CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
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"Empowerment is a term widely used in the context of 'development', particularly, women's development. Empowerment is a way of defining, challenging and overcoming barriers in one's life through which the individual increases her ability to shape her life and environment."\(^1\)

Women empowerment cannot be rigidly defined particularly in a situation like ours, where there exists a lot of difference among women in different sectors such as rural versus urban women; women in organized sector versus women in unorganized sector or informal sector; women in Government/Public sector versus those in private sector; educated women versus uneducated women, both in rural and urban sectors; and women belonging to lower level income group versus those belonging to higher income group."\(^2\)

"Empowerment has been conceptualized differently by different writers. However, for all of them the goal of the empowerment process is to address issues relating to women's subordination, inequity and inequality."\(^3\) 'Empowerment can be traced to the theories of Paulo Freire (1972), who put forth the notion of 'conscientization' - a process that would enable the poor to challenge the power structures and gain control over their lives."\(^4\)
In the same Vein, Dandekan (1986) has described, "Empowerment as a multifaceted process, which involves four parallel aspects. These are -

- The woman's economic/resource base;
- The public/political arena allowed to her by society;
- Her family structure and the strengths and limitations it imposes on her; and
- Perhaps most important, the psychological/ideological 'sense' about women in her society, which in turn shapes her own perception of herself and the options she allows herself to consider."

Bhasin (1992) defines, "Empowerment as a means of recognizing women contribution, helping women fight their own fears, enhancing their self respect, making women economically independent, self reliant, controlling resources like land and property, reducing women's burden of work (especially within the home), creating and strengthening women's groups, organizations and promoting qualities of nurturing, caring, gentleness etc."

Karl (1995) views, "Empowerment as a continuum of several inter-related and mutually reinforcing components including awareness buildings, capacity and skill development, control and
decision making power and action towards gender equality."\textsuperscript{4}

Zippy (1995) defines, "Empowerment as 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 choice and facilitating the development of the knowledge and resources necessary to exercise these choices."\textsuperscript{5}

Stein (1997) suggests that empowerment can be studied by partitioning it into measurable components which include psychological aspects (self esteem), behavioural aspects and family relations (autonomy and decision making) and community relations (mobility, participation in community affairs).\textsuperscript{4}

Radhai (1998) in her empirical study on "The Status of Urban Working Women in Chennai" identified factors which effect empowerment of women in the organized sector. For measurement of empowerment, the following index is used-

\[
\text{EPI} = \text{SSI} + \text{ESI} + \text{DMI} + \text{LS}
\]

- \text{EPI} = \text{Empowerment Index}
- \text{SSI} = \text{Social Status Index}
- \text{ESI} = \text{Economic Status Index}
- \text{DMI} = \text{Decision Making Index}
- \text{LS} = \text{Legal Safeguards}
Determinants of Social Status Index
a. Community  
b. Type of family  
c. Total household income  
d. Educational status  
e. Occupational status  
f. Membership in any social Club

Determinants of Economic Status Index
a. House owned/rented  
b. Educational status given by qualification or years of schooling  
c. Income  
d. Work experience  
e. Whether Income Tax assesses or not  
f. Possession of consumer durables  
g. Size of family

Decision Making Index
a. Whether women is involved in taking household management decision or not  
b. Choice of education  
c. Choice of employment  
d. Choice of marriage  
e. Choice over children's education  
f. Role in purchase of consumer durables  
g. Purchase of assets  
h. In running day to day household affairs  
i. In helping friends and relatives
Such a measurement of women empowerment is possible if only the respondents women are educated and employed in any organized sector as it involves basic understanding of their own ‘status’ and the competence to understand the different dimensions of status such as economic, social, political and legal, all of them help to construct their empowerment index.6

Soni (2001) defines “Empowerment is an active multi-dimensional process which should enable individuals or a group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It would consist of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making, greater ability to plan their lives, have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practice.”7

“The women empowerment mechanism is easily enumerated on higher literacy and education, better health care for women and her children, higher age at marriage, greater work participation in modernized sector, necessary financial and service support, advancement into higher position of power, better consciousness of their rights, self-reliance, self respect and dignity among women.”8
“World Economic Profile of women shows, women represent 50 percent of the population, make up 30 percent of the official labour force, perform 60 percent of all working hours, receive 10 percent of world income, and own even less than 1 percent of the world’s property.”

“Work participation rate, literacy health, and political participation are the globally accepted indication of female empowerment” (Human Development Report 1997). Under work participation, while a movement from unorganized to organized sector is much better, attainment of higher occupational scales reflects improved socio-economic status and hence greater empowerment.

One of the debatable issues is whether economic participation of women leads to enhancement of her status in family/society. Lalitha Devi made a study of change of status in the family as a result of employment and examined four variables which are important determinants of status within family. They are –

1. Extent of power in decision making in the family;
2. Extent of freedom in spending the family income;
3. Extent of help received in discharging household responsibility;
4. Extent of observation of traditional customs and behaviour which are indicative of subordinate status of women.
Jauhari (1970) studied the status of working women in Lucknow. She found that inspite of social progress and increased education, working women perceived that the society was highly critical of them. Financial difficulties was the most dominant reason for taking up job earning and level of education were not found to be correlated.

