Indian Women: A Historical Perspective

Women constitute almost half of the world’s population. Yet their social, economic, and political status is lower than that of men in all countries. In India, there were distinct stages of rise and fall in the status of women.

During the Vedic period, women’s progress kept pace with that of men. Women were men’s friends and co-workers. In that action-oriented society, no religious rites could be performed by a man without the participation of his wife. But in the post Vedic period, the enlightened precept gave way to Manu’s precept ‘woman does not deserve independence’ and she was expected to be controlled as a daughter, wife and mother by her father, husband and son respectively.

In medieval period, the position of Indian women was very miserable. Women could marry once among Hindus while a man was permitted to have more than one wife. Women were mostly required to live within the premises of their houses to cook food and to feed and take care of their children and other members of the family. Hindu women had no right to inherit property, nor did they enjoy the right to terminate an undesirable marriage (Saheb Deen Maurya ,1988).
Muslim rule brought a further deterioration in the status of women. Purdah and polygamy were two most important institutions of the Muslim conquerors bringing in more and more restrictions on the rights and freedom of women. Moreover, both Muslim and Hindu women were economically and socially, totally dependent on men. This period is known as the darkest period for women in Indian history (Beena Shah, 1995).

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the position of Indian women had reached the greatest degree of deterioration. The social institutions and customs not only thwarted the free growth of women but also regarded them unfit for participation in social, political and religious functions of any significance. They were even debarred from receiving education. Thus for about 2000 years (from 200BC to 1800AD) the position of women was deteriorating (ibid.).

When the British ruled India, they established the modern capitalist economic system and modern state based on principles of liberty and equality and generated a new climate to bring changes in the old, traditional feudal, un-egalitarian social structure and norms based on equality. They favoured and encouraged education for women.

Independence reinforced the challenges and struggles to improve the status of women. The need to encourage education for women in general and higher education in particular has been recognised in free
India. But the improvement in the status of women and their education is not commensurate with expansion in the facilities and opportunities for their education.

Women's position changed as the social structure changed from communal to matriarchal and from matriarchal to patriarchal.

Status of Indian women

In determining the status of women in India, factors such as the role of women in decision-making in the family and in the community, their educational status, their participation in social, political and economic activities and their position in the various professions as well as their legal status in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance of property could be taken into consideration. Women in general are discriminated against and gradually the status of women has declined.

Article 15 of the Constitution of India provided for equality between men and women. It prohibited any discrimination on the basis of sex. This provision because of its importance was made a part of the chapter on Fundamental Rights. In the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Constitution expressed the desirability of providing equal chances to women in the field of employment and education (Kiran Devendra, 1994).

Women still remain bound by cultural, political and economic constraints that prevent them from attaining absolute equality with men.
There are several ways in which one can look at the status of women in any society. One is to examine the common demographic indicators that give an overall picture of women’s relative standing vis-à-vis men. Statistics show that the proportion of women to men has been steadily declining since the turn of the century.

The 1991 census put India’s total population at 846.3 million. Males 439.2 million and females 407.1 million. According to the 1981 census, the sex ratio stood at 935 females per 1000 males. But it has changed to 927 females per 1000 males in ten years since, as stated by the 1991 census (Manorama Year Book, 1999). The declining sex ratio continues to be a matter of concern.

According to Amitabh Kundu (1991) there are five possible explanations for the decline in sex ratio at the national level.

1) A progressive undercount of women compared to men in different census.

2) An increased discrimination of females (including infanticide) in providing the minimum nutrition, access to health and other amenities.

3) Increase in the proportion of male selective migrants from other countries.

4) Reduction in foetal wastage resulting in a decline in female male ratio at birth.

5) Female selective termination of pregnancy leading to, once again, a decrease in the sex ratio at birth.
The literacy status in India, according to the 1991 census stands at 52.21 per cent – males 64.13 per cent and females 39.29 per cent (Government of India, 1991-'92). The levels of literacy among rural women is lower than that of the urban women. In some states like Rajasthan female literacy is as low as 20.44 per cent. Although the literacy percentage has shown a steady increase over the last several decades it is still far from the desired standards.

Exploitation and Subordination

Problems of women’s development cannot be viewed in isolation from other problems of society. The three key institutions in the case of India are property, caste and household. The institutions of property, caste and household have traditionally served as instruments of subordination for women. The conjunction of property and caste in an interacting system of production reinforces the subordination of women within the economy and the household (Subrata Mishra, 1995).

For countless centuries, women in India had been subordinated to men and socially oppressed. Sahab Deen Maurya (1988) tells that the various religions practised in India as well as the personal laws based on them consigned women to a status inferior to that of men. In India, women were supposed to have no personalities of their own apart from their ties to their husbands. They could not find any other expression to their inborn talents or desires except as housewives.
Andiappen (1980) views that the biological differences - women bear children and are, on an average, physically weaker than men – reinforced by the cultural norms and the value systems, placed women secondary to men.

Women have been discriminated against in all strata of society. Women were victims of wide spread illiteracy, feeble health, segregation in the dark and dingy rooms in the name of purdah, enforced marriage before marriageable age, indeterminable widowhood, rigidity of fidelity and opposition to remarriage of widows, turning many of them into prostitutes, curse of polygamy degrading sacred rites of matrimony to a system of shameful traffic, violence used to make women practise sati, commercialised marriage through dowry, and above all the complete denial of individuality (Raj Pruthi and Bela Rani Sharma, 1994).

In a patriarchal society such as ours, there exists the unfounded belief that man is the breadwinner of the family. Consequently, the male child gets the best of the limited facilities and resources with the family. The girl child runs the risk of being aborted through the misuse of modern technology of amniocentesis. She is deprived of school education because she has to take care of siblings at home and since she is to be married off soon; investing in her education is liability, not an asset. Despite the fact that women are massively involved in agriculture, food production and the like, their work counts for nothing. Their activities as producers are not reflected in statistics, thus making their contribution invisible.
Culturally, in an effort to uphold cultural heritage, the past is glamourised and with it, the trend towards equality of women and enhancement of their role in development gets inhibited. This unfortunate state of affairs stems from the fact that the role of women in overall development has not been fully understood nor has it been given weightage in the struggle to fight poverty, inequality and injustice.

Women do not have an aggressive mind, a conquering nature, the desire to subdue to control. This was the cause of their disempowerment. This is why women and feminine principles were dethroned by patriarchy (Kamla Bhasin, 1995).

Women have always made a very significant contribution to their societies, but a patriarchal conspiracy has prevented women's contribution from receiving its due recognition. The reason is that society's legitimating myths, the creation of written historical records and the production of authoritative self-knowledge have all been enterprises controlled by males. Women have been and still are excluded from the production of and representation in many social and cultural activities, but even when they are included, they do not receive their due recognition.

**Women and Economy**

World economic profiles of women indicates that while women account for half of the world's population and perform two thirds of the
hours worked, they receive only one-tenth of the world's property registered in their name (Satnam Kaur, 1987).

