CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

‘There isn’t single country in the world-not one-where men and women enjoy completely equal opportunity... that is why we must change attitudes and policies. The aim must be to give each and every human being greater freedom to make choices about their own lives....’

-Gro Harlem Brundtland

World Conference on Women, Beijing, 2006

When researcher select the topic, one should go through the studies done in past. As such researches on the role of education on women empowerment was not done before but there are few studies regarding education & empowerment

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of referred literature on previously made studies or research will give you correct direction to your study or research. The study helps in planning your project.

As per Walter R. Brog.

“The literature in any field form a foundation upon which all the future work will be built”

The study of referred literature provides scientific and logic support to the study being undertaken. The study provides various bottleneck on the subject on which the student can add and develops suitable means and methodology and move further his work. The referred literature provides ideal guidance to plan the study being carried out by the student.

2.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.31 Studies on women empowerment

The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world. The International Women’s Day celebrated on 8th march every year has become a day of demonstration for equal opportunity and solidarity. But the question arises how relevant is celebration of Women’s Day in view of the fact that their position in the society has not changed much. They are still treated as the ‘weaker sex’ who needs to be protected entire life-be it by her father, husband or son. The ‘New Age Women’ and the ‘Women of Substance’ in true terms are just words in books.

Women constitute about half of the total population of country but they suffer from many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rates, labour participation rates earnings. Social, economic and political
Empowerment is the need of the day, as it is one only surest way of making women “equal partners in development”. The process of women empowerment is conceptualized in terms of personal assertions, self-esteem and confidence, ability to protect themselves as women attaining socio-political participation and economic independence, ownership of productive assets and provide leadership in women.

The Government has been implementing various schemes for the socio-economic advancement and development of women in the country. The ‘National Policy for Empowerment of women’ was adopted in 2001 with the objective of ensuring women their rightful place in society by empowering them as agents of socio-economic change and development.

‘Empowerment of women’, is therefore, an important approach adopted in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) for development of women. Two important schemes in the areas of education viz ‘Sarv-Shiksha Abhiyan’ and ‘Mahila Samakhya’ are being implemented by department of Elementary Education and Literacy. A number of other schemes include Swyamvidh, Swashakti, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Swavalamban, and support to training-cum-Employment Programme (STEP), Swadhar, and Hostel for working women.

Women as a group of the human community their status, role and problems have been an important issue of debates among the intellectuals from pretty time.

Writers, thinkers, researchers and discoveries say that the first female made the transition from an ape to a human erectus who stood on her ‘Two Feet’ and they named her ‘Lucy’ and she is the first female. I understand judeo, Christian and Islamic religions teach us that ‘Adam and Eve’ the first from whom we all emerged. It is said that women is the indispensable for human being as air and water are essential for living on this earth. Then why throughout history and in many societies including India gender inequality is part and parcel of an accepted male dominated culture.

Women and men are different in four manners. They think and act differently in some given conditions. Men are egoist, arrogant, assertive and dominate. Men and women have their specific areas of strengths and weaknesses but understanding is the mandatory. If they understand each other they can have better relationship. But from the long time, the women on this earth were treated as a sort of thing. Her place in this society was not like other human being. She has no rights even she cannot move nor does anything at her will. In Hindu Shasta’s, she has been branded just like animals. ‘Great poet of Hindi-“Tulsi Das” said in Ramayan ‘Dhol, Ganwar, Shudra, Pashu, Naari-Ye Sab Tadan Ke Adhikari’, according to this statement one can easily understand that what status has been granted to our mothers. There is not only one example; we have many examples of this type.

Just see, another example of women’s status-Mahabharata “Draupadi” was reduced to the status of a bitch, as she was the wife of
Five Pandwas. She was not only the wife of Five Pandwas, she put at stake in gambling by none else than the so-called Dharmraj Yudhishthar!

One more example-in Manusmriti women were treated as animals and slave. Such was the placement earmarked to our daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and grandmothers that the heads of humanity bend upon down with shame. As Swami Vivekananda said, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing”.

Our society has never been reluctant to accept female politicians at the power centre. India has respected women leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Indira Gandhi, Mamta Banerji, Sheila Dikshit, Jayalalitha, Sushma Swaraj to name a few. The year 2020 will no doubt see more women politicians at the helm of affairs and our experts are confident that women will make a better administrator, and she will clean up the mess created by men.

2.32 Benefits of education for women:

Education as a means to promote development in social & economic condition

According to Dreze and Sen, education has five intrinsic values for improving social and economic conditions in Third World countries, both benefits for communities and societies, as well as individual social benefits.

First of all education gives personal benefits for the individual in terms of self-confidence leading to motivation and interests in society. Social interactions are easier when persons are capable of reading a newspaper about social and political issues in the community and the rest of the World.

Secondly, education gives access to a wider range of job opportunities and in general enables persons to take advantage of economic opportunities and to participate in local politics.

Thirdly, a higher literacy rate facilitates public debates and demands for health care, social security and other needs. Public discussions enable people to hold politicians accountable for their promises of improvements in the social service sector. Information on ones society provides better possibilities for utilizing the service system.

Fourthly, education indirectly prevents child labour, to the extent that implementation of legislation of basic education for all children, force parents to send their children to school which again gives less time for labour. Entering school broadens horizons for young people. This means that meeting other children and young people could result in new ideas of different opportunities in the future.

The fifth effect of education and literacy enables oppressed groups in a society to become politically organized. Being a larger group makes it easier
to insist on ones rights and demands concerning social and politically issues. An organized group achieves visibility in the society and is harder to oppress. The ability to resist operation not only concerns disadvantaged groups in society, but education does also have positive effects within families when girls are being educated (Dreze & Sen. 2002).

Political and economic spheres has been gender-blind, but in the late 1970s this respective changed. In 1979 “Fertility and Education: What do we really know?” was published by Cochrane. A large number of studies and research concerning this subject followed, and concluded the existence of a high correlation between women’s schooling level and a decline in infant mortality and fertility rates. Women who had completed basic education were able to make use of health facilities and service for their children and had a higher interest in sending their children to school (Dighe 1998). 1990 was proclaimed to be the international literacy year; by the UN. The focus on education for women continued during the 1990s and results of different researches showed that investment in this area gave the highest “output” (compared to earlier development investments focusing primarily on production and industrial growth) both at socio-economic, cultural and political levels.

Before the mid 1970s people occupied with development issues has paid little attributed from women (Fink 1992). Educating women also result in economic benefits. In Africa, for example, 46% of the agricultural workforce is female. Educating these women will increase productivity, enabling them to contribute to the protection of the environment and preservation of water and energy will increase economic growth markedly. Investment in education for girls and women has, according to Shultz, been one of the factors why Southeast Asia, East Asia and Latin America have a significant progress in social and economic growth. Conversely, growth has for instance in Middle East and North Africa been of limited scale which according to Schultz is one of the consequences of a lacking investment in the education of girls and women (Schultz 2001:2008) economic analysis on wage returns shows a lower fertility rate and infant mortality and a higher GNP per capital and life expectancy when a larger number of girls are enrolled in primary education. Furthermore does a study of countries with equity of about 100% enrolment rate at primary level, show higher GNP and lower fertility rates when more girls are enrolled in secondary education. This indicates the necessity of educating women at secondary level as well, since it not only gives a higher personal freedom as Dreze and Sen Mention. But it also affects children, as well as the rest of the society in a positive way.

2.33 Education and development of women

“In order to awaken the people, it is the women who have to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves and the country moves: and through the women, its children are brought into the picture and given the opportunity of a healthier life and better training. Thus, through the children of today we build the India tomorrow.”

