3.1 INTRODUCTION

Empowerment, today, is a largely discussed and focussed terminology in every development activity. It is equally a widely interpreted concept. It has also become a popular tool for analysis and an umbrella concept to justify every conceivable development intervention. Empowerment surfaced prominently as an objective in the World Summit for Social development held at Copenhagen in March, 1995. The Draft Declaration of the Third Preparatory Committee (New York, January, 1995) adopted by the heads of states and governments asserted that ‘the most productive policies and investments are those which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities'. The same document further emphasizes that the main focus of development is to empower people, especially women, to enhance and strengthen their capacities.

Undoubtedly the welfare and well being of the people is the ultimate objective of every development effort. Similarly, the basic quest of human struggle is to seek a better quality of life. Every individual irrespective of being a man or a woman holds equal right to lead a respectful and sustainable life. This can be achieved by the participation of people in both formulation and execution of decisions determining the functioning and well being of society.

Decades together witnessed the extensive efforts by the policy makers directed towards liberalisation. Recently the goal of national and international policies and development programmes has undergone a paradigm shift. They now have empowerment at their core. The Indian government’s country paper for the Copenhagen Summit included a section on ‘Empowering the people-Models of Mobilization’. It stated that empowerment of people was in enabling them to help themselves and in removing social, economic, cultural and psychological barriers,
which would transform them from being passive recipients of the government programmes to active ones and manage their own affairs.²

3.2 MEANING OF POWER

It is commonly seen that gender determines the access to resources and power to individuals. When the individual recognizes and opposes the forces that deny such access the empowerment begins. It is a process by which those without power gain greater control over their lives. Empowerment rotates around three basic constituents’ viz. power to, power with and power within. Towards understanding the concept of empowerment, it is necessary to know what Power is.

Max Weber defined power as “the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action”³. Power enables an individual to place himself in a dominating position many a times over and above others also. Oxaal and Baden⁴ (1997) stated that the concept of power lies at the root of empowerment which operates at various levels. He classified power into four types viz.:

a. **Power Over:**
This involves either/or relationship of domination/ subordination and is based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation.

b. **Power To:**
This relates to the authority of decision making, power to solve problems and can be creative and enabling.

c. **Power With:**
This involves bringing people together and organizing them for a common purpose to achieve collective goals.

d. **Power Within:**
Refers to self confidence, self awareness and assertiveness.
Of the abovementioned four types of power the first i.e. power over reflects the negative aspect of the concept. It tends towards violence and creation of fear among others. Empowerment based on this power, however, leads to disempowerment of those on whom it is used or exercised. This obviously is not a healthy form and empowerment based on such power cannot survive for long.

On the contrary the other types of power are productive and positive. Empowerment built on power to, power with and power within leads to upliftment and enhancement of lives of all those who are directly or indirectly associated with it. This is the empowerment that must be strived for through policy implications.

### 3.3 CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT

According to the World Bank’s Empowerment Source book, “empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”\(^5\). In other words empowerment is understood as an attribute that enables poor people to discover their potentials as individuals and as groups and propels them to design their lives.

Empowerment is viewed differently by different social thinkers. Some of the important understandings of empowerment are given below:
Table 3.1

Components of Empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Power as means to take control of their circumstances and achieve their life goal.</td>
<td>Ability to exercise authority over one’s own life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naila Kabeer</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied.</td>
<td>Ability to make choices &amp; exercise options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigler</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Enabling people to develop their full range of human capabilities, options, choices &amp; control are to be emphasized as the basic components of empowerment.</td>
<td>Developing capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narayan</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Expansion of assets and capabilities to negotiate with institutions.</td>
<td>Expansion of assets and capabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Microcredit & Empowerment of Marginal Farmers, A.Thomas*

Thus empowerment has been understood as the process which starts from within by expanding the choices to which an individual is exposed. It also provides the individual with enhancement of the capabilities that enable him to exercise control over these choices. In the words of Naila Kabeer (1999), ‘empowerment entails a process of change. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered in this sense, because they were never disempowered in the first place’. The philosophy of empowerment is hence related with ‘disempowerment’ and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. It is the process of transforming those without power to a level where they can exercise their choices and control these alternatives. Empowerment as per Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988), is a social process that promotes participation of people, organizations and communities.
in gaining control over their lives in their community and larger society\textsuperscript{8}. Participation has been looked upon by many as an important ingredient of empowerment. The major functions determining participation are immediate material and social benefits, anticipated future benefits and symbolic benefits like increased status (Kindervatter, 1979)\textsuperscript{9}. This basically led the planners and the policy makers to focus on a participatory approach to achieve empowerment.

