a result the neoliterates lapsed back to illiteracy. Moreover, literacy that does not help bring in additional earnings becomes useless to women in the rural areas, whose main concern is to improve livelihoods. It is in this context that functional literacy becomes a felt need for women in rural areas who live in poverty. This kind of literacy will enable them to earn higher wage which in turn will make them feel secure and

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 21.
¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 12.
confident. They will become aware of their basic rights to food, shelter, health and education and the right to live a safe life. This is the essence of empowerment and functional literacy is one of the tools towards achieving it.197

Badwar and Ryngnga (2006) expressed that the Khasi women are never allowed to take part in the politics and administration of the village. This is the domain of the male folk of the society. With the change of time the women have come forward and have got directly involved in the political and administrative spheres. Unlike in the past, the women have in the present times emerged as active participants in politics and are associated with different non-governmental organisations. The presence of Seng Longkmie (Local Women Organisation) in all the localities for the betterment of the society gave the women opportunity to work for common good.198

Chaoudhury and Blah (2006) were of the opinion that unless women are actually involved in village councils and local civic bodies in a big way, they will not be able to address the problems that they actually face in the society. The growing incidences of crime like rape, murder and domestic violence can be addressed only through the participation of women in the decision-making bodies.199

Gupta (2006) noted that the situation has changed after the Independence of the country and under the liberal constitution. Khasi women are no longer barred from participating in the political and administrative matters. After the creation of Meghalaya in 1972, a number of Khasi women came forward to contest elections. In the Autonomous District Councils also there were a number of Khasi women representatives who were either elected or nominated. Now Khasi women also attend *durbar* in some localities. But it is important to note that their participation in political sphere is still confined to a limited extent.  

Gupta (2006) reiterated that Khasi women are competitive, intelligent, hardworking and very creative and these values and qualities might be properly used in the decision-making process only when they are represented in the Local, State and National politics. Khasi women activists and organisations should come forward and enlighten the Khasi women on the importance of women participation in public life. Wider entry of women into the Legislature and Councils would be of immense significance to the state and to the country as a whole.  

Jyrwa (2006) narrated that we find so many Meghalayan women participating in modern political institutions like late Mavis Dunn Lyngdoh as the Cabinet Minister of Assam under the Government of India Act, 1935 and many others. Thus, Prof. Pakem explained that in Meghalaya we have social situation where a particular custom like women’s

---

participation in modern institutions may not be a constraint to development, while exclusion of women may be a constraint to modernisation.\textsuperscript{202}

Jyrwa (2006) expressed that traditionally, the political role of women is that of a consultant through the adult male members of the domestic groups. With regard to judicial system woman cannot be a member of the jury but she has a right to be heard. Women have no right to decide and participate in their respective village councils. As a protest against this, in some localities of Shillong, women’s movement for emancipation has started since 1988. The women demanded full participation in their respective local Durbar Shnong (Village Council). Moreover, in some localities of Shillong town, women have got space in the village councils as elected or nominated members. For many, particularly in the urban areas it means a great initiative for women empowerment. In the urban areas it has caused substantive change in the role and status of women. But on the other hand, political participation of women in the village councils is rather remote. Women cannot enter the village durbar as elected or nominated members. This is so because majority of the Khasi villages have not shifted from the traditional practices.\textsuperscript{203}

Lyngdoh (2006) opined that women in Meghalaya are competitive, intelligent, practical, hardworking and are very creative. They must now assert themselves. They must be given opportunities for greater participation and representation in the policy and decision-making bodies so that they can speak for themselves and voice their agenda.