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Traditionally, women are more backward in every respect in our society comparatively than men. Women’s education is an instrument for liberation not only of women but of the Indian society as whole. During the last three decades, planning of the socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged groups has been accelerated in India. It is only in the last decade beginning with the International Women’s Year in 1975 followed by the attention of planners in India has been specially focused on women.

The history of mankind reveals that there was a time when it was not essential for everyone to learn, or to read and write. The life was so simple and the activities of a person were confined to his small village community and that of women were limited to their respective families only. With the passage of time, the complexity of life also increased. Now activity of the people is no more confined to the boundaries of their communities/families but has tremendously grown in the recent century. The scientific Knowledge and technology have entered the sphere of our day-to-day life-and-culture. But in this process women are backward. Very few of them are getting the minimum fruits of present development of our country. But the major portion of the poor section, both urban and rural areas, are completely deprived of it, more particularly the women in rural areas, and though it is not denied that till now our Indian society is completely male-dominated, women are exploited, oppressed and deprived in every sphere of life whether socially, economically, politically or culturally. But if we read the history of social change in India we will observe that the position of women today is not as equal as with the position of women in ancient period it was. Once it was time when the position of women in our society was very high, especially in Vedic period the educational status of women were almost equal to men. For example, we can say about Gargi, Maitreyi, Lilavati, etc. Even if we go back little more we learn that once it was time when women were the heads of the families. But in course of time women became the prisoners of our walls in the little home among their family members, especially to serve the men. But society cannot stand for ever in a particular place. So again, women are coming out of their small cottages to serve themselves for the greater interest of the society. Still there are some obstacles regarding their coming out from home for the society which prevents them to participate in Nation’s development.

1. **Women and education**

The lack of education is the main cause for which women are the sufferer, more than men. The lack of education means the lack of self-reliance, self-confidence for which women are not able to come out of their problems. So educating a woman means educating a family. That’s why our great social scientist Swamiji said, “Educate your women first and leave them to themselves, then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them”.

As per one estimate, about 850 million people in the world are illiterates. Out of these, about 50 percent are in India alone. But if we take illiteracy rate among women the situation becomes more alarming. Four out of five women in this country are illiterates that mean they are denied the
benefits of modern knowledge, improvement of functional skills and behavioral changes towards modernization. No doubt that there has been a tendency towards literacy in post-Independence era, but women to a large extent have been ignored. Consequently, a considerable majority of the women particularly from rural areas continue to be either illiterate or semi-literate. It means women are not given due opportunities in order to enable them to take the benefit of the modern technology.

2. Women and law

Illiteracy creates a barrier to the realization of constitutional goals of social justice and equality of status of opportunity between men and women. After Independence various laws were enacted to ensure equality, social justice and fraternity, enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution. Under Indian Constitution every citizen enjoys safeguard against exploitation and various measures have been taken to ensure the protection and equal opportunity to women. But the noble ideals enshrined in the Constitution are hardly followed in practice.

They are not aware about the various programmes of social-welfare and development which is actually meant for their improvement. Policies to extend educational opportunities (both formal and non-formal) to women have failed to bridge the knowledge gap between men and women which was emphasized as the main task by the National Committee on Women’s Education in 1958. So it is recognized that without education women cannot make themselves liberated out of their problems and unless women are developed in a country the nation cannot develop as a whole with men alone.

Different Development Programme for Women:

After Independence major emphasis was placed on different development projects for rural and urban areas including special programmes for women. So, many programmes for women have been planned and also implemented such as ‘Functional literacy for women’. In ‘Integrated child development services programmes were lamented with the aims and objectives to educate women as follows:

(1) Making women more conscious of the right and responsibilities, the implications of the laws governing women’s status in society and developing and understanding about the various manifest and concealed ways which cause women’s oppression:
(2) Assisting women to achieve economic viability through acquisition of literacy and other necessary skills and resources:
(3) Providing women access to knowledge in areas like health, child care, nutrition and family planning:
(4) Assisting women to form their own groups for learning and productive activity, and strengthening their participation in the developmental process.

To reach these aims and objectives, sufficient preparations have been made such as human resource (who will work for them?) planning and
management (how will work?) need based curriculum (what kind of content areas should be covered?), sufficient teaching, and learning materials, appropriate methodology, proper training, monitoring and evaluation etc.

Well, all the ideas above-mentioned are very good. But what do the result says after implementing those programmes up to this? What do the statistics say? – Not absolutely, but a very few number of participants are getting the benefits of development and the rest major portion is out of it. Now the question simply arises that- What are the obstacles in the way of women’s lives to get education for coming out of their problems? Various factors are responsible for the low education development of women. These factors can be grouped under the categories namely, economic, social and others.

3. Economic factors

Studies have revealed that “Women carry two-thirds of the total work load in the country and receive not more than 10% of the total wages, out of which they probably do not get even 1% for their own use. An important reason for the low participation of girls in education among the disadvantaged sections of the population is that girls from a very early age begin to take care of their younger siblings and to house-hold work to relieve their parents to go out for work. Such girls indirectly generate income.

Again, although no school fees may be charged, certain items like books, stationary and uniform entail costs which poor family would be unwilling to incur for sending their daughters to school. If the girls can directly earn some income, for example, as a domestic servant, the income forgone by her, if she is sent to school, is an additional cost which the family may not be prepared to meet. Further, when resources are limited and education has to compete for resources with various other sectors of the economy, women’s education will find it even more difficult to get adequate resources and attention from planners who are generally men with not very favorable attitude forwards women’s education.

Social factors: This plays an important role in inhibiting the participation of women in education. Early marriage, frequent pregnancy, affects the enrolment rates of girls in education. Most important, however, is the attitude towards girls which is widely prevalent, especially among the poor and in rural areas. The role of girls is restricted and considered to be useful both by the parents and the community (amongst whom education has not made much progress) and hence, the low participation of girls in education. On the other hand, as boys are regarded as belonging to the world of work, their education is encouraged. Again women are regarded to be passive and pliant units in social system which confers on them a subordinate status (unfortunately, women themselves accept such an attitude as being culturally conditioned for it) and their education is feared as it may make the women question such a system: hence, the negative attitude towards education of women.

Due to our cultural and social heritage parents are often reluctant to send their daughters to boys’ schools, especially for girls (though the
percentage of such institutions is very few in numbers) inhibit their participation in education. The lack of women teacher and instructress similarly hinders the progress and do not suit girls in rural areas as they are required for work either at home or in rural areas as they required for work higher at home or in fields at the same time: hence, their low participation in school education. The unattractive school environment, especially in mixed schools, lack of physical facilities for sitting in class and the discriminating attitudes of teachers towards girls, etc., also adversely affect the participation of girls in education. Where schools are located at a distance from the home, especially also inhibits the participation of girls in education. There are some more other factors for which women are not able to participate in education. If we list, it would be a long history, but I do not want to go far, the above-mentioned are enough. Any how these are the barriers for which most of the women are not getting proper education and to their ignorance till now, after 40 years of Independence women are not independent. They are not free from male domination. They are sufferers of social evils and prejudices like cruel dowry system, caste system, etc. They have no economic independence, - working a lot for the family (especially household work) and getting nothing. Here it is also said that among poor unorganized sector women are economically exploited more than men. In rural areas in the fields for the same works female workers get fewer wages than male workers. Also politically women are exploited. The equal right and protection for both men and women already mentioned in our Constitution are not applicable in practical life. And culturally, how they are not oppressed? There is only one answer according to Paulo Freire, - “The culture of silence”- to have patience to tolerate all the exploitations done by the others.