Little attention has been paid to her as an economic being, which she very much is, especially in a rural family. The fact that a rural woman besides being a home maker is also a partner in food production efforts and that in poor rural families the women have to play an economic role as well, was ignored.

Leelamma Devasia and V.V.Devasia (1994) view that when a woman attains economic independence she naturally becomes the mistress of her own body and author of her own decisions. She can then take free choices even regarding her sex life and no one can force her to be used for his pleasure and benefit.

The empowerment of women, equitable access to resources, power and decision making is essential to gender equality and this is a critical determinant of economic well being, social status and political power. However, there is substantial evidence that economic resources in the hands of male household members often do not benefit female members in equal degree and thereby independent ownership of such resources, particularly land, can thus be of crucial importance in promoting the well-being and empowerment of women.

One of the means to empower women is to conscientise them to raise their economic status and thus bring them into the mainstream of
national development. Hence within the overall context of Human Resource Development, it is necessary to ensure that women get their rightful share out of the development plans and that they assume their rightful role in society (Chetana Kalbagh, 1992).

The 1991 census counted 407.1 million females against a total population of 846.3 million out of which 297.8 million women live in the rural areas and 27 per cent of the rural women live below the poverty line. It has been established that women are productive workers and integral to India’s national economy and make up one third of the country’s labour force. Also it has been understood that the poorer the family, the greater the dependence on women’s economic productivity. This goes on to prove that enhancing women’s economic productivity is an important strategy for improving the welfare of 60 million Indian households below the poverty line.

It has also been seen that there is a significant gap between women’s (especially rural women’s) potential and actual productivity and that the productivity gap of the poor women is much wider than that of poor men. Therefore, women will gain proportionately more, if investment allocation and development efforts are shifted in their favour. Studies have also shown that women’s earnings have a positive correlation with children’s health, nutrition levels and education and that Indian women contribute a much larger share of their earnings to basic family maintenance than men. Increase in women’s income therefore translates
more directly into better health and nutrition for children and therefore improving women's productivity, income and quality of life, implies a multifaceted contribution to overall growth and development.

Special programmes for the welfare and socio-economic advancement of women have been undertaken and major programmes have been constituted for protecting women and promoting employment opportunities for women through training, skill development and organisation of productive groups. However, rural women as a group have been neglected in most of the development programmes.

The report by the National Committee on the Status of Women reveals that women's participation in the economy has been declining since 1921. The reasons for the decline of women's participation in the work force, differ in urban and rural areas and in rural areas there is a strongly rooted view that the wife's leisure might be regarded as a sign of status by others. The other factors that inhibit women's employment are heavy domestic work load, lack of assumed work, irregular and underpayment of wages, absence of transport facilities, lack of child care centres and other supportive structures.

**Employment and Labour force**

Women's participation in labour force has been declining and the status of women has not improved much over the years, and they continue to remain disadvantaged group. Women play dual roles, one as the paid
worker and the other, as an unpaid worker, involved as a part of the family labour in the fields, family trade, craft etc. Through her labour, she also contributes in running the family by doing different domestic chores.

The discrimination against women is clearly seen in the employment opportunities available to them. Besides this social and economic factors are also responsible for the low participation rate for women in the nation's labour force. According to Leelamma Devasia and V.V. Devasia (1994) the major reasons for this may be:

a) Segmentation of labour market which works against women.
b) Adverse implications of technological growth for women.
c) Lack of unionisation of women workers.
d) Absence of purposeful human resource development policy aimed at improving women's employability and productivity through training.

As per the 1991 census, work participation rate of women is 23 per cent – 27 per cent for rural women. 19 per cent of the total female work force consists of unpaid family workers. 94 per cent of the total women workers are concentrated in the informal sector, low skills, low status and poor pay.

Andiappan (1980) views that a government can adversely affect the employment rights of women in 4 ways:
a) discrimination in education and training,
b) discrimination in public employment,
c) failing to implement policies requiring fair employment and
d) family laws which deprive women of equal property and other rights.

Even many of the educated women fail to get jobs because they belong to the weaker sex and many others who are employed complain that they are unnecessarily harassed in their offices. The illiterate and poor women who do low grade jobs to earn their livelihood are subjected to several types of abuses and are also generally offered very low wages. Women seek work for many of the same reasons as men: it provides income, fringe benefits, social interactions and a sense of accomplishment (Victor R. Fuchs, 1998).

Working women, both educated and uneducated, are denied equality and justice in their houses as well as in their work places. A working woman who is also a mother, is expected not only to do her office work, but also all the household work, both in the morning and in the evening. She has to do her traditional duties as the wife, mother and the daughter-in-law. She has to labour hard both in the office and at home. The husband is also not expected to help her and ease her burden. In many a case even if the woman has a white-collar job she is not allowed adequate freedom of movement outside the house and a large number of employed women have few rights over their earnings. A woman also has no legal
right over children and she cannot be the guardian of her children so long as her husband is alive (Baral and Kumudini Patnaik, 1990).

Women are denied opportunities to participate in the decision making process. Even when the decisions are to affect their well-being, they are only passive observers. The primary challenge facing women today is to increase their participation so that they get hold of the situation and become actively involved the process of decision making (Chandra, 1997).

**Women and Education**

Lack of formal as well as informal education for women has a crucial effect on their involvement and status in society. This shortfall is mainly due to the poor appreciation of the value of female education by parents and society in general. There is a false assumption in some sections of rural society that investment in training women/girls is a waste as they ultimately marry and take away the skills acquired to their new families.

Educating women will not only enable them to get better jobs, and even be economically self-sufficient or independent, but also society, as a whole will gain. Women will get married at an older age, choose to have smaller families and in turn nurture and educate their young.
The National Policy on Education 1986 has emphasised that women’s development is essential for national development. Its highlights are as given below:

“Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women.

The position of women in respect to education is equal to that of men so far as formal situation is concerned but the structure of society does not allow all the women to benefit by the constitutional provision (Sneha Joshi, 1992).

To quote from the Report of Education commission 1864-66, “For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of even greater importance than that of men. In the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond home and the bringing up of the children.

Women and Empowerment

The most conspicuous feature of the term empowerment is that it contains the word ‘power’. It may be broadly defined as control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology.
The process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining
great control over the sources of power may be termed as empowerment.

Empowerment in its simplest form means the manifestation of
redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male
dominance (Chandra, 1997). It is both a process and the result of the
process.

Empowerment represents a means for accomplishing community
development tasks and can be conceptualized as involving two key
elements: giving community members the authority to make decisions and
choices and facilitating the development of the knowledge and resources
necessary to exercise these choices (Zippy, 1995).

Robert Adams (1990) defines empowerment as the process by which
individuals, groups and or communities become able to take control of
their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to
work towards maximising the quality of their lives.

The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from
individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilisation
that challenges basic power relations (Kumud Sharma, 1991-'92).