3.3.1 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women’s empowerment is not a static concept. Instead it is contextual and nonlinear. It moreover changes over time within the life of the same woman. The different stages, the familial environment, the level of exposure given to the woman act as the deciding factors in the empowerment of a woman. The process of empowerment entail change at different levels and in different dimensions; change can occur at level of the individual, in their ‘inner’ sense of self, or in their access to material resources; it can occur in relationships within the family and household; or it can reflect alteration in position in the wider hierarchies of the economy and state\textsuperscript{10}. According to Naila Kabeer (2001) choice comprises of three interrelated components: “resources which form the conditions under which choices are made, agency which is at the heart of the processes through which choices are made and achievements, which are the outcomes of choice”\textsuperscript{11}. Kabeer further distinguishes between strategic life choices and second hand choices. The strategic life choices or First Order choices include choice of livelihood, where to live, whom to marry, whether to marry, freedom of movement etc. The Second Hand choices are related to the quality of one’s life such as when to have a dinner, when to go to the market, etc. She advocates that choices should be evaluated in terms of their transformatory significance, the extent to which the choices made have potential for challenging social inequalities and the extent to which they merely express and reproduce these inequalities. According to Caroline Moser (1993)\textsuperscript{12}, the concept of woman empowerment has two dimensions:

1] Building self-reliance and internal strength of the woman.
2] Ability to determine choices of life.

Moser also attempted to make a distinction between practical and strategic gender needs which women identify in their society. These gender needs do not challenge the gender divisions of labour or women’s subordinate position in the society. The strategic gender needs are the outcome if the roles which the society and culture expects women to perform. The process of empowerment should focus on meeting strategic gender needs and should challenge the subordinate position of women. Thus, Moser attempted to focus on individual’s empowerment and it considers control of resources as their main means to achieve empowerment.

In relation to women’s empowerment Hake Holly M. states, “it is restructuring of gender relations within both family and society at large and it is society’s recognition of women’s equality with men in terms of their worth to society as an independent person”\textsuperscript{13}. Empowerment is the process which takes place at both individual level and societal level. It is expected that empowerment should result in enhancement of individual status. But more than that an acceptance of this enhanced status is equally important.

According to J.K.pillai, “empowerment is an active multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted nor can it be given away as aims. Power has to be acquired and once acquired; it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved”\textsuperscript{14}. Thus empowerment is needed and necessary at all levels. Merely women acquiring power and exercising the same cannot be said to be empowerment. Instead the recognition of the capabilities of women both by themselves and by their families, society and community as a whole would lead to empowerment. Empowerment is not an end in itself but is a pathway towards providing a respectable status to the woman. It also involves challenging the existing power structure and the gender inequalities which deprive the women and suppress them. Empowerment is not related with
snatching or grabbing of power. It has to head towards achieving equality and providing equal opportunities to all for sustainable existence.

### 3.3.2 PROCESS OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

According to Srilatha Batliwala, women empowerment refers to an institutional environment that enables women to take control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology. The material assets over which control can be exercised may be physical, human, or financial. Intellectual resources involve knowledge, information, and ideas. Control over ideology signifies the ability to generate, propagate, sustain, and institutionalize specific sets of beliefs, values, attitude, and behaviour—virtually determining how people perceive and function within a given socioeconomic and political environment.

The women’s access to resources and power differ under different situations. It is majorly governed by the social position of the women in terms of gender, class, caste, and ethnicity.

The process of empowerment deals with how to empower women and what they need to become empowered. It involves the strategies and methodologies that need to be adopted by institutions or agencies or even individuals focusing on empowerment of women. These strategies would take different forms and designs depending upon the current status of the target women. But in general, every woman should be provided with certain essential needs or the basic needs. Rather they must be given an array of opportunities for satisfying their basic needs through welfare services.