What should be the remedial measures to promote women’s education to come out of their problems: Suggestions for educational improvement of women: The measures to promote women’s education will have to take into consideration the factors which inhibit the participation of women in the formal education system. Many of these measures have already been adopted in certain places, but in most cases partially have less impact. The measures need to be adopted uniformly and in a big way. The measures being suggested are as follows:

- Education for girls up to the secondary stage should be made free in all parts of the country. Besides, incentives like free supply of books, stationery, uniforms, mid-day meals, attendance- scholarships and stipends should be provided at least to the 50% (instead of the mere 20% at present) of the girls who hail from the poorer sections of society. Such measures would reduce the economic constraints which stand in the way of greater participation of girls in education.
- Separate schools for girls should be established wherever there is a demand for them. However, the same standards and courses should be made available in such schools as in mixed schools.
- More women teachers should be employed and special facilities should be provided to attract them especially to the rural areas,
for instance, they could be given free accommodation, special allowance, etc. where women teachers are still not available, at least school matrons should be appointed to look after the girls students.

- The school environment should be made more attractive so that girls’ participation in the educational system is greater than at present. Adequate physical facilities like proper seats in the class, separate toilets, and suitable extra-curricular activities and games should be made available, in the school for girls and especially in mixed schools.

- The time schedule of the schools should be made flexible so that girls can attend classes when they are free from domestic chores.

- The common and relevant curriculum for boys and girls should be introduced to have equal educational opportunity and later equal job opportunity.

- Child care centers of Balwadis as part of the elementary education system are necessary to keep the siblings (for whom the girls are able to attend classes in the schools).

- Schools for girls should be set up at easy walking distance from their homes. Where this is not possible, adequate arrangements for free or cheap hostel facilities for girls should be provided.

- Special campaigns should be launched to change people’s attitude in favor of girl’s education. Such attitudinal changes are more likely if the benefits of education for girls are obvious, for instance, schools can provide education which is relevant to their homes better in later life or would help them to enhance their income for women will have to be generated which is by no means an easy task.

- Impart vocational or employment related knowledge and skills.

- Considering the inadequacy of the educational needs of women the importance of non-formal programmes cannot be over-emphasized. However, the non-formal programmes available at present tend to be as ineffectively utilized by women as the formal education opportunities and the socio-economic factors acting as barriers in both the cases are the same. Social constraints affect women as covertly as school-age girls and the whole value complex attached to the norm of house-bound women limit women’s access to non-formal programmes. For example, while women may work the whole day in the field, an agricultural extension programmes would be directed only to male farmers. Again, economic constraints loom large where expenditure is involved or where paid leave facilities are not provided to working women. Women with family responsibilities are left with little time after the endless drudgery of household chores to participate in educational programmes. Besides, there are no infrastructural facilities like child care services and domestic assistance to facilitate their participation.

- While devising non-formal education programmes for women care needs to be taken that these:
• Enhance awareness:
• Include literacy and numeracy as learning tools:
• Offer general education related to knowledge and skill base required for improving the quality of life:

And

For girls less than 15 years of age, essential general education leading to the level reached after the completion of first cycle of the formal system is required. They also need to be encouraged a great deal to enter the formal education system. The content of education for such girls will have to be derived directly from their real life situation and work activities so that it is not divorced from reality as otherwise the non-formal system would prove to be as ineffective as the unrealistic formal system.

For the age-group above 15 years, continuing education programmes outside the formal system (e.g., literacy programmes, part-time secondary and tertiary education, open universities, distance education through mass media leading to certification and may offer an opportunity to reenter the formal education system) need to be provided according to the educational level already attained by them. Such women could complete their education and to enter suitable occupations, or if already working, to advance in their careers. The latter would also necessitate vocational training programmes, those relating to health, family-life, nutrition, child care, home-management, women’s rights, civil responsibilities, generation of awareness of the role of women, whether working or not.

Mention may be made of the factors which would help in effective utilization of various non-formal programmes. Many of them are common to the formal education system.

There are:

• Access to greater number of non-formal programmes with multiple alternatives for learners to choose from, and provisions of or subsidized programmes:
• Provision of more employment opportunities.
• Motivation schemes like paid leave and facilities as child care centers to enable women to participate in the programmes:
• Time and labor saving devices to simplify household work:
• Support within the home including the concept of shared responsibilities:
• Maximum utilization of existing infrastructure, e.g., formal school buildings for providing non-formal education. Some of these factors have far-reaching implications and are by no means easy to ensure. In all non-formal education programmes special attention should be given to the needs of rural women who are the most disadvantaged, both socially and economically.

There is an urgent need to give top priority to women’s education in the coming years to ensure development with social justice in the country. The problem of women’s development, therefore, calls for sincere, dedicated all-out efforts from the whole of society, from planners, administrators,
philanthropists and social and educational workers. A movement for women’s education in India will have to strike the very root of the parasitic system of social inequalities in the country.

2.34 Need for empowerment of female

Of late the incidence of female headed households is on the increase. In many developing countries vast changes are taking place at the elementary level of ‘family’ mainly because of economic hardship suffered. The causes for the rising incidence of female headship are varied. While marital breakdown and preference for the status of unmarried mother are the major reasons as far as advanced countries are concerned, in the case of developing countries widowhood and desertion are found to be the major reasons, the latter especially among the low income group. Migration of men to urban areas in search of wage employment is another important contributory phenomenon. In the recent past autonomous movement of women in search of employment is on the increase which causes female headship in urban areas. Based on two different but complementary research perspectives viz. system oriented perspective and the actor oriented perspective it is believed that increasing number of women headed households is associated with economic marginality.

The causes for concern on female headedness are many. Most female heads live with severe financial constraints. Their work is often low paid and menial. Most of them have no marketable skills because of poor education and lack of training. They cannot be choosy in their employment but should take up what they can procure which makes them vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. The growing inequality between male headed and female headed households is another cause for concern. The children who grow up in such households suffer poverty from childhood which is unacceptable. Hence the need for identification and empowerment of female heads of households.

In order to remove the hardships suffered by the female heads the government should come out with some realistic programmes. First of all efforts should be made to identify female headed households. Once they are identified the really deserving should be assisted with income generating activities. Once again the sons of the female heads should not be offered jobs since there is no guarantee that the widowed mothers will be taken care of. NGOs are already doing a good deal of service to the deserted women. But the magnitude of the problem is so vast and so severe especially at the destitute’ level that NGO activity alone will not suffice. Among the female heads whoever are hale and healthy should be imparted some skill so as to enable them to make a living out of it. But all above are easily said than done. The financial requirements are quite heavy. But now the time has come for identification of such female headed households in view of their increasing number and the growing inequality between female and male headed households. At least a bread through should be made by including some relevant questions in the existing census/NSS schedules. One round of NSS should be completely devoted to the identification of female headed
households which may help policy planners devise appropriate alleviation measures.

At the community level one important strategy of empowerment of female heads is promotion of ‘self help group’. Due to scarce resources and the problem of identification of female heads the government may not be very effective and in such a context the concerned target group should take care of itself. In the intervention strategies of the voluntary sector ‘self help’ has emerged as a new paradigm. Two important elements of this approach are building upon what the rural poor have rather than what they lack and facilitating and promoting their organizations. The underlying assumption behind self help promotion is by ‘being reached the position of the poor is weakened and not strengthened’ by merely ‘being reached’ the poor tend to become dependent on development agencies and they are being forced to accept the development process which is not of their own making. It does not mean that the development agencies have no role to play. Instead of playing a ‘supportive role’ they can play a ‘directive role’. ‘Self help’ implies development of the bargaining power of the poor to the extent that outside agencies cannot unilaterally impose their conditions and regulations upon the rural poor as passive recipients. Thus either the NGOs can mobilize the poor female heads and promote group employment schemes and collective action for their social economic needs or the female heads themselves to organize plan and execute programmes for their welfare. Such self help promotion strategies are likely to be more effective and realistic than the programmes passed on by outside development agencies. Such self-help organizations could also bring pressure on the government to identify appreciates the problems and extends help to female heads of household.