For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender
determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins
when they not only recognise the systematic forces that oppress them, but
also act to change existing power relationships.
Empowerment commonly means 'becoming powerful: self help may thus be viewed as one form of empowerment. Empowerment may be used to mean simply "enablement" (Robert Adams, 1990).

According to Kumud Sharma (1991-'92) empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systematic forces which marginalise women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context.

Empowerment is also visualized as an enabling process. The process of empowerment operates at all the levels of the individual, group, family, organisation and community and also in the different aspects of people's lives. For example, one person may feel empowered because of something realised or understood; another may experience empowerment once a new job, course or career opportunity is achieved.

Empowerment in its multiple forms continues to be the dominant requirement of all grass root level situations. (Ram Rajput and Hem Lata Swarup, 1994)

Empowerment implies fundamental redistribution of power within and between families/societies. It is an externally induced process of change towards women's equality and development. It is a process of equity enhancement and can be achieved only through disempowering some structures, systems and institutions. The process is often selective and uneven. Here power is used not as a mode of domination but as
strength, ability to influence social and political processes, the right to choose and the ability to influence the direction of social change.

Empowering is development of skills and abilities of people to enable them to manage better development delivery systems. Some see it as more fundamental and as essentially concerned with enabling people to decide upon and undertake actions which they believe are essential to their development (Marina Pinto, 1995).

The empowerment process encompasses several mutually reinforcing components but begins with and is supported by economic independence which implies access to and control over production resources. A second component of empowerment is knowledge and awareness, the third is self-image and the final component is autonomy.

Elements of Empowerment

The essential qualitative elements of empowerment are well suggested in many writings on participatory development, from which the following three are highlighted (Rahman, 1990):

1. Organisation - Organisation of the disadvantaged and underprivileged people in structures under their own control, or sufficient strength, derived from direct numerical size and for linking with other organisations of similarly situated people.
2. Social awareness - Social awareness of the disadvantaged, in terms of understanding derived from collective self-inquiry and reflection, for the social environment of their lives and the working of its processes.

3. Self-reliance – People’s power comes ultimately from self-reliance. Self-reliance is not the same thing as self-sufficiency, but a combination of material and mental strength with which one can deal with others as an equal and assert one’s self-determination.

Anelia Rokoluivuna (Edited by Venessa Griffen, 1989) views empowerment in the following ways:

- Empowerment means adding to women’s power.
- Having control or gaining greater control.
- Having a say and being listened to.
- Being able to define and create from a woman’s perspective.
- Being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society.
- Being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

**Phases and Aspects of Women’s Empowerment**

Although there are many complex phases and aspects of women’s empowerment, these selected views represent a few of the most vital prerequisites for women’s achievement of individual and collective empowerment (Sushama Sahay, 1988).
1. To the extent that women can become independent in their families, they will be empowered in diverse social settings.

2. To the extent that women can develop their own religious beliefs and practices within established denominational and sectarian orders, they will be motivated to work toward their equality and the well-being of all.

3. Women who increase their control over their work at home and outside home are in advantageous positions for achieving equality and empowerment.

4. Increased knowledge about women's condition throughout the world increases women's objectivity about their own conditions and deepens their understanding of women's subordination.

5. To the extent that individual women connect their biographies with history, seeing the influence of broad social structures on their lives they will be empowered.

6. Women's mutual support is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of their empowerment. An individual woman who does not have the support of another cannot develop her potential or make her fullest possible contribution to society.

Women's empowerment frequently takes place at a personal level through their friendships with other women (Bell, 1981). The strengthening of women's personal relationships also assists their growth and maturation (Cancian, 1987), making them more immune to their own debilitating and self-destructive patterns of behaviour (Chernin, 1981).
Women can work effectively towards gaining access to power on domestic and international fronts (Epstein and Coser, 1981).

The first stage of women’s empowerment at individual or social levels involves the process of reaching the decision to be empowered. Making this initial choice is a vital condition to all further action to be taken. Being open to the possibility of change is a necessary prerequisite for this basic change to become possible.

**Indicators of Women’s Empowerment**

One of the clearest indicators of women’s empowerment is an increase in women’s capacities and willingness to support other women and to work diligently toward strengthening women in their efforts to survive or to gain equality (Bernard, 1971). The probability of realizing women’s freedom is increased through their awareness of the plight and possibilities they share with other women (Randour, 1987). When women are able to organize their efforts and secure crucial goals, such as changing particular values or specific behaviour in wider society (Smelser, 1962) women’s empowerment will be realized more effectively.

The Draft Country Paper – India for the 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995 proposed the following qualitative and quantitative indicators for evaluating the women’s empowerment. (Sushama Sahay, 1998).

Qualitative indicators of empowerment:
a) Increase in self esteem, individual and collective confidence

b) Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness levels on issues affecting the community at large and women in particular such as women's health, nutrition, reproductive rights, legal rights, literacy etc. depending on the programme.

c) Decrease in workloads of women as a result of the new programme.

d) Changes in the roles and responsibilities in the family and in the community.

e) Visible decrease in levels of domestic violence and other forms of violence perpetrated on the woman and girl child.

f) Responses to and changes in, social and other customs that are anti-women. eg. child marriage, dowry etc.

g) Visible changes in women's participation levels. eg. Are more women attending public meetings, training programmes? Increase in bargaining /negotiating power of the women as an individual in the home and community as well as in collectives of women.

h) Formation of cohesive and articulate women's groups/collective at the village level, district, block, state levels.

i) Positive changes in social attitudes amongst the community members towards discrimination against women and the girl child.

j) Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household.

k) Women's decision-making over the kind of work she is doing- is her income and expenditure in her control?
Quantitative indicators of empowerment:-

a) Demographic trends:
   - Mental/mortality rates
   - Fertility rates
   - Sex ratio
   - Life expectancy at birth
   - Average age of marriage

b) Number of women participating in different development programmes

c) Greater access and control over community resources/government schemes/services. e.g. creches, credit-saving groups, co-operatives, schools etc.

d) Visible changes in physical health status/nutrition levels

e) Changes in male/female literacy levels- primary secondary and adult literacy including enrolment and retention rates.

f) Participation levels of women in political processes at the local level.

Sushama Sahay (1998) in her study about women and empowerment says participation has two dimensions – quantitative and qualitative. Usually only the quantitative aspect of participation is taken care of. People’s participation in terms of mere numbers has no meaning. Today, there is a need for change – change in the right direction, change from quantitative to qualitative. Active participation in social, economic and political spheres would help in enhancing the process of empowerment.
and it would also give women the desired self-respect and social dignity, and these, of course, are the pre-requisites of empowerment.

**Empowered Women’s Characteristics**

According to Hall (1992), the empowered women share the following characteristics:

- Empowered women define their attitudes, values, and behaviour in relation to their own real interests. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom from existing male hierarchies.