Empowerment is a process which includes the following components:

i. Equal access to opportunities for using society’s resources.
ii. Prohibition of gender discrimination in thought and practice.
iii. Freedom from violence.
iv. Economic independence.
v. Participation in all decision making bodies.
vi. Freedom of choice in matters relating to one’s life.

Eradication of gender inequality forms to be an integral component of empowerment process. Almost every society and community is dominated by patriarchal system. This system by its very nature provides for gender inequality. Creating awareness among women about the existing gender discrimination is equally important in empowering them. Further, they must understand that the cause of this discrimination lies in the inherent structural and traditional discrimination. However, merely recognizing the forces that oppress women and their status do not mark the beginning of the process of empowerment. An attempt to change these forces which marginalize women ignites the process. Changing the gender relations, challenging the existing rigid patriarchal system and providing situations wherein the women can explore their potentials would lead to empowerment. If followed in the proper sense, this infact would provide with a conducive environment for the betterment of women.

The process of empowerment also involves the enhancement of the inner self of the woman- making the woman realize her below dignity status and that the need for upliftment is necessary for her empowerment. Women’s acceptance of their secondary claims on household resources, their assent to violence at the hands of their husbands and their willingness to bear children to the detriment of their own health and survival for son preference are the examples of behaviour of women that undermine their own well being.  

Schaffer found in his Guinea study that though both men and women identified women’s heavy workloads and male domination as major sources of gender disadvantage, neither considered it to be unjust. Even the Nobel laureate Dr.Amartya Sen points out that history holds evidences about acute inequalities often surviving by making allies out of the deprived. He further states that the legitimacy of unequal order is accepted and moreover it becomes an implicit accomplice. It is commonly seen that women often look upon their subordination as natural and
obvious due to their biological differences with men. In most of the societies the male dominance is justified by women thus inflicting injustice upon them. Hence, unless the women become aware about the prevailing gender disparity and the fact that they also hold an equal right to lead a respectable life as do their male counterparts, empowerment cannot begin.

Once the woman becomes aware about her oppression and causes thereof, she conceives the feeling of challenging the factors that led to her subordination. It may be the patriarchal system, the values and attitudes that she might have been imposed upon with since her childhood or such other factors which she fights against for self-upliftment. This awareness does not come spontaneously so is the case with empowerment. Equal access to education, credit and property can supplement the process of empowerment.

3.3.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIRST WORLD & THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

The fabric of the empowerment process in the First World is different from that of the Third World. ‘The use of concept of empowerment has greater relevance and application to third world countries which are characterized by high levels of poverty, feminization of poverty, low female literacy, invisibility of women, strong patriarchal and community values’\textsuperscript{21}. The empowerment process in the first world is more strategic while in the third world it is more practical. Meeting both practical needs and strategic needs are necessary to empower women. The practical needs include the basic needs like food, housing, health care, income, education as well as welfare benefits. It is these practical needs which must be met in the first place for providing a sound foundation for the development of women. This however does not lead to empowerment. It is the strategic interests, like changing patriarchal norms, gender division of labour, gaining equality and changing the attitudes of society towards women, which empower women. Strategic interests are long term and include efforts to enhance women’s knowledge and skills, give them legal protection and provide
equal opportunities and equal participation in decision making and greater access to resources.

Even within the third world countries the process of empowerment of poor women differs from that of the middle and the rich class. Due to poverty, illiteracy and rigid patriarchal values poor women cannot be empowered on their own. Hence the empowerment process through external intervention is inevitable in the third world. This intervention can be initiated by the Government, NGOs or women’s movement, through various programmes and schemes designed specially for the cause.

The aims of empowerment may be different for different groups. It may merely aim at improving women’s income or health or eradication of social evils like dowry, child marriage etc. It may also be related with questioning the gender relations and the power equations. It is those involved in empowering women who have to decide which is the most urgent. It may be re-emphasised that external intervention though inevitable can be ineffective in the absence of internal awareness or acceptance among women of their subordination and oppression. Unless women are free from their existing perception of themselves as weak, inferior and limited beings, no amount of external intervention will enable them to challenge the existing power equation in the society.