The government and voluntary organizations may at the most provide employment opportunity to reduce the economic vulnerability of female heads. But the attitudinal change has to come about in the minds of people towards the treatment of widows/separated and this could be done only through persistent education of people on this issue through press, visual media meetings etc. The secondary status accorded to women should be done away with both at the attitudinal and practical levels. Since women heads of households are not one homogeneous group they should be classified as de-jure and de-facto in each socio-economic category for evolving suitable policy measures. In view of the rising incidence of female headed household’s empowerment of such female heads is an urgent necessity warranting immediate action by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

2.35 Empowerment of women on going Approaches and strategies

Women empowerment is fast emerging as an important slogan for the 1990s. This slogan is gradually being integrated with that of participation, advanced so vociferously by many in the late 1970s and 1980s, with the accent of development progress becoming people centred and equitably distributed. As a result, women’s subordinate position has been recognized and the need to improve their “status” beyond the traditional sphere became a
significant step forward in the rhetoric of international development. It was also recognized that there is a need for equal participation of women and men in every sphere of national life for the purpose of national development and also for the better standard of living.

Gender equality represented by fairer opportunities for women and better access to education, childcare, credit and employment contribute to their development. It is also recognized that investing in women’s capabilities and empowering them to achieve their choices is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overact development of the nation. The goals and commitments of the recent series of global summits provide a powerful new framework and many concrete specifics for concerted action. The Cairo Conference was a challenge to the world to accept that if we are to deal with population issues in a truly serious and meaningful way, it requires the emancipation and empowerment of women.

As a result, in India, women were recognized as a separate target group after 1980, and the government began to direct its effort towards mainstreaming of women into the national developmental process. Their major approaches were adopted one after the other by the government towards the development of women viz., the welfare approach, the anti-poverty approach and the equity/equality approach. While the welfares approach laid stress on the importance of women’s pates as wives and mothers and careers of family welfare the anti-poverty approach was built on two strategies – need for recognizing women’s participation to family income paid and unpaid works. There was full effort to mobilize poor women and give them economic support through income generating projects and co-operative functioning. The equity/equality approach focuses on women’s actual productive contribution rather than looking at it from the traditional role as wives and mothers. The aim in this approach is to ensure women’s rightful and equal position in society through direct programmes that would enhance women’s activities in both the household as well as market spheres. Thus began the strategy for the empowerment of women in India.

Some of the empowerment mechanisms in India could be identified as follows:

- Literacy and higher education;
- Better health care for herself and her children;
- Higher age at marriage;
- Greater work participation in modernized sector;
- Necessary financial and service support for self-employment;
- Opportunities for higher positions of power;
- Complete knowledge of her rights; and above all
- Self-reliance, self-respect and dignity of being a woman.

The Constitution of India made a deliberate radical departure from the inherited social system, by granting to women equal social and political status. Constitutional equal status meant that every adult female, whatever her social position, or accomplishments had the opportunity to function as a citizen and individual partner in the task of nation building. With the exception of cultural
empowerment of women, the following aspects of women empowerment are given importance such as, full participation of women in democracy (political empowerment); the education of girls (social empowerment); the eradication of gender barriers in employment (economic empowerment); and land rights and legal machinery (legal empowerment). Let us now analyze each aspect of empowerment of women in detail.

2.36 Studies on Political empowerment of women

The political empowerment of women is one of the most important aspects in the overall empowerment of women for it gives women the capacity to influence the decision-making process. The political empowerment of women in India has made considerable strides with only 4.4 percent women being represented in the first Parliament of 1952-57 to 7.4 percent in the election of 1996. Women’s representation in the Rajya-Sabha has however, shown greater improvement, having increased from 7.7 percent in 1952 to 15.5 percent in 1991. Besides the 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj institutions is certainly a revolutionary step towards empowerment of rural women. The Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendments paved the way for the emergence of about one million women as leaders and decision-makers in the rural and urban elected bodies. Of these, 75000 will be Chairpersons in rural areas. This will really empower women politically at the grass-roots level in a revolutionary fashion and it will enable them to take interest at the local level to energize and improve the situation of women in areas like health, education and employment, which essential to their basic existence, This will also train them for further political assertions in the form of Members of State Legislatures and Parliament. As a result of the system of periodical elections, woman even in remote rural areas of the country are now familiar with the elections though not with their mystique.

Despite their vast numerical strength, women occupy a marginalized position in society because of several socio-economic constraints. This has inhibited effective participation of women in political processes and the institutional structure of democracy. Even after five decades of the grant of political equality, statistics have over the years revealed that while there is an acceptable visible manifestation of gender quality at the voter level, gender visibility within the power structures show cause for woman concern. According to the document on Women’s Development (1985), women’s role in political structure had virtually remained unchanged, despite the rapid growth of informal political activity by them.

In general the women candidates have to cross three hurdles before they could aspire to enter the formal political structures - (a) they should be willing to stand for elections, (b) they should be judged suitable by the party electorate which is the “gate-keeper of power and (c) they have to be voter friendly. Besides, broad-based political participation of women has been severely limited due to the nexus of traditional factors such as considerations of caste religion and feudal and family status. Further, the political parties do not favour the nomination of women candidates, although the political parties
do have a Women’s wing, few women have access to the inner ring of the party. This is the core of the power structure. This is true of the Indian political system as well. Majority of the women; are illiterate not politically conscious due to the lack of information and political awareness and they make their choice on the basis of suggestions from male members of the family. As a result, women were left on the periphery of political process.

However, with the Panchayati Raj institutions getting Constitutional status by way of the Seventy-third Amendment Act, it is hoped that the women will have greater participation in the political process and decision-making capacity as the Act made such a role mandatory and universal in the whole of India. But, it must be remembered that a change cannot be brought about overnight. Women have been subjected to exploitation forages and this cannot break free of all the shackles of illiteracy, poverty and tradition at one stroke. Even today, most of the women are uneducated, have little or no property and Live in a tradition-bound society. In such a case, the politically powerful can make them contest elections for their own political gains. Another problem is that women, especially in rural areas, would not come forward to fight the elections. In case, they do come forward, it would be along the patriarchal whip, under the command and guidance of the males, as proxies and signing or stamping on the dotted lines. But it is a fact that a breakthrough has been made.

Gender as a political ideology view, women a basically different from men-psychologically, physiologically and often intellectually. Women’s perception of life is a web. Man’s is that of a ladder. Women emphasize stress attachment, affiliation, empathy and interdependence. Men emphasize competition, independence, separation and formal rights. Combined with the first-past the winning post-theory, an inherent weakness of the democratic electoral process, the visibility issue gets further compounded (Shanti, K2006)

Gender empowerment strategies under these circumstances require structural systemic change and basic attitudinal and value change. The real empowerment of women requires a thorough going renewal of the political process on a democratic basis. Unless women are equipped with the necessary skill in political decision-making, their increased representation in the local bodies may not alter the existing set up. It is, therefore necessary to sensitize the women in the women’s perspective, not in the narrow feminist sense, but in the sense of honourable co-existence with men for this will enable women to exercise their “will” and advance towards their complete emancipation. This, of course, requires sensitizing men as well, as they are currently the holders of power. Besides the success of the Panchayati Raj institutions largely depends on the collective participation, they are at a take off point, where the basic indicators are positive and the women who will be elected in the election have a challenging and an operas task ahead. And, thus there is a need to extend greater affirmative action from the Panchayati level, to the state and national level and political conscious raising and supportive action by women’s organization at the voter level to enhance self-potency and political efficacy. If these measures are followed, political
participation of women will open up new vistas of development, which will automatically result in the real political empowerment of women in the society.