- *Empowered women maintain equal-mindedness, rather than act out roles that merely confront and challenge male dominance. Empowered women do not aim at being superior to men. They respond as equals and co-operate in order to work towards the common good.*

- Empowered women use their talents to live fulfilling lives. They maintain their strength in the presence of pressures of family, religion, and work, and they contribute towards the empowerment of all women.

- Empowered women define their values and formulate their beliefs themselves. They strengthen themselves through other women’s support and sustain their own moral visions. Their actions flow from their own distinctive ideals.

- Empowered women can be found in all social groups and all societies. However, the optional conditions for empowered women are both individual and social.
Training

Training can be considered as the bridge that narrows the wide gulf between what an un-empowered woman is and what an empowered woman could potentially be.

Various persons have defined training in its different aspects and some of them are given below:

According to Dugan Laird (1985) training may be defined as an experience, a discipline, or a regimen which causes people to acquire new predetermined behaviours.

Michael Jinks (1979) defines training as an organised procedure which brings about a semi-permanent change in behaviour for a definite purpose. The three main areas involved are skills, knowledge and attitude, but always with the objective of a definite purpose in mind.

In the words of Carolyn Nilson (1990) training is a way of organising information and experience so that an employee can behave differently on the job to his own and the company’s benefit.

Vincent. A. Miller (1979) defines training as the process of affecting change in an individual human behaviour often applied to the acquisition of limited job-related skills.
Stephen. P. Robbins (1978) gives the following definition of training. Training is a process of learning a sequence of programmed behaviour. Training is the application of knowledge.

According to Alan Mumford (1971) training is an attempt to change behaviour. Behaviour is influenced by a number of factors, which act or interact to produce a result in a particular environment. The type of technology, the structure of authority, the actual tasks performed, the methods of communication, the methods of working, the system of rewards, all influence behaviour.

According to Kiron Wadhera (1982) training envisages action and in addition to other things provides skills of different types in a field of work.

T.H. Boydell (1971) defines training as one way of achieving specified behavioural changes in a required direction. This direction is related to organisational objective and the people whose behaviour is to be changed work within the organisation.

Varshney (1980-565) regards training as the process of aiding employees to gain effectiveness in their work through the development of appropriate habits of thought and action, skill, knowledge and attitudes.

According to Calvin.P.Otto and Rollin. O. Glaser (1970) training refers to the teaching/learning activities carried on for the primary purpose of helping members of an organisation to acquire and apply the
knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes headed by that organisation to carry out its mission.

Mamoria (1982) views training as a widely accepted problem-solving device.

Training can be defined as an activity aimed to acquire a specific skill or knowledge, which is necessary to perform a specified job at optimum efficiency.

All these definitions point out to one single major factor, that is, training seeks to change the individual's human behaviour. This change in behaviour occurs through a process and training is a means that brings out this change. Therefore training is a formal, structural and systematic programme that seeks to change human behaviour on the basis of sound learning principles.

To put it in simple words, training is a formal procedure used by an organisation, government or voluntary organisation to facilitate the personnel's effective functioning so that their resultant behaviour contributes to the attainment of the organisation's goals and objectives.

Training is to provide participants with an opportunity to improve their understanding, analytical capabilities, awareness and sensitivity to major issues related to rural poverty and attempts at initiating a process of participatory development (Kamla Bhasin, 1985).
The basic aim of training should be to serve functional adequacy to all categories of people in the changing environment.

Broadly speaking, training intends to fulfil the following objectives (Samanta, 1993):

(i) To help the trainees in acquiring knowledge of the subject matter.

(ii) To bring about a change in the attitudes, understanding and behaviour among the trainees towards the particular object, programmes and problem.

(iii) To help in evaluating the abilities, potentials and competency of the trainees for a particular job or work skill.

(iv) To induce the zeal and enthusiasm among the trainees for self-learning and development.

(v) To enhance the problem-solving and decision-making capacity of the trainees.

(vi) To help in narrowing down the gap between expected level of performance and actual level of performance among the trainees.

(vii) To provide scientific pace of knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities of the trainees meaningfully and purposefully.

Calvin and Rollin (1970) opine that training originally referred to the communication and learning of the manual skills necessary to perform an economic task. Gradually the term came to include a broader spectrum
of activities ranging from skill training to individual development to organisational change.

The goal of social skill training programme is to improve the interpersonal functioning of individuals (Luciano and Michael, 1985).

Training bridges the gap between actual performance of the personnel manning the project and the expected performance related to the ever-changing technologies of production. Thus in training, the focus is firstly on learning by an individual of the new ways of doing things i.e. better performance and secondly the transfer of learning in the work situation directed to greater organisational effectiveness and the resultant impact on the target beneficiaries (Bhatnagar, 1987).

Hence training is organised based on the needs of the people, the projects and the programmes and therefore is performance-cum-productivity oriented. It tries to reduce if not eliminate, the gap between expectations and performance. It does so by changing the behaviour of the individual in the desirable direction and making them useful and effective in serving the people with whom they have the privilege to work. Such training ensures that the trainees have receptivity, profitability, and applicability and adequacy in performance of the job related to their environment.

Lynton and Udai Pareek (1967) give the following assumptions on training:
**Prevaling concept**

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<th>The acquisition of subject matter knowledge by a participant leads to action.</th>
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**New concept**

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<th>Motivations and skills lead to action. Skills are acquired through practice.</th>
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<th>Learning is a complex function of the motivation and capacity of the individual participant.</th>
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<th>Individual action leads to improvement on the job.</th>
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<th>Individual learning which is unused leads to frustration.</th>
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<th>Training is the responsibility of the training institution. It begins and ends with the course.</th>
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<th>Training is the responsibility of three partners- the participant’s organisation, the participant and training institution.</th>
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Besides the changes in attitudes, behaviour and understanding, the skills of the trainees are also improved through the effective process of training. Therefore it may be said that the training is a structural and organised effort through which an atmosphere of learning, sharing and synthesizing of information, knowledge and skills are transmitted to the trainees with the help of trainers (Samanta, 1993).

**Education and Training**

Education is primarily concerned with opening out the world to the student so that he can choose his interests and mode of living, and also his career. Training on the other hand, is primarily concerned with preparing the participant for certain lives of action which are delineated by technology and the organisation in which he works.
Education deals mostly with knowledge and understanding. Training deals mostly with understanding and skill. Education helps to choose and decide the activity, while training helps to improve the performance. In the words of Ruskin "Education is not for knowing more but for behaving differently"

Training is concerned with increasing knowledge and skill in doing a particular job. On the other hand, education is concerned with increasing the general knowledge and understanding of the total environment. Thus education is broader in scope and its purpose is to develop the individual, whereas for all practical purposes training is aimed at specific job based objectives.

One more version differentiates both with respect to contents and users or participants. Accordingly, contents in education are oriented towards opening out the world and wide ranges of choices for career. In case of training it is oriented more towards knowledge and skills that are of practical worth. With respect to participants for education, they are viewed as less mature and of a younger age. Participants in training are normally adults and hence more challenging to deal with.

