CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered the most effective instrument for equalising opportunities and reducing disparities between human beings. In a democratic society like ours, the thrust is to equalise and enlarge the coverage and improve the quality of education in educational institutions, so that a person belonging to any caste, creed, sex, and religion or economic strata, would have the chance of developing his potential fully. History reveals that education has formed a continuum and basis for the development of human society. Through the development of healthy attitudes, positive values and capabilities both of skill and knowledge, education provides strength, vitality and sensitivity to people to respond to changing situations and enables them to contribute to development. History has also established the significant role
played by human resources in the development of nations. The development of human resources is the main function of education. Education is one of the major tools, which provide to fulfil economic roles and consequently improve their socio-economic status.

Women education has much importance as it provides not only requisite equipment and training for their future economic participation but it also acts as revolutionary force which is expected to liberate them from subjugation and exploitation. In this connection Desai (1967) observed “Formal education has a strategic significance in modern society. It is expected to promote scientific and technical knowledge, occupational requirement and social relations based on training, qualification and knowledge suited to non-ascriptive, national, universalistic and secular patterns of orientation underlying the status and role demanded by exigencies of functioning of modern social structure”. Education has been perceived to be a significant instrument in improving the status of women and consequently there have been efforts to improve the accessibility of girls and women to education. For a country, which has accepted the goal of development of women’s education, is foregone commitment.
Policy makers have recognised that apart from the political structure, corrective legislation and economic transformation, the formal education system has to be made more democratic and change-oriented. For modernising India, high hopes have been pinned on education which is considered as a significant determinant of aspiration, technology, productivity and mobility. In fact, it is a fundamental pre-requisite for participation in the various developmental activities of society. The level of recognition for women is dependent upon societal expectations of women’s role.

In the words of Gandhi Ji, “The question of the education of children cannot be solved unless stupendous efforts are made simultaneously to solve the problems of women’s education and that as long as there are no real mother teachers, who can successfully impart true education to our children, our generation will remain uneducated even though they may be going to schools”. Women are after all, human beings and have as much right to full development as men have. The position of women in any society is a true index of its culture and spiritual level.
The importance of women's education cannot be overlooked. Women play a very significant role in developing human resources, in improving household affairs, in moulding character of children and indirectly in educating the whole family. That is why education of women is considered more important than those of men. Real advancement in any of the fields of human life cannot be possible without women education. For happy and healthy homes, development of society, economic prosperity and national solidarity women education is very important. The University Education Commission (1948-49) has rightly remarked, "There cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for them it would more surely be passed on to the next generation".

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) reviewed Indian education in its totality. The commission gave special attention to women's education. For full development of our human resource the improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of even greater importance than that of men. The United Nations Declaration (1967) on the
elimination of discrimination against women stressed that all appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that girls and women—married or unmarried equal rights with men in education at all levels. The Sindhi Phadke (1967) observed that there arose awareness among the urban-middle class that women should have educational qualifications, which would enable them to take up a joint case circumstances make it necessary. So far the professions which are relatively more accessible to women have been medicine, nursing, teaching social work, etc. Now a number of new careers such as engineering, architecture, law, science, etc, are being opened to women. However, their entry in their fields is still very limited.

National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi (1971) recommended that the opportunity for women in programmes of national reconstruction, part-time and full time employment should be greatly increased apart from teaching, nursing and social service, which can have a useful role to play. They recommended that several new avenues covering all the different occupations would have to be opened out.
The National Policy on Education, 1968 stated that the education of girls should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Equality of educational opportunities for all sections of population was emphasised. The National Policy on Education, 1968 envisaged that education would be used as a strategy for achieving basic change in the status of women. The National Education System would play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and text books, women's studies will be promoted as part of various courses.

Traditional Indian society was characterised by 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.
During the British rule the state run educational system attempted to replace the stratification, based on caste to class. However, in the process the internal differentiation of power, based on caste lines remained intact as upper castes took up roles as upper classes in the changed scenario (Cornoy, 1974) while there is considerable documentation on the inequality in the field of education across various caste groups. Very little attempt has been made to record the horizontal differentiation that existed between men and women. Thus, in the changed context, no serious attempt was made to promote women’s education. Further gender inequality cut through caste/class as a sub category and affected the position of women in society.

After independence, the constitutional guarantee of equality changed the conceptual thinking on the educational development of women and urged women to play multiple roles in the polity, economy and society. The role of education in preparing women to take on this new responsibility achieved new significance.