\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., p. 61.
This will undoubtedly help in the progress and development of the state and the nation as a whole.²⁰⁴

Lyngdoh (2006) stated that true democracy demands effective participation of the women who constitute half of the population. They need to understand that only as voters and campaigners they would not be able to make democracy a success. Women of Meghalaya have shown deep public concerns in different public meetings, processions, hartals and even joined as volunteers in the Non-Violent Direct Action. In any election, the women voters outnumbered the men voters. Some women also hold key positions in political parties. Women’s Wings exist in all political parties but they do not come forward so much to contest in the elections. The political parties therefore have a role to include women in the electoral fray by giving them tickets during election.²⁰⁵

Nessa (2006) said that today, women have come forward in the executive committee of some ‘durbars’. With this ice-breaking, gradually few women also came forward to contest election in District Council and State Legislature. This could break the traditional rigidity in the power structure though it could not reverse the traditional structure of power. The Constitution introduced universal adult franchise and consequently, the number of women voters increased enormously. After the attainment of statehood in 1972, considerable number of women contested election. Compared to this, the percentage of successful candidates was not satisfactory. This may be due to the

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 98.
traditional mindset of the women. Till date there are many clans whose women inspite of being highly educated and employed keep themselves aloof from active politics.\textsuperscript{206}

Ray and Athparia (2006) stated that the history of women’s participation in the political process in Meghalaya can be traced in the Government of India Act – 1935. Later, under the liberal constitution, the women got political rights in all the state institutions of governance including the Autonomous District Council, the State Legislative Assembly and the Parliament.\textsuperscript{207}

Ray and Athparia (2006) noticed that a section of the women of Meghalaya came forward in the electoral politics. But on retrospection into their electoral performance reveals that their participating has not been significantly progressive and they were unable to position themselves in the public domain although a handful of them came to occupy important political positions from time to time. While much of the reasons for such a trend lies in the passive political behaviour, the women in Meghalaya infact could not come out of the generic structural limitations of their society, economy and culture. Low participation could not reverse the male dominated power structure in the Khasi society.\textsuperscript{208}

Chapter 8 of the Meghalaya Human Development Report (2008) mentioned that, “Female literacy rates are lower compared to males” and on political empowerment it


\textsuperscript{208} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 21-22.
stated, “When it comes to public life, the mindset and long held views and attitude against women still pose a major obstacle for women to enter electoral politics. Authority in its real sense is the exclusive preserve of men. Local administration is completely under the domain of men”.

Mukhim (2008) argued that to any ordinary woman it is still very difficult to create space in electoral politics which is at par with men. But this is not to say that women have remained outside the political ambit. They have carved out their own roles but those are limited to playing foot soldiers to political parties and their candidates. Women are good campaigners and they have a strong influence on their peers. Hence even male candidates use them for door to door canvassing. Women also make very reliable polling agents. When they sit at polling booths to identify genuine voters, they do so with a sense of responsibility and commitment. They do not leave their posts until the polling is over and the ballot boxes are sealed.

Mukhim (2008) asserted that gender roles are clearly defined and men expect women to perform the domestic roles of wife, mother, cook, washer-woman and also to take care for the infirm and elderly in the family. Besides the above chores; women in the rural hamlets also have to collect firewood and water, sometimes from a great distance away. Families engaged in the slash and burn methods of agriculture require the support of women for planting, weeding and harvesting food grains. But since their labour is not classed as ‘work’ because it does not fit into the normative paradigm of economic

theories, women are classed as unpaid workers. Since the gender division of labour is clearly marked, women are literally tied to their homes and their housework, making it impossible for them to step out into the public domain and to engage in hard-boiled politics. Men and women have definite biological roles and there has never been any quarrel about that role. Gender roles need to be redefined so that they are just and equitable.²ⁱ¹

Mukhim (2008) narrated that traditional institutions are male-centric in composition and have no space at all for women. As a result, women have no political voice. In fact, political mobilisation among women is still at a nascent stage. Women are deprived of political space not because they are not competent but because men are not ready to share power. Politics has been a male domain for too long and any attempt by women to capture political space is seen as a direct threat to male hegemony.²¹²