In spite of all these differences, it is commonly agreed that both are however concerned with promoting and guiding the learning. Also the motivation for learning is common to both and it is expressed that for effective learning to take place, congruence of the goals of teacher/trainer and learner is an essential condition.
Education and training are concerned with promoting and learning and that ‘motivation’ is common to both. Differences can be highlighted in four main areas:

1) The degree to which their objectives can be specified in behavioural terms.

   Educational objectives are less amenable to definition in behavioural terms while training objectives are capable of being expressed in behavioural terms.

2) The time normally needed to achieve the set of objectives.

   Many years are required to accomplish educational objectives. In case of training objectives, relatively short period of time is required.

3) The method of learning.

   Education involves organic learning. It involves change in the individual rather than in what he can do. It is much less amenable to external direction and its outcome is very difficult to predict.

   Education provides more theoretical and conceptual material aimed at stimulating analytical and critical faculties. In contrast, training programmes contain materials essentially practical and relevant to the specific job.
These various differences though significant should not obscure the fact that both are complementary parts of the same process and are concerned with the development of human potential. This interdependence has not always been fully recognized. It is difficult to imagine any training which does not have some educational efforts and vice versa, in short, some of each exists in both. It may be rightly stated that knowledge, skill and attitude-all three are major objectives of training and education (Sarkar, 1978).

**Principles of Training**

Training programmes function through personnel, materials, and activities. Their elements are objectives, content, patterns of instructor and trainee organisation, learning materials and aids, equipment, strategies, methods and techniques, and evaluation devices. All these elements are interdependent and interactive. If training programmes are to meet the needs of the organisation efficiently and effectively, they must be designed, developed, validated, implemented- and controlled for quality in accordance with systems, principles and procedures. There are however, some preliminary considerations and some basic principles that apply to all types of training.

Mukherjee (1990) gives the following principles of training:

1. Training of workers in a joint enterprise-responsible for clarifying objectives, outlining programme content and running the course
being shared between the trainers and the trainees. In other words, the training has to be participatory in nature.

2. Every trainee learns at his/her own pace and according to her capacity and motivation.

3. Trainees learn as a whole, i.e. the total personality of the trainees has to be completely involved in the learning process.

4. Learning has to begin at the existing level of understanding of the learner.

5. Learning how to learn is more important as the participants have to function independently in the field.

To make any kind of training in management development programmes, social and rural development of extension activities, more effective and efficient some cardinal principles are to be followed. These are (Samanta, 1993):

(1) The training should be based on the existing field situation of the trainees and should be meaningful and purposeful to them.

(2) It must start from the level at which the trainees are.

(3) It must provide nature and scope for relevant experiences to the trainees for their self-improvement.

(4) Training must also help the individual to experience changes which occur or ought to occur in their existing field situations.

(5) It must provide the opportunity to the trainees to equip themselves with techniques and means to grapple with the specific problems.
(6) The training process should be such that it ensures fuller participation and involvement of all the trainees.

(7) The training process should ensure three distinct ways of information transfer from trainer to the trainees, from the trainee to the trainee, from the trainees to the trainer.

(8) The training situation should be in informal environment so that the trainees would be able to react and participate without any hesitation in the process of learning and sharing of ideas.

Today, there are several kinds of training methods that are available to the management and in order to select and design a particular training method, it is important and necessary for the trainer to consider the above objectives and cardinal principles of training. Above all it is to be kept in mind that training helps an individual to learn as to how to carry out satisfactorily the work assigned to him by creating a learning environment in which the desired knowledge and skills can be effectively and meaningfully acquired by the trainees.

Characteristics of Training

According to Varma and Aggarwal (1991) a sound training programme must possess the following characteristics:

1) Training programmes should be designed so as to achieve the predetermined objectives, goals and needs of the organisation.

2) Training programme should be developed for all in the organisation and not for a particular group.
3) Training programme should be preplanned and well-organised, taking in view the objectives of training programme. For this purpose, the whole task should be divided in various sub activities and such sub-activities should be arranged in a systematic order.

4) Training programme should be designed according to the size, nature and financial position of the concern.

5) Training programme must be flexible enough.

6) The programme must be conducted by a senior and experienced officer of the concern.

7) Theoretical and practical aspects of training must be given due consideration while preparing a training programme. Theory and practice must go hand in hand. Teaching of theory without the knowledge of its application will be liable to lose the interest of trainees.

8) It should be designed in such a fashion as to incorporate the recent trends developed in the field concerned. The main purpose of the training programme should be to enable the trainee to pick up the training.

9) Training programme should be designed taking in view the interests of both the trainees and their organisation concerned.

10) The main purpose of the training programme should be to motivate the trainees to learn something to improve their performance.

11) An allowance for individual difference should also be considered because training needs differ from person to person depending on
the ability, learning capacity, interests and traditional and emotional make up of trainees.

The above characteristics must be developed in designing a sound training programme.

All training programmes have certain core features which can be listed below, but will differ in the area of emphasis given depending on the position of the trainee in the hierarchy, the number of trainees and so on, but however the common factors are:

i) Overall aim and objective of the programme i.e. what knowledge, skills and attitudes will be instilled at the end of the training period.

ii) Subject matter to be covered (syllabus) in sessional form and in logical sequence.

iii) The method of training that is to be employed to cover the subject matter in sufficient detail for trainers to use, e.g. lecture, discussion, practice etc.

iv) Where and when the training will take place, in terms of duration if not actual dates.

v) Who will do the training i.e. the people to whom training function has been delegated.

vi) Follow-up to the session to check performance, review progress or for recording purposes.
The training system is conceptualised in terms of 3 major functions-
1) Planning, 2) Implementation 3) Evaluation— which are interrelated.
Every training programme should be designed for and directed to meeting
specific needs of both the individual and the organisation.

Importance of Training

Competency in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude to shoulder
the responsibility of development is required of both the groups, the
officials as well as the non-officials. The most important question is how
to achieve not only change in their knowledge, skills and above all, in
attitude but also gain favourable perception of one another on their part.
Training compared to other methods could be considered as one of the
most effective means for effecting the desired change. Hence the
importance of training.

It is therefore, imperative that those personnel involved in
developing and creating a change in any particular area must first be
themselves well equipped and efficient. The quality of services rendered
in achieving development is directly dependent on the quality of
manpower engaged in these activities at various levels. The quality of
manpower in turn depends, along with many other factors, on the efforts
to equip them with qualifications needed for the responsibility they are
shouldering. Seen in this perspective any effort to improve quality of
manpower is intended to be qualitative contribution to development.
Hence the role of training for change agents is well recognized and
emphasized everywhere. Thus, training becomes a natural corollary to the very process of change especially the planned one.

Carolyn Nilson (1990) argues that training is one major approach to helping people control or manage change. This happens because training is designed to lead the trainee to master new knowledge, attitudes and skills. A person leaves training with the confidence that he can cope with change.