2.37 Studies on Social Empowerment of women

We are convinced that women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

- Beijing Declaration, 2006

In this section an attempt is made to analyses the wise scope for women empowerment. Empowerment of women has relevance in all the walks of line. The areas of women empowerment can be demarcated conveniently into political, social, economic, cultural and psychological. Social empowerment deals with empowerment at the level of family, community and at personal level which includes psychological and physical health of women. Other areas include religion, literature, arts, media, history, legislation, human rights and social movements.

1. Social Empowerment of women at the level of family

Family is the first agency to create discrimination and gender injustice. Domestic empowerment is concerned with freedom and autonomy of women in the family or in the households; both at parental as well as in in-laws’ houses. There are several traditions and customs related to dressing up, food habits, space for movements etc. that are discriminatory. And domestic empowerment envisages ensuring equality for women in domestic life. Empowerment in the domestic field deals with socialization at home, succession, inheritance, the issue of domestic and social space, mobility, status and role at home, and so on.

Social space for women is very restricted in Indian context. The friendship circle of girls especially in rural areas is very limited. Mobility and social interactions of rural women are governed by culture and traditions. Seemanthini Niranjana (2006) remark that there is a relative lack of theorization on the spatial basis of social life in the domains of sociology and anthropology and a reluctance to conceptualist the body more fully in gender studies. Seeking to rectify these tendencies, she provides accounts of the domains and activities of women; describes cultural perceptions and experiences of the female body; explores gender in the ritual realm; and provides suggestions for formulating a basis for female agency within a space-body matrix.

The physical space of the domestic world where women reside provides an important clue to an understanding of their socio-economic position in India. Space at the household which women usually occupy is very limited and secluded. Even when they take up the yoke of the domestic responsibilities, they are rather invisible at their households. The expansion of physical space of the household for women is an important concern of her domestic empowerment. She is no longer the subdued daughter in law,
seldom heard or seen, but a more vocal and visible wife and mother with
greater share in decision making in the family.

In an extended family, daughter-in-law occupies relatively low status compared to other women of the household. Her appearance, mobility, freedom, and communication are restricted at in laws' house. The status of a daughter-in-law does not become better until she becomes a mother-in-law. Only with the attainment of the position of mother-in-low did women attain a position of respect in the joint family. The joint family discouraged public participation of women because the greater authority of older women prevented younger women from breaking out of traditionally approved female behavior patterns. Divorce is considered a taboo in our society and a divorced woman looked upon with displeasure and disapproval.

The socio-economic empowerment of women in the family in reality is the urgent need of hour. This seems to be the best way to stop the degeneration of the society and to bring real harmony, happiness, progress, prosperity and peace in the world. It is a very complex phenomenon and needs multi-dimensional, multi-pronged and multi-disciplined handling. What women do and are expected to do vary, of course, with economy, climate, political or religious ideologies and cultures, but there is throughout the world a core of common tasks which women everywhere are required to perform. These include housework like, cooking, cleaning and sweeping, care of small children and so on. In addition providing these services, a rural woman is also responsible for the household production of food, care of herds, etc. Moreover often rural women spend her time fetching water and fuel. Division of labor by gender is most often evident. More than any other concept, the concept of equal sharing of household and family work is universal goal of the women’s movement. (Balasubramahnyam, 2005)

Chirita Benerji (2007) weaves a warm, evocative tapestry out of memories of food, ritual and women’s lives in Bengal. She writes about growing up from girlhood to womanhood in her native land, food and ritual become intimate experiences, which definitively shape day-to-day life for the women of that culture. Food and cuisine are nothing simple to Bengal; they are essential to the Indian mental and cultural landscape. Like in agricultural communities the world over, food and ritual, food and social custom, food and culture, are deeply imprecated. Women’s lives are closely associated with the production and preparation of food. Certain foods are ‘forbidden’ which Indian windows cannot eat. Association of food with status is clear.

**Education:** Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including
the Scheduled Castes/Minorities. Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.

**Health:** A holistic approach to women’s health which includes both nutrition and health services will be adopted and special attention will be given to the needs of women and the girl at all stages of the life cycle. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern. This policy reiterates the national demographic goals for Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) set out in the National Population policy 2004.

**Nutrition:** In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages VIZ., infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase, focused attention would be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle. This is also important in view of the critical link between the health of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women with the health of infant and young children. Special efforts will be made to tackle the problem of macro and micro nutrient deficiencies especially amongst pregnant lactating women as it leads to various diseases and disabilities.

**Science and Technology:** Programs will be strengthened to bring about a greater involvement of women in science and technology. These will include measures to motivate girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs involve women fully. Efforts to develop a scientific temper and awareness will also be stepped up. Special measures would be taken for their training in areas where they have special skills like communication and information technology. Effort to develop appropriate technologies suited to women’s needs as well as to reduce their drudgery will be given a special focus too.

**Violence against women:** All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices shall be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence. Institutions and mechanisms/schemes for assistance will be created and strengthened for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at work place and customs like dowry; for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence. A special emphasis will also be laid on programmes and measures to deal with trafficking in women and girls.

It is often argued that education is powerful tool in the emancipation and empowerment of women indeed the different co members of the United Nations (e.g. UNICEF) and experts in women’s development argue for women’s education as the basic status in women’s quality. It has been reported as a crucial factor for development of women as it not only helps women to gain knowledge which is the necessary courage an inner strength to face the challenges. It will also enable them to procure a job and supreme
the income of the family and achieve social status. Education, especially of women, has a major impact on health and nutrition, and is the key of developing a sustainable strategy for population control. Moreover, educated women could play an equally important role as men in nation building. Thus there is no denying the fact that education empowers women.

One of the recommendations of the National policy on Education (1986) by the Government of India is to promote “empowerment” of women through the agency of education and it is considered to be a landmark in the approach to women’s education. The national Literacy Mission is another step towards eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15 – 35 years by the year 1995. Women’s education has assumed special significance in the content of planned development as education was included in the Sixth Five Year Plan as a major programme for the development of women. The internalization of elementary education, enrolment and retention of girls in the schools, promotion of Balwadis and crèches, increasing the number of girls’ hostels, women’s polytechnics and multipurpose institutions and adult education programmes were some of the steps taken to boost women’s education. This is being done with the hope that once illiteracy is removed, other avenues of development get opened automatically.

In spite of these appreciable momentums much headway has not been made till date and women’s education has always been an enigma in India for several reasons. In the year 1901, the status of women’s education was deplorable since it was less than 1 percent. In 1981, women’s literacy was 24.83 percent. The 2001 Census report indicates that literacy among women is 54 percent. Almost a century has gone and in spite of best efforts India had achieved only 50 percent literacy among women. There are better educational facilities for women in big cities and towns. But the growth of women’s education in rural areas is very slow. In general, majority of the women is still illiterate, weak, backward and exploited.