The process of empowerment starts from one woman either individually or collectively and then spreads to other women. It is also observed that women alone cannot undertake the process of empowerment; men must be involved in the process. ‘Along with women men must undergo a process of reflection and transformation which makes it possible for them to recognize the ways in which their power is a double edged sword.'
3.3.4 MODEL BY SARA LONGWE
Figure 3.1 Women’s Empowerment Framework

Sara Longwe combined the concept of gender equality with empowerment for women’s involvement in the development process. She has constructed the women’s involvement framework as shown in the figure.
empowerment framework, a model with five levels of equality. Longwe proposes that empowerment is a necessary part of the development process at each level, in order to have women advance towards equal status.

The five levels of equality as propounded by Longwe are:

- **WELFARE**: Only the basic needs of women.
- **ACCESS**: Equality of access to resources;
- **AWARENESS**: An understanding of the fact that women are subordinate.
- **PARTICIPATION**: Where women take decisions equally alongside men;
- **CONTROL**: The ultimate level of equality and empowerment, a balance of power between men and women in a sharing approach.

### 3.4 NEED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is necessary for every individual at all levels. Empowerment enhances the life of an individual. It is a continuous process that leads to expansion of opportunities and choices for the individuals. ‘Empowerment is a social experience that motivates people to transform their social location and affect the environment around them’.

The wholesome development of any nation calls for optimum utilization of its human resources, without any discrimination. But unfortunately in the third world countries, including India, women have been subjected to subjugation and subordination from times immemorial. Though women occupy half of the Indian population, they have been denied equality of status and opportunities in social, economic and political sphere. Various indices of development and socio-economic status of men and women if compared reveal that women of all regions and strata have fared worse than men.

The Human Development Reports since 1999 state that practically no country in the world treats its women as per the measures of life expectancy, wealth and education.
The developing countries suffer from urgent problems where caste, class and gender disparities result in incapacitating the women.

Women constitute 70% of the world’s poor population, produce 50% of the food worldwide but receive only 10% of the incomes (Kihali B., 1995). In addition the women also lag behind the men in access to and ownership of resources. It is seen that gender inequality retards economic growth. Various studies have concluded that gender based division of labour, disparities between male and females in power and resources and gender biases in rights and entitlements act to undermine economic growth and reduce the well being of men, women and children. Hence it can be inferred that empowering women is an urgent necessity for development at personal as well as national level.

According to the Jakarta Declaration, ‘Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration; it is also the necessary pre-condition for sustainable economic and social development’. In Indian context, the subordination of women can be directly related with low rate of life expectancy, higher illiteracy rates, and high unemployment rates along with the traditional and cultural barriers.

Some startling statistics from UNDP (www.undp.org) provide a true but unnerving picture of women development across the globe. These facts show how far lies the goal to be achieved that will provide for gender equality.

- Of the world’s one billion poorest people, three-fifths are women and girls.
- Of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read, two-thirds are women.
- Seventy percent of the 130 million children who are out of school are girls.
- With notable exceptions, such as Rwanda and the Nordic countries, women are conspicuously absent from parliaments, making up, on average, only 16 percent of parliamentarians worldwide.
- Women everywhere typically earn less than men, both because they are concentrated in low-paying jobs and because they earn less for the same work.
- Although women spend about 70 percent of their unpaid time caring for family members, that contribution to the global economy remains invisible.
- Up to half of all adult women have experienced violence at the hands of their intimate partners.
- Systematic sexual violence against women has characterized almost all recent armed conflicts and is used as a tool of terror and ‘ethnic cleansing’.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 57 percent of those living with HIV are women, and young women aged 15-24 are at least three times more likely to be infected than men of the same age.
- Each year, half a million women die and 18 million more suffer chronic disability from preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

It is clear from the abovementioned fact sheet that with this state of women all over the globe, empowerment is primarily necessary at all levels. Empowered women alone can prove to be the key to overall development of any economy.

3.5 WOMEN ON INDIAN CANVAS

Ancient India holds to its account women with high status in the society. But with the passage of time, women were made to accept subordination on the grounds of their biological features. This subordination increased to a very large extent leading to victimization and exploitation of women.