In any developing situation and more so in the Indian setting, there cannot be two opinions on the importance of training of personnel which is made necessary by the new and diverse types of activities inherent in the process of progress.

Viewed from any aspect, the problem of identification of training needs is in a sense nuclear to the entire process of development because the effectiveness of the planning process has a direct correlation with the availability of trained manpower (Conference on Training – Report, 1969).

There is now a greater awareness of the need for training and a better appreciation of the value of the training. Some state governments have taken steps to improve and reorganise training facilities for their officers.
On-the-job training is extremely suitable where transference of knowledge or skill is required. However, where the objective is to change attitudes and influence behaviour, its efficacy is limited.

William R. Tracey (1992) gives the following points to highlight the importance of training in an organisation:

1) Training helps to bring about changes in behaviour that promote the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organisation.
2) Develop the group and team skills needed to achieve organisation goals and objectives.
3) Develop in individuals, the knowledge and skills needed to perform the jobs, duties and tasks found in the organisation.
4) Prepare to assume supervisory, managerial, executive position in the organisation.
5) Improve the productivity of both individual and work teams.
6) Encourage self-development and involvement in programme.

Training provides or enhances the skills of operation. These skills are acquired or enhanced to implement the ideologies and to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation. In cases where the goals and objectives are not already set, the training provides the opportunity to understand the need for and the process of setting them. Any training to be effective however, needs to focus upon the individual who goes through the training (Kiron Wadhara, 1982). Training helps people to:

i) Look into themselves and their own functioning.
ii) Analyse the situation.

iii) Identify the problems in their work situation.

iv) Identify the areas in which they need to bring about a change.

v) Plan their objectives and action programme.

vi) Attitudinal change or development at certain attitudes.

**Training Need**

Training does not exist for its own sake. Its function is to increase efficiency, productivity and safety, it is part of a total manpower utilisation commitment. The identification of training needs must therefore be resolved before training itself can be usefully undertaken. A training need is the gap between the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the job demands, and the knowledge, skills and attitudes already possessed by the trainee.

The word 'need' implies that something is lacking and that there is a shortfall somewhere. The word training further implies that this lack can be supplied by systematic training. It can thus be said that a training need exists when the application of systematic training will serve to overcome a particular weakness (Boydell, 1971).

According to Boydell (1971) there are in fact 3 main areas to which the term ‘training need’ may be applied:

1) Needs at organisation level.

Here we are talking about general weaknesses. We are trying to highlight where, in the organisation, training is most needed.
2) Needs at occupational level.

By this we mean what is needed in terms of skill, knowledge and attitude to carry out the various duties related to a particular job or operation.

3) Needs at individual level.

Having determined the organisational and occupational need we are now trying to determine who needs training in what. Here we try to discover deficiencies in particular skills, knowledge and attitudes in the individuals.

Jonathan Coates (1984) gives the following reasons for why training is needed:

i) Speeds up learning.

ii) Increases efficiency.

iii) Standardises the work.

iv) Enhances confidence.

v) Increases profit.

vi) Decreases errors and mistakes.

Training is to aid in changing something in a particular direction and to a particular extent. Even in its widest sense training can do no more than make a contribution. It is never the whole process of change. In fact there are many areas of action in which training is not involved at all or at least not at a particular time.
Training has in view specified changes and is really for individuals in organisation who choose to take part in predetermined developments and are prepared by training for certain lines of action.

Training Process

John Staley (1982) says that a training process would involve the acquiring of skills to promote relatively intangible objectives like awareness building, a sense of community participation and group dynamics.

Kiron Wadhera (1982) views training as a process of learning and de-learning which helps individuals to acquire knowledge and put into practice, to develop and implement skills to achieve goals and objectives of the work that they are doing. It helps people to understand their abilities and enables them to develop their potentials for optimum utilisation in the field of work.

Improved performance of individual in achieving the desired goals is the ultimate aim of any training activity. Training is treated as a desirable, continuous activity in any organisation. If the organisation wants to keep itself abreast of changes within it and around it. In that sense training as a continuous process, helps to bring about desired, planned and appropriate change in attitude, skills and knowledge of the persons in the organisation. However, since in a large organisation especially that of government, training is treated as an independent
activity generally entrusted to a separate body especially created to impart it, training can be viewed as a separate system in itself contributing to the different other systems of organisation from which it receives persons for training and to which it sends them back furnished with training.

The training is also viewed as a system contributing to the enrichment of the work performance of people in organisation. A system view of training is illustrated by way of a diagram (Lynton and Pareek 1967).

A system view of Training.

Input-characteristics ↔ Process-characteristics ↔ Output-characteristics

Need identification ↔ Time utilisation ↔ Change in relation among the member participants

Training specification ↔ Goal redefinition ↔ Change in attitudes, knowledge and behaviour

Goal definition ↔ New role definition Role socialisation

Selection of participants ↔ Communication structure

Course duration ↔ Action decisions

Feedback

The training process basically aims at creating an impact in three main areas:
1) Personal changes in individual participant's attitude, knowledge and behaviour.

2) Changes in the relationship among the members of the group.

3) The action decisions resulting from the training process.

Mukherjee (1990) stresses the following steps in a training process:

1) Understanding of the training needs and thereby formulation of themes.

2) Working out the details of the objectives.

3) Selecting the venue taking into consideration the theme and availability of facilities.

4) Fixing of duration and time.

5) Making a choice about the nature of participants.

6) Selection of the resource persons taking into consideration the theme and background of the participants.

7) Actual holding of the training.

8) Oral evaluation of the programme by the participants.

9) Sharing of experience among the co-organizers.

10) Follow-up.

Lynton and Pareek (1967) speak of the spiral model of the training process, which shows the phases through which a participant passes as he learns and returns, with capacities enhanced to do this job. This model is useful to visualise a training programme as a whole and also each event and series of events which make up the programme.
The process view of training explicitly makes it clear that ‘training’ is not confined only to the training institution. And that the participants and their organisations are equally responsible partners in the process.

**Training Strategy**

Effective training calls for clarity of objectives and means to achieve them. In that sense it is just like a manufacturing process where both the ends and the means must be appropriate to the purpose. Relating them demands clear specifications for each part of the training task, including the resources of time, skill, and facilities required for it, establishing training goals and defining training specifications.

In order to have an effective training strategy it is desirable for an organisation to have a separate training cell which apart from identifying the needs of training in their respective organisations, the training cells will also have to undertake, at the appropriate stage, the preparation of training manuals and accurate duty charts in terms of which training needs have to be located. In addition, these training cells will assist in the formulation and development of training programmes, supervisions of training arrangements, collection of data on training techniques and of reading materials and liaison with similar units in other organisation.

Mukherjee (1990) gives the following strategies for an effective training:

a) Pre-training stage -
1) Plan the programme taking into consideration the factors contributing to organisation of training theme, background of the trainees, content and methodology.

2) Identify the target group, establish contact with them and collect information about them and their job responsibility.