Kala Rani in her book entitled, ‘Role Conflict in Working Women’ talked about the motivations for a job. She named the motives as – engagement for spare time, gross necessity, to supplement husband’s income, to escape from domestic chores, ambition for a career, to have independent income, to achieve own status and position, to make use of education and to serve human beings.

The studies have indicated that in all cases it is just not one motivation which works but a constellation of motivations, some more important and some less. The knowledge of motivation for work has an important bearing on the job satisfaction and the role conflict or happiness in the life of working women. The in-laws attitude is declining in importance, but husband’s attitude is very significant. Husband’s positive approach inspite of non-sharing of the household chores, considerably satisfies working women. Thus the levels of economic equality and independence are the real indicators to measure the status of women in any society.
Therefore we can say that empowerment requires a fundamental and dynamic change in the perception of women expectations, from women in society and a scientific and rational understanding of women's problems and needs. Empowerment of women is the prerequisite for a sustainable development of any country.

NEED FOR EMPOWERMENT

The position of women in India, inspite of legislations and policies, continues to be subordinate with all economic and social indicators pointing towards their unequal access to various resources, Viz. health, education, employment, property right etc.

It is a well established statistical fact that participation and involvement of women in productive and promotional activities is very unfavourably disproportional to their total percentage in Indian population. The position of women becomes further adverse due to societal behaviours in terms of denial of access to material resources and deprivation of social resources like education, health, care etc. Much of women's work remains unvalued, undervalued and unrecognized. They share the major burden in human development, but get very little of its benefits.

According to the census of 1991, India's total population is 846.3 million. Out of this, 407.1 million
are females and 439.23 millions males. Further, the female literacy rate is only 39.3 percent as compared to 64.1 percent for males.

To sum up, we can say that the verb "empower" means to enable. Enabling implies motivating by enhancing personal efficacy. As a motivational construct, empower means creating conditions for heightening motivation for task accomplishment through development of a strong sense of personal efficacy.14

PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN

"Empowering of women pre-supposes a drastic, dynamic and democratic change in the perception of the expectation from women in our society. To help women to attain economic independence is the first pursuit for such a change. When a woman attains economic independence she naturally becomes the mistress of her own body and author of her own decisions."8

After independence the Government of India adopted the Welfare Oriented Approach as far as women’s issues were concerned. The Government in different plan documents enunciated the policies advocating women’s issues through both Government and voluntary agencies. Some of the important policy guiding documents include—The National Plan of Action for Women (NPA) adopted in 1976 became a guiding document for the development of women till
1988 when a National Perspective Plan for women was formulated. The National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP) was drawn up to facilitate main streaming of women's issues in policies and programmes. ⁸

Also the era of development of women was started with the appointment of a Committee on the status of Women in 1971, which was influenced by the declaration of the year 1975 as the International Year and the Decade of 1975-1985 as the International Women's Decade. Government of India designed the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) for implementing certain policies and programmes to achieve advancement of women and to eliminate discrimination.⁶

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) was formulated towards equality of women. It was pointed low status of women cannot be raised without opening up opportunities of independent employment and income for them, as such Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was started. A sixth plan strategy for women's development was three fold—education, employment and health.

In the Seventh Plan (1985-90) the identification and promotion of women in different developmental sectors have been implemented in order to bury them into the main stream of national development. The Central Government's main wage employment programmes are the National Rural Employment
Programme (NREP) and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP).

The Eighth Plan (1992-97) made a shift from 'women development' to 'women empowerment'. This had come a long way by way of moving from growth to growth with equity, from bureaucratic delivery of services to people's participation, from economic development to human development and from asset and services endowment to empowerment.

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) is attempted to shift the focus from household based to community based programmes. Several poverty alleviation programmes through women's organizations at the grassroots level were implemented.

The Tenth Plan (2002-2001) approved aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for empowerment of women into action and ensuring survival, protection and development of women and children. To fulfill this objective, the following commitments were made during the Tenth plan.

a. To create an environment for the development of women through positive economic and social policies.
b. To provide equal access to participation and decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation.
c. To ensure access to women to health care, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal reward, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
d. To build and strengthen partnership with civil society particularly women’s organizations. Cooperate and private sector agencies.
e. To strengthen legal system in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
f. To eliminate all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
g. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the development process.
h. To change social attitudes as well as community practices by active participation and involvement of both women and men.
i. To allow women to enjoy not only the de-jure but also de-facto rights and fundamental freedom at par with men in all spheres, viz political, economic, social, civil, cultural etc.\[14\]

**NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

Not a single research an “Empowerment of women in Kashmir-A study in Srinagar district” has been undertaken. So the present study aims at examining or assessing empowerment of women in Kashmir in context with parameters like education, employment, decision status of women (within and outside family), social and family relations, various problems faced by women etc. After the completion of
this thesis it shall help in identifying the factors which help in empowering women.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem for the present investigation was titled as "Empowerment of Women in Kashmir—A study in Srinagar District".