Education for a long time was dissociated from the idea of nation building. Its main aim was considered to be transmission of the accumulated wealth of knowledge, impart classical values and to build the character of the individual. It was not viewed as a contributory factor to the development of the nation as we understand it today. Though the aim of education has changed, the perception of women’s education is still backward. A girl child from her childhood is socialized to be a good sister, good wife and good mother and not for a challenging career. She is constantly reminded that her role is limited to home and home management. Even in those families where girl children are given higher education they are encouraged to take up humanities and social sciences and not sciences, medicine or engineering. Though the trend is changing it is very slow.

It is indisputable that education enables a woman to gain more knowledge about the world outside of her hearth and home, helps her to get status, positive self-confidence. Even so, these attributes will remain personal to her and cannot be transferred to her sex. The fact that education by itself will not contribute to social status of women has been shown by the
population Crisis Committee’s (USA) data sheet, which shows that many countries which have high scores on education of women are low on social status of women (HDR,1990). In Kerala, the very high rate of female literacy has not increased the social status of its women commensurately. True, there have been a general all-round development in Kerala women, especially in their quality of life, level of white collar employment, expectation of life, maternal rates control of birth but, in other fields, the women of Kerala are more insecure today than before. Wife burning, dowry death and crimes against women which, were unheard of a few decades ago have now become a general feature like in the rest of India. Certainly, by itself education will not be able to deliver the goods unless it fosters new values – values which expose the inequities against women and which espouse gender justice.

There is a need for encouraging more women to participate in vocational, technical and professional education. Women’s education should be treated as a special priority in all Programmes of development. The government can open more places in schools for girls, lessen the financial burdens of education for women, reform curricula and education system, in order to encourage girls to formulate non-traditional career goals and centralize the educational system to greater equivalence of educational experiences for girls. Education for women must be practical and well adapted in their needs, especially in relation to health nutrition and legal right.

2.38 Studies on Economic Empowerment of women

Poverty Eradication: Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macroeconomic policies and poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programmes which are already women oriented with special targets for women. Steps will be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities

Women and Economy: Women’s perspectives will be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers will be recognized in the formal and informal sectors (including home based workers) and appropriate policies relating to employment and to her working conditions will drawn up. Such measures could include:

Reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of work wherever necessary is needed e.g. in the Census records, to reflect women’s contribution as producers and workers. Preparation of satellite and national accounts Development of appropriate methodologies for undertaking both.

Women and Agriculture: In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors, as producers, concentrated efforts will be made
to ensure that benefits of training, various extension programmes will reach them in proportion to their numbers. The programmes for training women in soil conservations, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc. will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

**Women and Industry:** The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labor legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors.

Women at present cannot work in night shift in factories even if they wish to. Suitable measures will be taken to enable women to work on the night shift in factories. This will be accompanied with support services for security, transportation etc.

Economic and Social development of a country can only be meaningful when women are in the main stream of progress. It is possible through economic empowerment of women. The main objectives to empower women are to create large scale awareness with the active participation of women. Empowerment of women in any society may be judged through parameters like employment scenario, education, women’s liberation and women law.

Economic empowerment of women by enabling institutionalisation through organisation of self Help Groups, Mahila Mandals, focussing on credit and thrift activities, related to meeting social financial needs and investments for initiating micro enterprises. While facilitating financial and institutional development for initiating economic activities, capacity building for income generation through training in various skills and trades identified as suitable and with potential for sustainability in the project area would be initiated. The concept of economic empowerment does not only address poverty alleviation as it also reaches out to the empowerment of women by bringing incomes in the hands of women. There by promoting decision making independent of men in incurring expenditures.

‘BUSINESS TODAY’ in its special issue March 12, 2008 list 25 most powerful women in Indian Business Companies are monitoring the gender equation and proactively hiring women.
Indian women have contributed a lot in the field of business. There has been a rapid growth of women entrepreneurs in other field like in the world of fashion designers are women with their own labels.2/3 women entrepreneurs are concern with health science, media and entertainment and banking.

**Figure – 2.2 Showing Field of Work**
Instead of this progress, if we go through a cursory glance on the socio-economic status of ‘INDIAN RURAL WOMEN’ we find they are on the same place from where they are not getting their rights. The Socio-economic status of rural women is poor. She however busy in household/ domestic work. They are struggling for survival. She is powerless, malnourished, poor in health, uneducated, unskilled. She has no right to live her life in her own way.

While women are guaranteed equality under the constitution, legal protection has little effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions. Women lack power to decide who they will marry and are often married off as children. Legal loopholes are used to deny women inheritance right.

We naturally require a change in mindset to allow economic partitions of women in equal footing with men in society. Women need to move away to a certain extent from the traditional roles of home-makers and child rearing to more progressive roles where their economic contribution to society is regarded in a positive light.

**Approaches to economic Disempowerment of women**

After the end of Second World War, welfare programmes to reconstruct the European economy, was specifically targeted at the vulnerable groups. They identified women as the main beneficiaries of these welfare programmes. This development assistance effort had two approaches (1) financial aid for economic growth, and (2) relief aid for socially deprived groups. Now we are marching from welfare approach to women development and empowerment approach. Our vocabulary is also changing along with our approach.

There have been three approaches that seek to integrate women in development process. They are Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD). There are five factors in the WID approach. They are Welfare, Equity, Anti-poverty efforts, Efficiency and Empowerment.
The Welfare approach is based on three assumptions. They are (1) women are passive recipients of development, (2) motherhood is the most important role for women in society, and (3) Child bearing is her significant responsibility.

In the second half of 1970s, the Women and Development (WAD) approach emerged as a critique of modernisation theory and WID approach. It has its close base in the dependency theory. The focus was that women have always been a part of the development process: therefore, integrating women in development is a myth. It highlights the relationship between women and development processes. The approach accepts women as important economic actors in their societies. Women’s work in the public and private domain is central to the maintenance of their social structures. It looks at the nature of integration of women in development which sustains existing international structures of inequality.

The Equity approach was introduced in the UN Decade for women. This approach sees women as active participants in the development process who through both their productive and reproductive role provide a critical contribution to economic growth. This approach aims at reducing inequalities between men and women in the division of labour. It acknowledges that women must be brought into the development process through access to employment and the market place. Anti-poverty programmes aim at increasing productivity of poor women. It recognises the productive role of women and their practical need to earn an income particularly through small-scale income generating projects. It meets the practical gender needs while recognising her triple roles: reproductive, productive and community management.

Gender and Development (GAD) came into existence in an alternative to WID approach. It has a holistic approach by looking at all aspects of women’s lives. It challenges the basic of assigning specific gender roles to different sexes. It recognises women’s contribution inside and outside the household non-commodity production. It rejects the public/private dichotomy. It gives special attention to oppression to women in the family by entering the so called ‘Private sphere” of the household. It emphasises the state’s duty to provide social services in promoting women’s emancipation, Women have been seen as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development assistance. This approach stresses the need for women to organise themselves for more effective political voice and recognise that patriarchy operates within and across classes to oppress women. It focuses on strengthening women’s legal rights. It shows how necessary it is to understand the ways in which unequal relationship between men and women contribute to the exclusion of women in the development process.

GAD approach sees gender as a cross-cutting issue with relevance for influencing all economic, social and political process. It aims to identify both the practical gender needs of women such as healthcare, water supply, education labour saving technologies and the strategic gender needs
ensuring increase in benefits and help to overcome structural constraints. The strategic needs of women include the right to land ownership, access to loan or active participation in decision making bodies. The World Bank in 1994 revised its earlier WID policy that tended to treat women as a special target group of beneficiaries in projects and programmes and replaced it with a new GAD policy which is based on the recognition that “investing in women is central to sustainable development” and refers to its own studies indicating strong economic arguments for investing in women. Today gender budgeting and having gender friendly project is internal part of all development programme.