3) Select resource persons, decide venue and duration.

4) Make physical arrangements.

5) Prepare a list of reading materials.

b) Training stage –

1. Welcome the trainees.

2. Explain the objectives of the programme and seek their clarification.

3. Explain to the trainees what the organizers expect from them during the period of training.

4. Actual organisation of different sessions.

5. Evaluation of the programmes.

c) Post training stage –

1. Devote time in introspection.

2. Prepare a report incorporating the experience gained.

For the trainees-

1. Share the experiences with colleagues.

2. Try to use the newly acquired knowledge.
Brandford (1954) argues that a training approach directed toward bringing about desirable changes in the way people work and relate to others must analyse five major areas. These are:

1. The aspects of individual learning necessary for change in the total individual.
2. The optimum condition under which change can be encouraged under the training plan.
3. The psychological atmosphere conductive to change.
4. The ways of handling the personal problems arising from efforts to change.
5. The support necessary to enable the individual to maintain the change.

Training may be defined as one way of achieving specified behavioural changes in a required direction. This direction is related to organisational objective, and the people whose behaviour is to be changed work within the organisation. Therefore the responsibility for training lies with the persons responsible for organizational objective and for the people employed (Boydell, 1971). The job of the training manager can be illustrated by way of diagram.
The job of the Training Manager

Define the problems

Evaluate the results

Arrange the programmes in order of priority

Analyse each programme to determine the best combination of organisational change, selection and training

Assemble the resources and implement the process

Design the training process and produce the training plan

Produce a
-Target population analysis
-Task analysis
-Performance analysis

The real difficulty with this form of training is however that its success or failure hinges upon the availability of competent trainers who have knowledge and skills, the ability to communicate with and motivate the trainees along with a deeper awareness of the higher purpose of administration. A trainer must have a clear – cut picture of the objective of training in mind. Trainer needs professional expertise in order to fulfil his responsibility. Trainer should not forget the newness of the trainee to the training programme. Trainees should be facilitators of training rather than merely transmitters of knowledge.
For an effective approach it must be kept in mind that, participants to be trained in the task of development have to face the masses as this brings them in close proximity to people and since they are broadly working to bring about changes in people, they should develop people-oriented attitudes in their tasks. Hence, any training programme, whatever be the subject matter, as far as its strategy is concerned, should be participant oriented. This is more feasible by adopting a participative approach.

There are many other reasons in support of the participative approach. First, the prior experience and knowledge of an adult participant can be drawn upon- this is a concrete way of recognising the independence and responsibility of the participant as an adult. Second, the central or basic task of training in rural development is not only to help the participants learn theory and techniques but also to help them acquire skills in applying this knowledge to facilitate problem-solving. This can be best achieved by linking the knowledge-learning process with the skill-learning process and only the participative approach provides such a linkage (Hokenstad and Rigby, 1977).

**Training for Rural Women-The Quest for an Alternative**

"If the Community Development Movement which aims at changing the whole texture of our society, ever fails in achieving its objectives, it will not be for lack of money, but for lack of trained personnel. In these words of Nehru (the then Prime Minister of India) are epitomized the
essence and importance of training for community development. And no wonder therefore, that it occupied the pride of place in the programme of community Development Ministry in the early sixties. However, these training programmes were rather restricted in its scope. It mainly aimed at training the extension workers.

The magnitude of the task was such that training was needed for everyone in the administration from the village level up to the national level in every department, generalist or technical.

In the Indian context, since the beginning of 1951 training for Rural Development has captured the importance in all governmental efforts. Two main developments can be distinguished as far as the growth of the training institution is concerned. First, it is in the wake of launching the nationwide programmes of community development, that systematic network of training institutions, government or otherwise, been set up. These areas however were largely meant for needs of field staff, administrators and policy makers than for people at large or their leaders at local levels (Committee on Plan Projects, 1957).

Secondly, the introduction of Panchayat Raj added another set of institutions of training for functionaries of its new structural arrangements. Under these efforts attention was also paid to the training of community leaders and people's representatives of government organisation (Government of India, 1978).
The need for training of the developmental functionaries, as a part of building up the manpower potential was recognized in all types of rural development strategies. Several committees appointed by the central government and state governments on community development and Panchayat Raj devoted attention to this vital aspect of Human Resource Development.

For instance the Ashok Metha committee report emphasized the importance of training as follows:

In many ways the human resource is more vital than the financial. The value of human factor in the development process is not only the component in growth but also in shaping the texture of our society. Development of human resources should, therefore be the primary feature in Panchayat Raj.

Furthermore, it has been seen that women play a vital role in the rural economy of India. However their socio-economic status remains marginal. Agriculture is the major economic activity for women, yet as stated ‘in towards equality’ there are considerable disparities in wages between men and women depending upon the region, between crops and the bargaining power of labour. These differences form the basic rationale for the planning process for vocational training, which can improve the economic options and opportunities for women.
It is largely women from the poorer strata of society who seek participation in training programmes in the hope that such training will ensure an improvement in their own, or more exactly, their families' income. If this is the trend, the motivation to be trained should be the strongest among the landless families.

The next factor to be considered is how training can be arranged so that it suits the living conditions of these women. Here the main points requiring attention are the possible loss of income in cash or in kind while participating in a training programme and suitable arrangements for childcare and the domestic chores usually undertaken by the women. However according to the survey conducted in the context of the project ‘Women’s Vocational Training Programme’ there are many women who have or who are said to have enough leisure time which means that they are not likely to face problems in this regard (Government of India, 1980).

It has also been established that improved access to education and training is not in itself sufficient to improve the productivity and income of women and girls working in the informal sector. It must be perused within a context of training for the existing or potential market opportunity and be geared to the circumstances of women’s lives. An additional aspect of training for women would be in skills related to personal development, such as leadership, assertiveness, managing stress and discrimination, and self-confidence building.
According to the International Labour Organization, training for women should also emphasize their personal development—how to overcome discrimination and hostility, how to maintain good business relations in the face of unwarranted pressure to do things which might jeopardize their business, how to negotiate and influence people.

It also mentions that training must be organised in ‘camps’ because in this way women are brought together to share their problems, discuss issues which affect their lives and identify common solutions. In the course of these gatherings, women with leadership qualities are identified and their skills enhanced for leadership role. Considerable attention is paid to organisational dynamics whereby group leaders are taught ways of mobilising women, introducing issues, stimulating discussion and enabling action to be taken. Women receive training in specific technical, vocational and management skills to improve their productivity and income levels.

The ILO views that as a co-operative, women learn ways of learning with intermediary agencies, they acquire the communication skills and confidence needed to do so. Training should relate directly to their experience and to the problems they perceive. Training programmes must be prepared so that they are functional, comprehensive, forward-looking and flexible (Fred Fluitman, 1989).