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Empowerment of women is a long drawn issue, receiving much importance during last few years. The main concern in this regard is to bring women out of the boundary of four walls and to widen their role beyond child and family care to the wider aspects of socio-economic and cultural activities of the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study aims at studying empowerment of women in Srinagar District with parameters like education, employment, decision making (within and outside family), social and family relations and various problems faced by women. The main objectives of the study are:-

1. To make an assessment whether education is an important factor for empowering women and if it develops in her the desire for higher status.

2. To find out motivational factors for women's education.
3. To assess whether employment helps women to be economically independent.

4. To ascertain the participation of women in taking decisions within and outside family.

5. To find out the changes in the role and responsibilities (as mother, as wife, as wage earner, as employee etc.) of Kashmiri women in family and society.

6. To make an assessment of problems which women are facing.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

In consonance with the aforesaid objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated for verification and confirmation.

1. Education enhances status and is a major step for empowerment of women.

2. Women's work outside home (i.e. employment) is the primary avenue for their empowerment.

3. Economic empowerment or financial difficulties are most dominant reasons for job earnings of women.

4. Working women face more role conflict than non working women.
5. Economic empowerment helps women to take her own decisions.

6. There is still upper hand of men pertaining to decision making power (within and outside family).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is mainly based both on primary and secondary data. It may be stated that the data presented in tables is the outcome of the field work and the collected data have been used as partial and in aggregate form of percentages to draw inferences in the study.

2. To streamline the research, respondents from different nature of jobs were chosen by random sampling technique.

3. The researcher had to face number of difficulties while collecting data. To meet the working women it was important that the timing should be 1–2 pm only as it was a lunch time. To have interaction with housewives it was much more difficult as they were always busy in their domestic chores. On an average, the researcher could interact with 3–5 respondents per day with an average 25–35 minutes with each respondent.
4. In social research percentage of human error in recording the responses and in tabulation of the data cannot be ruled out.

5. Women from unorganized sector (agriculture) have not been included in the sample.

6. Political participation of women is not included in the study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

The important terms used in this study are contextually defined as the following:

**Woman** – Woman is the adult human female to family. She assumes multi-faceted roles like daughter, sister, wife, mother, etc.

**Working Woman** – A married woman who is employed outside the home in full time job were she is guided by rules and regulations of the administration. She therefore is a wage earner to her family.

**Non Working Woman** – A married women who works within home and is not a wage earner.

**Primary Data** – Primary data is the information which is collected for the first time and thus happens to be original in character.
Secondary Data – The information which has been already collected by someone else and which has already been passed through statistical process.

Education – Education in the present study means a formal and conscious training to acquire knowledge, values, skills, and information in an institutionalized form over a stipulated period as a means to personality development as well as livelihood. The term education is used in this study to refer to those who have had primary schooling and above.

Employment – In the Census of India, the term worker is defined as “a person whose main activity is participation in any economically productive work by his physical or mental activity. Work includes not only actual work but effective supervision and direction of work”. Employment, thus, can be understood as economically productive work that involves physical or mental activity or both which is remunerated by wage or salary. Further, it may be either permanent or temporary, having contractual obligation for both parties. In this study employment means any source of income whether private or government which gives monetary benefit.

Gender roles expectation – The gender role of the woman generally include the feminine roles of daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, mother etc.

Mahr – Mahr is the amount paid by bridegroom to
bride among Muslims at the time of Nikah ceremony.

**Role** - It is a pattern of feelings, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour that a person in a particular social status is expected to exhibit.

**Role Conflict** - It is a situation in which an individual is expected to play two or more different roles that involve response that are competing or antagonistic and thus causes role conflict. In the present study, role conflict of working women will be studied regarding the roles performed by them within family and outside family.

**Dual Role** - Multiplicity of roles performed by working women i.e. within family as home manager and outside family as wage earner.

**Harassment/molestation** - To annoy anyone or unpleasant behaviour towards someone that takes places regularly e.g. threats, offensive remarks etc.

**STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**
The study is divided into five chapters:

**Introduction**
This chapter deals with the concept of empowerment, followed by perceptions of empowering women. Besides statement of problem, objectives, hypothesis, limitations, definition of important terms
used in the study, scope and structure of the study are also laid down.

- **Review of Related Literature**
  This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I deals with the historical background of women in India, major theoretical approaches etc. Part II deals with literature available on women and women's empowerment.

- **Materials and Methods**
  This chapter deals with selection of the area, sampling, structure of the questionnaire, data source and data analysis.

- **Results and Discussion**
  The results obtained from the study are discussed in this chapter.

- **Summary and Conclusions**
  This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study. Further it lists the conclusions that emerge from the study. Based on study results, some recommendations have been put forth for empowering women.

In foregoing pages besides introducing the problem under study, objectives and hypothesis were also laid down. Since secondary data forms an important documentation of any research study
therefore the next chapter is devoted to "Review of Literature" sighted for the study. The review of literature has been divided into two parts as Part I and Part II. Part I pertains to the historical background of women in India; major theoretical approaches (theoretical and methodological issues) and approaches to empowerment. Part II pertains to review of studies pertaining to empowerment of women.