The Empowerment approach, while recognising the fact that women’s subordination lies in the family, emphasises the fact that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history and current positions in international economic order. So women have to challenge oppression at different levels simultaneously. This approach is well articulated in the Development Alternatives for Women in India, which was a formation of individual women and women’s groups that came into existence before the 1999 Nairobi Conference. DAWN takes into account long term and short-term strategies. Long term strategies are needed to break down the structures of inequality between gender, classes and nations. The short-term strategies are identified as necessary to provide ways of responding to the current cries. The empowerment approach recognised the triple role of women. It seeks through grassroots women organisation, to raise their consciousness to challenge their subordination. Women activists reflect the beneficiary for women. They prefer to use participants for them.

Another set three approaches to women’s empowerment is presented by Savitri Bisnath (2001), VIZ; (1) integrated development; (2) economic development; and (3) consciousness raising and organising among women. These are not mutually exclusive categories, but they are useful for distinguishing between the various causes of women’s powerlessness and among the different interventions thought to lead to empowerment.

1. The integrated development approach interprets women’s powerlessness to be a result of their greater poverty and lower access to health care, education, and survival resources. Strategies deployed under this approach aim to enhance women’s economic status through the provision of services. This approach improves women’s everyday realities by assisting them in meeting their survival and livelihood needs, i.e., their practical needs.

2. The economic development approach situates women’s economic vulnerability at the centre of their powerlessness, and assumes that economic empowerment positively impacts various aspects of women’s position as workers through organising and providing them with access to support services. Though this approach improves women’s economic position, she notes that it is unclear that this change necessarily empowers them in other dimensions of their lives.

3. The consciousness-raising and organising empowerment approach is based on a complex understanding of gender relations and women’s status. This method ascribes women’s powerlessness to the ideology and practice of
patriarchy and socio-economic inequality. Strategies focus on organising women to recognise and challenge gender-and class-based discrimination in all aspects of their lives. However, she posits that though successful in enabling. Women to address their strategic needs, this approach may not be as effective in assisting them to meet their immediate or practical needs (www.unifem.org).

In the practical field, the Economic development Approach can be further classified into three approaches:

1. The financial self-sustainability paradigm (also called the financial systems approach and the sustainability approach) has been promoted since the mid-nineties by international institution such as DFID-UK, USAID, UNDP and the World Bank. “The justifications for targeting women are in terms of efficiency; Women are better re-payers and are an underutilised resource for development”. This strategy aims to enable poor people to achieve financial self-sustainability through access to micro-finance services with the assumption that there will be accompanying poverty reduction and empowerment effect. Empowerment is defined in individualist terms, such as the “expansion of individual choice and capabilities for self-reliance”.

2. The poverty alleviation is part of an integrated poverty-targeted community development programme. Its main focus is to develop sustainable livelihoods and increase “well-being through integrated livelihood interventions and social provision”, including literacy and health care. In terms of empowerment, the underlying assumption is that addressing women’s practical needs will enable them to address underlying inequalities.

3. The feminist empowerment paradigm situate micro-finance as an important way to respond to the immediate practical needs of poor informal sector women workers, and as part of a strategy for wider social and political empowerment of women. “Gender subordination is seen as a complex, multi-dimensional and all-pervasive process, affecting all aspects of women’s lives and embedded at many different mutually reinforcing levels: individual consciousness, the household, work, legislation, state structures and international economic and political systems. Support is provided for individual women, and challenging inequalities at the macro-level” (www. Unifem.org).

Economic independence of access self-generated income is considered to be the major means of empowerment of women and, the contribution of employment to the empowerment of women’s position is largely contributed by the education and they enable women to move out of their homes to an ideas, exchange their problems and evaluated their position against men in many areas of social life. This would grow their position in society and an urge to do something better employment of a women assures her a better rewarding life and human relationship. The government has there certain positive steps in full employment of women and payment of equal remuneration to them. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (India) was a major step towards protective legislation and establishing the principles of equality, as it provides for equal remuneration for women workers and prevention of discrimination against women in the matter of employment. In addition to enabling women on their own legs, the Government of India introduced a number of women-oriented generations the recognition of national
responsibility the economic empowerment of women cannot be anything but to the advantage of women.

But there seems to be a little link between the level of economic development and women’s economic opportunities. There are some major factors, which hinder gainful utilization of female labour force such as, general antipathy towards women’s employment, responsibilities at home, traditional forms of job discrimination, high male unemployment, women’s work and earning being treated as subsidiary to that of man’s absence of facilities such as cheap eating facility, childcare centre and safe transport. In India, the labour force participation of women is very low. As per 1991 Census, the percentage of women in the labour force was 22 against 52 percent for men. Though women engage in a wider variety of occupations, they are concentrated usually in the unorganized sector, at the lowest rung of the ladder. Contribution through work in the domestic sectors remains unrecorded.

The plight of working women has drawn attention of many welfare institutions and women’s organization in the recent years. The panel Document adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women stated: “In order to ensure women the right to work it is especially necessary to eliminate unemployment and all forms of discrimination, enable them to have access to every profession, ensure them to general and vocational training and to eliminate illiteracy through the establishment of functional literacy.” This statement is quite valid as we cannot view women’s economic participation is related to a variety of variables, cultural values relating to the sexual division of labour, women’s access to education and availability of jobs to women should be taken care.

One of the major hurdles to the development of employment opportunities for women is the lack of adequate training. Women should have access to productive resources such as land, building, credit, housing and skill training. Supporting service provisions would make women more functional and productive by reducing their drudgery and provide them with more time for employment. Programmes for women, consisting of skill building and skill upgrading can be more fruitful for enhancing their economic status, and make them to have a superior bargaining power as far as employment is concerned. Therefore, it is crucial for raising the female earning power to increase the effective demand for education, health and family planning services, which are necessary for improving the status of women to a great extent.

2.39 Studies on Legal Empowerment of women

Laws empower women. They provide legal redressed in cases where conciliation fails. And, it is important machinery at all levels, as it has an ability to sensitize women to fulfil their needs. The concept of gender equality was accepted in principle by the great Indian political leaders of the twentieth century. With the adoption of the Constitution in India, there has been a spate of legislation to protect women and to give them an equal status, The
following legislations\textsuperscript{23} have been enacted which are women-specific and women-related to protect women against social evils like child marriage Act of 1955, the Special Marriage Act of 1954, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act of 1976, the Factories Act of 1948, the Maternity Benefits Act of 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act of 1986, the establishment of family Courts in 1984 and the Amendments to Criminal Law in 1983. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987 have also been passed to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation. The State also imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Legal rights of women in India are of very high order and in certain respects more than what is available for women in other countries. But seldom are these laws followed. Violations are the order of the day than adherence to these laws. For instance, the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act instead of protecting the women penalize her, the others serve to strengthen the state by wasting more and more power with the enforcement machinery. For many of the laws, which reinforce equality between men and women, social acceptance is yet to come. Personal Laws are the laws, which govern marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession and adoption. Personal Laws do vary based on the religion practiced. The personal laws governing Hindus has been codified and amended from time to time making it progressive and comprehensive but not the Mohammedan Law. This has become a legal problem for women of different religions as they are put to differential treatment. As long as there are disparities in the law administered, based on religion, Article 44 of the Constitution which states that the state shall endeavour to secure the citizen a Uniform Civil Code remains a dead letter.