The subject of women’s studies in India is riddled with contradictions. On one hand, the constitution not only grants
equality to women but also provides an affirmative action and for positive discrimination by empowering the state to make special provisions for women. India bestowed on women the right to vote much before this right was given to women in other advanced countries. India also has the distinction of being one of the few countries, which through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment ushered a sizeable number of women up to the political echelons of power at the decentralised governance level. Notwithstanding this, women are grossly under represented at the higher level of decision making in government. Educated working women have strong familiar values because the family in India is the major social economic and moral base of one’s identity. Further, this feature of primacy of familial responsibility is taken advantage of being employers who consider women as secondary earners and only temporary in the job market. Education is valued for its instrumental value so far as it equips women to get a job or help index knowledge that has significance. However, it does not enable a girl student to build up a challenging mind, which would question unfair social or defying traditional customs.

The position of women in Indian society has been extremely marginal. The status enjoyed by women has not yet
been equal to that of men. For the society, still it is governed by religious traditions and age-old social customs, which have deprived women from, enjoyed a status equal to that of men. In fact, Indian society has discriminated against women in every lifestyle. Every religion has its own chain to enchain women. Women have been prescribed in all possible manners to be well within the four walls. In India, women mostly remained attached to domestic and agricultural work. However, important and far-reaching efforts to emancipated women were made during the period of freedom movement. It is during the movement that women made their presence felt by participating in the movement. They positively demonstrated that they were in no way unequal to men. Many women played decisive roles in the freedom struggle. They were considerably enlightened to realise their potential and as a result, the Indian progress recognised equality of sexes as early as in 1931. In fact, during the 19th century, it was considered derogatory for a woman to take outside work as means of subsistence.
Dube (1963)\(^1\) points out, “There are unmistakable signs that the traditional conception regarding the place and role of women are slowly changing in contemporary Indian society. The process has been generated and aided by a variety of factors, which are operating almost simultaneously. Increasingly opportunities for modern education, greater geographical and occupational mobility and the emergence of new economic patterns are mainly responsible for this trend”.

In ‘Towards Equality Report’, “Education is recognised as a major instrument of social change. Understanding the ambivalence between the traditional and the new attitudes on women’s education is essential for only then one can examine the progress of women’s education in this country because it has an impact on academic planning, allocation of resources and development of values in society for both men and women”.

As stated above, all policy documents articulate the government’s concern to promote the education of women who constitute one-half of the human resource of this country. Notwithstanding the educational status of women is poor as it

\(^1\) Dube, S. C. 1963. “Men and Women’s Role in India.”
revealed by the gender gaps. This has as a profound impact on the development of the country and can be broadly examined at two levels.

1. Unequal representation of women at all levels of education.
2. Poor representation of women at decision-making levels.

As a result of these factors like educational expansion, legislation, economic pressure, urbanization, etc, a new section of women called working women has emerged and this section is rapidly expanding. However, for the last four to five decades tremendous changes have been seen in the status and role of women in the society. They have started coming out their seclusion and are working in factories, government offices, semi-government and private business establishments.

The employment of women has bought mixed reaction both from processional and lay persons. It is common knowledge that social changes evoke sometimes more negative than positive emotion. In regard to the employment of women, even social scientists, for most of the parts, took negative view. Psychiatrists gave negative comments. However, in one of the studies carried out by ILO dealing with women's employment, it was presumed
that motive differed with marital status both objectively as well as subjectively, due to women’s economic needs, and national necessity for increased production. Since the work conditions have important bearing on the employment of women. Some of the papers of this work deal with this issue. It has been found that most of the working women did not have any difficulty in securing a job. If there was any hurdle, it was the initial opposition by the family members. With regard to the attitude of women towards employment, it was found that both the working and non-working women approved the idea of women’s employment. A very large number of both the working and non-working women felt that in the name of giving freedom to women, men had over-burdened them with various types of work. Women have always made a very significant contribution to their societies, but a patriarchal conspiracy has prevented women’s contribution from receiving its due recognition. Women and their problems have acquired growing importance in our social milieu. Hence, after realising the significant role of the women it is desirable that greater emphasis should be given for her all-round development.

The education and occupation are considered to some extent inseparable. The highly educated women were engaged in
professions such as medicines, teaching, law, etc. Those who were non-lettered or low educated were employed in unskilled workforce. This shows relation of occupation and education. Since processional work like medicines, law, teaching in universities or administration could not be taken up without higher education, it was natural that educated working women were found in such occupations and those who were not educated would go to such occupation where education was not a prerequisite.