Nag (2008) asserted that progress will remain elusive until gender discrimination is put to an end and women are empowered with knowledge, rights and awareness about themselves and their environment. There is a growing awareness that women should be looked upon as persons in their own right. They must be allowed to have sufficient space for development in every sphere of life and should keep pace with time. To achieve these, women must stand up and fight to obtain their rightful place.²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid., pp. 43-45.
²¹² Ibid., p. 44.
Nongbri and Pakyntein (2009) were of the opinion that in rural areas where agricultural and related activities dominate, the actual contribution of women towards the economy is significant. Women in both urban and semi-urban areas do not regard themselves as being gainfully employed, although they work at home in a variety of ways viz. embroidery, tailoring etc. to supplement the household income. Although women in Meghalaya contribute to the economy, yet their contribution to the family income in particular and to the society in general, is to a certain extent undermined.\(^{214}\)

Nongbri and Pakyntein (2009) narrated that representation of women in the State Legislature and in Parliament continued to be very low. Studies have however, shown that the unwillingness of the political parties to field women candidate is one major reason. The overall environment faced by women both in and outside the household is also identified to be a very pertinent reason. Women who can create independent space for themselves are more likely to be active participants in politics (Chibber, 2004).\(^{215}\)

Nongbri and Pakyntein (2009) argued that women in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya have no active roles in the public domain. Khasi women were barred from attending any of the councils (\textit{durbar}) be it at the village or state level. The simile – \textit{ynda kynih ka ˈiar kynthei, pyrthei ruh lawai} (meaning when the hen crows, the world is nearing its end) and \textit{ksan rympei rem durbar} (meaning a winner in the family, a loser in the council) – repudiate women active participation in politics. These sayings insinuated


\(^{215}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 203.
that though women are pivotal in the affair of the family and clan, men are decision-makers in the public sphere.\textsuperscript{216}

Nongbri and Pakyntsein (2009) noticed that among the Christians, women participate actively as members of their respective churches. However, women basically perform supplementary roles in the functioning of the church. Thus, women are more involved in the extension-activities and social services such as education, health, charity and a host of other activities. Christianity, Hinduism or Islam has been embraced by the Khasi-Pnar people in varying degrees and proportions. These religions, no doubt have a patrilineal flavour in them and this in turn influences not only the people who practise any such religion but also the society at large.\textsuperscript{217}

Nongkynrih (2009) stated that governance for human development relates to the management of all such processes that, in any society, define the environment which permits and enables individuals to raise their capability levels, on one hand, and provides opportunities to realise their potential and enlarge the set of available choices, on the other. These processes, covering the political, social and economic aspects of life impact every level of human enterprise be it individual, the household, the village, the region or even the nation as a whole. It covers the state, the civil society and the market, each of which is critical for sustaining human development. The State is responsible for creating conducive political, legal and economic environment for building individual capabilities and encouraging private initiative. The market is expected to create opportunities for the people. The civil society facilitates the mobilisation of public opinion and people’s

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., p. 192.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p. 197.
participation in economic, social and political activities for sustaining an efficient and productive social order (National Human Development Report, 2001; p. 114).  

Lamar (2011) said: “Female literacy rate in Meghalaya is roughly 60 per cent while that of male is 66 per cent, thereby depicting gender disparity. This is basically because of our customary laws”. She highlighted the poor status of women in the State. She pointed out that women are not yet in decision making positions even though Meghalaya is a matrilineal society which is depicted to the outside world as a paradise where women inherit family property and enjoy other benefits denied to women elsewhere. “We still lack in political participation and access to livelihoods and health care especially mental health and we are also lagging behind in education,” added Dr. Lamar.

Nonglait (2011) shared that the National Commission for Women, in order to push for making marriage-registration a compulsory step had proposed the draft bill ‘Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act 2005’. In this Act, the Commission has recommended for the enactment of a uniform law relating to marriages, providing for compulsory registration of marriages. The aim of the law was to prevent child marriages and also polygamy in the society.

---

219 Reporter: “Understanding the aspirations of women leaders”. Shillong Times, Dated: 08.03.2011, p. 1.