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kasturbagram, Indore, concentrated its efforts, in guiding, directing and training the rural women to promote and
The strategy of educating illiterate rural women was based on exposing the learners to a wide range of training which varied from most direct to highly abstract experiences. Learning involved performance of skills and exposures to experiences through use of different teaching methods.

The guideline for training the rural women was framed by eliciting and analysing responses from fifty randomly selected families from different locations. The responses of 700 rural women from five different villages were analysed in terms of participation in the training programme and the impact of technologies was assumed in terms of awareness and adoption of practices.

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra conducted a training for rural women to promote and rationalise development work. 700 rural women from five different villages participated in a wide range of training programmes, which involved performance of skills and exposure to different experiences of over a period of five years. The study shows that the women who received training became alert, bold, vocal and conscious of their needs and problems. There was greater awareness and motivation to change.

The findings show that in the women's training programmes it is essential to train and motivate adult women in the initial stages because they have a role in the decision making pattern of the family and would not permit young women to go out unless they like and relish the situation
and the programme. The awareness and motivation was more than 90 percent and the adoption of technologies varied from 15 percent to 80 percent.

A study of 350 trainees under TRYSEM by SNDT Women's University Bombay in the Bulsar District has corroborated several of the observations made by other evaluation studies. They suggest that women should not be treated as mere targets but as integral part of the programme and therefore qualities like confidence, innovation, negotiating ability etc. be developed. It also recommended that in deciding the skills necessary for women, stereotypes about women's role be removed. It is very necessary to identify a grass root voluntary organisation which would not only undertake to impart training but will sensitively understand the problems of poor women and further, take up the responsibility of conscientising the participants to women's issues. Besides these tasks, it may also monitor the way in which the training is being utilised.

The current framework of national development recognises women as unique power units and potential resources which need to be developed for the all-round development of the society. This is much more true in the case of rural women. The effective management and development of their resources i.e. their abilities, interests, skills and other potentialities are of paramount importance for the mobilisation and development process of rural women. Therefore an effective planning of extension programmes for rural women which should include training suitable for
local conditions, development of appropriate technologies to reduce the drudgery and utilization of available time and energy to maximum limits, needs to be carried out (Geeta Mahale and Uma Gavimath, 1990).

A study on effectiveness of institutional training on the knowledge level of rural women regarding tailoring was conducted in the seven villages of Dharward Taluk adopted by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharware. The study attempts to assess the impact of the training given to the rural women in terms of change in their knowledge level and also the study aimed to find out the association of certain selected personnel and socio-economic characteristics of trained rural women with their knowledge level. The result of the study shows that there was significant improvement in their knowledge level (ibid.).

A three day workshop to “Identify Training Needs for women in Rural Development” was organised by NIPCCD in New Delhi from 13-15 April 1988 with a view to reviewing the existing training programmes for women in rural development in the context of their multiple roles in order to identify areas of priority where training needs to be strengthened. The participants were senior trainers, academicians, social scientists, management professional, administrators and non-governmental organisations imparting training in the filed of women in development (NIPCCD News Letter, 1988).
The workshop recommended that the convergence to rural women would need to involve local institutions and organisations specialising in a particular field. A systematic development strategy focused on training for women was visualized at three levels:

i) the grass-roots level,

ii) the middle level and

iii) the policy level, to encompass certain principal areas, these being:

Organisation and leadership training aimed at conscientisation on issues such as health, education, paralegal training etc. which is given to catalysts, extension workers, organisers of co-operatives etc. The emphasis would be on communication and interpersonal skills and effective group mobilisation skills for organisation.

Skill training in the major sectors of employment aimed towards upgradation of skills and training in the use of appropriate technologies. This would be given to programme beneficiaries, functionaries and supervisory workers.

Management training: Special training for women workers and entrepreneurs in project formulation, monitoring, evaluation, and other skills which are required to administer and manage projects is given. It is also envisaged to train rural women as organizers and instructors in different sectors.
Sensitization of administrators/implementers: This training would be given through training programmes of the Department of personnel. It will be aimed at developing appropriate attitudes and knowledge for implementing, monitoring and planning programmes and policies for women.

The general overall objective of the training for rural women is to equip them with the basic knowledge, attitudes and skills to play effective roles in promoting the process of development.

According to John Staley (1982) the objectives of the training programme for rural women are:

1) To promote leadership among the members of mahila samajams and the womenfolk in general in the villages.

2) To help village women become more efficient in agriculture and thereby attain a better standard of living.

3) To help women realise the importance of girls' education.

4) To help women play their part as equal partners in the village Panchayats and co-operatives and make the best use of available facilities like school, maternity centres etc.

5) To help women to form themselves into associations for promoting social education and to actively participate in the village volunteer force.

In short the purpose of the training for rural women is to strengthen consciousness about women's problems and rights and to establish
workable structures that enable them to participate in development planning. Thus training becomes the essential instrument of women's emancipation and self-fulfilment.

The study conducted in the Mahila Sanghas of Karnataka shows that training in the political process seems to have helped the women to realise their role and responsibilities in the Panchayat. It is seen that passive participation of women in Panchayat activities is found more among those women who do not belong to the Mahila Sanghas. This may be due to lack of training and orientation and also the fact that where the Sanghas are more, passive women have developed self confidence and boldness due to exposure and awareness in various activities, the non Sangha women lack this attitudinal adaptation. It was thereby decided to encourage such women to take part in training (Sushma Sahay, 1998).

Various studies have revealed that rural development schemes have not reached women, and have rather alienated them in the process. The numerous training schemes, ostensibly for women, have not had the expected impact on women's status because of their failure to address areas of organisation and management. The training must keep in focus the specific needs of women and their role in the economy so that training operates as a tool to enhance their capacities. Training of personnel at various levels to develop a sensitivity to women's needs should be the other thrust in policy and programme formulations.
Most women do not have information on the services or facilities available for their training. The focus of the training is mainly in skill development and not on awareness generation, which would help their self-esteem, confidence, realization of potential and enhance their collective bargaining power. Training schemes planned centrally do not relate to the local perspective.

In view of the prevalent constraints and the piecemeal approach to training with a conspicuous lack of supportive services, the need for an overall mandate of training for women seems imperative. Alternatives need to be explored and mechanisms evolved to ensure that rural women can benefit from training inputs. The focus would be increasing capacities in training as strategy towards women's empowerment. The alternative framework for training should represent in itself an alternative approach to development which is people-centred, based on decentralised decision-making and access to resources, knowledge and power.

Empowerment is a continuum and consists of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components, such as awareness building, capacity building and skill development. Building critical mass of women who could act as a pressure group would enhance the process of empowerment. A growing awareness among women through the effective methods of training would create a very favourable and conducive climate to secure the empowerment of women.
In the light of the above literature stating the importance of training and its effect on the empowerment of women, the researcher wishes to explore and make a comparative study of the relevance and impact of the same. This study is based on selected categories of rural women who have both undergone and not undergone a training process and the focus is largely on three areas of impact namely level of awareness, leadership qualities and socio-economic status.