**Need and Importance of the Study**

The need of the hour is to harness the present favourable situation and make deliberate efforts to remove the gap between the education of the males and females. The measures of a women’s life today is more than half-empty, less than half-full. Admittedly, the women in the present day world are not completely invisible. Women are being given space in cultures of human kind and place in human history. Women are one of the greatest and excellent gifts of “Allah” without women the world cannot run and survive, she is doubtless and straightforward about her love, loyalty, courage, sincerity and dedication. Nehru
has once rightly said, “If you educate a man, you educate one individual; if you educate a woman, you educate the whole family”. It is reality that an educated woman is a true custodian of the character of man as well as social, economic and national advancement. Democratic setup also demands that the women should have equal opportunities in the field of education. Thus, if we want economic prosperity, cultural advancement and social reformation in a country it is essential that full attention should be paid to women’s education so that all women are educated.

If we compare the present position of women education with the past position, the situation is very encouraging. More schools and colleges for girls are being opened in cities, towns as well as in villages of the country but still more is required to be done. It is through the development of women education that India can become a really developed country. The number of women engaged in various occupations had been steadily increasing in India. They work as office secretaries, stenographers, telephone operators, broadcasting, journalists, nurses, teachers, air hostesses, etc. However, the number of women workers in engineering, law and medicine, etc is still meagre. According to 1991 census, the population of country has swelled to 843.93
million. Out of which 406 million are women. The number of working women has gone up to 1.5 million in organised sector. This shows that number of working women is improving for the last three decades. As the literacy rate grows further, the educated women will find more and more job opportunities in various fields. Census 2001 reveals that out of 54,41,341 people, 48 per cent i.e.; 25,92,024 are female in Kashmir region comprising of 1,920,945 women (74 per cent) in rural areas and 6,71,079 women (26 per cent) in urban areas. Out of 7,48,692, persons in the age group of 0-6 years, 49 per cent i.e.; 3,71,226 are female. About 89.5 per cent female (3,02,727) in their age-group belong to rural areas, whereas only 18.5 per cent females (68,499) of their age-group belong to urban areas. There is a sex ratio of 937 in the state and 20.7 thousand women are employed in Public Organised Sector and 1.9 thousand women are employed in private organised sector. (Jan, 200)²

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is backward so far as education and employment opportunities are concerned. But for the last three decades the female literacy rate is increasing and so is the case with employment of women. More and more women

are joining the occupational fields outside their homes. The State of Jammu and Kashmir has distinctive culture geographical position so there is much scope the study the various adjustments problems of working women in respect of home, health, social, emotional and marital adjustment. A very little effort by way of research has been undertake to throw light on different aspects of the life of women in Kashmir. It is against this research gap that the present investigator has very modestly attempted to undertake a comparative study of working and non-working women in Kashmir cultural settings. Thus the research problem formulated by the investigator reads as:

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem under investigation has been stated as “level of education, aspiration and adjustment of working and non-working women—a comparative study”.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study have been formulated as:
1. To identify the working and non-working women.
2. To study and compare the level of education of working and non-working women.
3. To study and compare the level of aspiration of working and non-working women.
4. To study and compare the level of adjustment of working and non-working women, with respect to home, health, social, emotional and marital adjustment.

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

1. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their level of education.
2. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their level of aspiration.
3. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their home adjustment.
4. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their health adjustment.

5. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their social adjustment.

6. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their emotional adjustment.

7. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their level of marital adjustment.

8. The working and non-working women do not differ significantly in their total adjustment.

Operational Definitions

The terms and variables used in the present study have operationally been defined as under:

1. Working Women Working women in the present study shall refer to educated women with educational qualification of Matric and above engaged in any government, semi-government, or private jobs.
2. Non-working Women  Non-working Women in the present study shall refer to educated women with educational qualification of Matric and above and who are not engage in any government or semi-government or private jobs.

3. Level of Aspiration  Level of aspiration in the present study shall refer the scores obtained by the respondents on level of aspiration scale developed by Shah and Brgava. The scores obtained on the scale will reflect the level of aspiration of working and nonworking women.

4. Adjustment  Adjustment in the present study shall refer the scores obtained by the respondents on the Bell’s Adjustment Inventory (Adult Form). These scores will reflect the level of adjustment under the areas of home, health, social, emotional and total adjustments.

5. Marital Adjustment  Marital adjustment for the present study shall refer the scores obtained by the respondents on R. H. M. Singh’s Marital Adjustment Inventory. These scores will reflect the marital adjustment of working and non-working women.