The law, which grants a decree for divorce must also secure for women a measure of economic independence. The cruel treatment of women in the hands of their husbands and their families is because of her total dependence on man, be it father, husband or son. If things go well then there is no problem but for those who are not so fortunate there must be a way out, other than ending life. Moreover, if dowry harassment, wife battering and child abuse took place in a non-domestic setting it would definitely give rise to legal action of complaint but when set in the domestic arena even law enforcement agencies are reluctant to interfere. Women lack the courage to start proceedings especially when they want the marriage tie to continue. Besides, “family” is the prime plays an important role in solving family disputes but their coverage is inadequate. In spite of the fact that legal remedies are available for women, many affected women do not resort to them in view of the time, cost and social image constraints.

Another important area where law could be an important tool of safeguard against exploitation of women is the law relating to wages for workers in the informal sector. Women constitute 90 percent of the total
marginal workers. Despite having ratified Imitational Conventions as are embodied by International Labour Organization (ILO) and having laws such as the Minimum Wages Act, the Contract Labour Act, the Equal Remuneration Act, etc. Poor implementation and enforcement has prevented women from benefiting from these legal safeguards. Laws to protect women against violence are proved inadequate as new forms of violence are coming to light which point out that a totally new approach is needed to deal with the situation. Therefore, there has to be a greater emphasis on creating awareness amongst the law enforcement machinery on issues related to human rights and social justice, which have been guaranteed by the Indian Constitution in Indian women.

From the foregoing it is clear that legislation is an important instrument towards social change, but experience has shown that statutory change alone is not adequate. Moreover, legislation in itself has only a limited impact and cannot be carried out in isolation. A change in social attitude is a must. Legal equality without social or economic equality is meaningless and women have been socially, morally, economically and physically exploited in the name of tradition, religion or by social sanctions. This should come to an end. Women have been defined by the sex and until this social attitude changes there will be no change in the status of women. Besides awareness and knowledge of women’s rights to equality has to be created not only among women but also in the society at large. Moreover, women should become aware of their legal rights and demand their unbiased implementation. In addition, women must themselves be involved in a much bigger way in the judicial and the law enforcement process as judicial officers, lawyers or police. The constitutional vision of gender justice can be realized only by a set of multiple strategies which include more affirmative action. Women’s movement therefore could play a vital role in such a context and perhaps that could be the most effective instrument in achieving the legal empowerment of women.

2.40 Studies on Cultural empowerment of women

The most basic factor which inhibited women from being empowered till recently was the attitude of society towards a women’s role and her place in society. These social values and attitudes get reflected in the education and socialization of girls, and in the institutional arrangement of society. Traditionally, a women’s reproductive role was considered as her primary role and her role as producer secondary, unless as in the low-income classes, economic necessity forced a women to support the family. Coupled with this was the idealized image of the woman as the one who subordinated self to the family.

Women were socialized into accepting these role definitions, and expectations through stories from mythology, epics and folklore, which glorified women who conformed to the ideal image. Thus, women were conditioned to sacrifice their own goals and ambitions, deny themselves their legitimate space and surrender any resources, which might have contributed to their independence. They were told to always adjust, accept and accommodate. This was hardly conducive to the development of self-
confidence, self-image and initiative or willingness to take risks, characteristics absolutely essential for empowerment.

These values and attitudes also meant that girls were often given less education than boys, and even when girls were educated up to school or beyond, the aspirations of the parents and even of the girls, themselves were lower both as to educational attainments and future prospects. For a young girl marriage and children were considered the only lifelong activity or to secure a better husband, since husbands preferred educated wives.

These attitudes reflected too on the courses and curricula offered to women, these were not designed to equip girls with specialized training for a job or career. If employment was at all considered for a woman, it was seen merely as a temporary occupation till marriage. This conditioned not only women’s own aspirations but also judgment of their capacities, choice of occupations and training. It also coloured the attitudes of all such as parents, teachers, heads of schools and training institutions, employers and policy makers.

From the foregoing it is clear that it is not enough if women empower themselves through education, employment and participation in decision-making. There should be cultural empowerment of women. To make this a reality, there should be social recognition, which requires attitudinal change. Freedom is necessary for women. It does not mean breaking away from home and tradition, but it means searching for one’s own identity and making the people around her to accept her as a human person. Moreover, there is a necessity of “conscious raising” of “awareness creation” for the achievement of cultural empowerment of women. This can be done through powerful means of communication, mobilization and organization of both men and women by helping them to think about themselves, identify the oppressive forces working against their improvement and enjoy a feeling of “oneness” and identification with the rest of the members of their group. The mobilization process could be successfully carried out by the non-governmental organizations working for the development of women.

Thus creating awareness among women about their freedom is invaluable. In addition, unless patriarchal values die and principles of justice are enshrined in the minds of every individual in the society, it is impossible to reap the fruits of empowerment of women.

2.41 Studies on Psychological Empowerment of women

Disaster Turned Opportunity

Women in Latur Rebuild Their Lives Although women here remain as economically marginalised as they were before the disaster, these ten years after the quake have seen a significant change in their collective perception of themselves and their role as members of the community. This psychological change can be counted as the most positive fall-out of the post-quake projects, notwithstanding the many short coming in planning and implementing resettlement work – by the community, by donor agencies like
the World Bank, by NGOs and by the government. It is a measure of the assertiveness these women have developed that, during the tenth anniversary observance at Latur on September 30, 2003, one of the women felt emboldened enough to question a State Minister in the middle of a public meeting, demanding to know what the Government was doing about closing liquor shops (because drunkenness leads to domestic violence). Ten years ago, none of these women would have dared to question a minister. Psychological empowerment, while essential and welcome, does not translate into better availability of basic services – an example of this is the poor access to health centres in the interior regions.

The special attention paid on the education of women and girls in development policies, activities and projects arise out of the knowledge that ensuring basic education for all, especially the education of women and girls and achieving gender equality are important elements in promoting development and advancement in people’s life quality as well as a means to empowering women themselves. Empowerment as the expansion of freedom of choice and action is identified by the World Bank as one of the key elements of poverty reduction and a primary development goal. The promotion of women’s empowerment as a development goal is based on a dual argument: that gender equality is a crucial aspect of human welfare and intrinsically worth pursuing and a means to other ends such as the promotion of growth, reduction of poverty and promotion of better governance.

Home science aims at educating individuals in the art and science of family living, improving services and goods and helping individuals and family to meet the challenges of the process of modernization. The discipline of home science is an applied science and drawn its principles from the basic discipline of arts and science. The committee of American Home economics Association (1959) has clarified this as: “Home economics synthesis knowledge drawn from its own researches, from the physical, Biological and social sciences and the arts and applies this knowledge to improve the lives of families and individuals.” Still there are variations in the ideologies.

Home science is concerned and interested in effecting improvements in home and family living. It influences the growth and development of family members, through the knowledge of the environment in which they live. It uses scientific method in solving daily problems. It is concerned with the happenings in the world, and how they affect the family.
Home science in addition to giving education for home living, also trains students for careers the greatest career is of course, home making and bringing up happy families, there are other careers in the communities, such as; teachers, extension workers, dieticians, and nursery school teachers. However, it can be safely said that home science education focuses at coordinating the scientific and practical knowledge drawn from different fields to utilize it in a suitable way for the development welfare and happiness of individual, family, community and nation at large.

So this study was undertaken to compare how home science, art & commerce education is effective imparting empowerment to women. Though empowerment is wide word & has so many dimension but if it can impart nutrition, health, social, educational, management & household knowledge to the students it could be helpful to them to become self confident & can lead to empowerment.