3.5.1 SEX-RATIO OF WOMEN IN INDIA

The percentage of women population to their male counterparts can be considered to be the first indicator of their status in India. Table 3.2 given below highlights the census wise female population per thousand male population.
Table 3.2
Census wise Sex Ratio in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census Reports, Govt. of India, New Delhi. (Sex ratio is per 1000 males)*

Chart 3.1

The table 3.2 in association with chart 3.1 clearly shows the declining female-male ratio. It means that over last hundred years the female population per thousand males has reduced substantially from 972 in year 1901 to 933 in year 2001. This decline can be directly attributed to the high rate of female foeticide as well as high victimization of women. The wide gap between male female population in itself is an evidence of the subordination of women.
3.5.2 EDUCATION AND WOMEN IN INDIA

‘Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change’. Education for women is a necessity for achieving the developmental goals. ‘A World Bank global study showed that nations that have invested heavily in female primary education benefitted through higher economic productivity’. Thus it can be understood that education is positively correlated with economic empowerment of women. Education holds a multi-fold impact on women. It helps to create a conducive environment for women wherein they can gain knowledge and information. This knowledge delivers the vision to women necessary for making their own choices. It enables them to have self-respect and a better self-image. At the same time education liberates women from their own psychological and social barriers.

A very interesting relation is shared by education, employment and empowerment. The low status of women has led to low levels of education and employment among them. This in turn contributes to the deterioration of the status of women. Thus, low status of women acts as the cause and consequence of backwardness in education and employment. The relationship between educational attainments and awareness of hygiene, improvement in family health, child health, girls’ education and general family welfare is well established. Formal education delays marriage, kindles a desire for a small family, increases the chances of survival of children and has thus a positive effect on fertility reduction. It increases a woman’s earning capacity and the potential for her empowerment. It is one of the most important tools of expanding social opportunity.

Education has been a very important part of Indian social and cultural life from the earliest times. Census-wise figures for literacy are given in table 3.3 below. The male female combined literacy rate in 1901 was 4.40 per cent, wherein the female literacy rate was only 0.6 per cent. Up to the 1941 census, it had increased only up to 7.30 per
cent, which was a little less than 50 per cent of the total literacy rate of 16.50 per cent.
The male female disparity is observed to be almost 100 per cent. Over the six
 censuses conducted in India since independence, the literacy rate for females has
 increased from 8.86 per cent to 54.16 per cent which means that about half of the
 women are still illiterate.

Table 3.3

Census-Wise Literacy Rates Among Men And Women In India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Census</th>
<th>Literacy Rates (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>9.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>10.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>15.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>24.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>27.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>45.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>56.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>64.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>75.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports, Govt. of India, New Delhi.
Efforts have been taken on large scale by the government and the policy makers to provide women population with basic education facilities. For the purpose the education for girls is provided free of cost upto the higher secondary level. Consequently, during 1981-2001 there is significant change in literacy rates among females, as compared to their counterparts. Despite of this the literacy gap between male and female is still quite high as depicted in chart 3.2 above.

The gender wise data given in table 3.4 shows great variations in literacy rates for rural and urban areas. Only 30.62 per cent women living in rural areas were literate in 1991 though most of the developmental efforts were directed towards this end. In 2001, literacy rate among women in rural areas was recorded to be 46.70. The male-female gap also shows disparity in rural and urban areas. The gap is substantially wide in case of rural areas in comparison to that in urban areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Male-Female gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1951</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>19.02</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>14.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>45.06</td>
<td>22.33</td>
<td>34.59</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>24.95</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>17.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1961</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>29.10</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>19.10</td>
<td>20.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>57.49</td>
<td>34.51</td>
<td>46.97</td>
<td>22.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34.44</td>
<td>12.95</td>
<td>24.02</td>
<td>21.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1971</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>33.76</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>23.74</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>61.27</td>
<td>42.14</td>
<td>52.44</td>
<td>19.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>29.45</td>
<td>20.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1981</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>49.69</td>
<td>21.77</td>
<td>36.09</td>
<td>27.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>76.83</td>
<td>56.37</td>
<td>67.34</td>
<td>20.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>56.50</td>
<td>29.85</td>
<td>43.67</td>
<td>26.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1991</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>57.87</td>
<td>30.62</td>
<td>44.69</td>
<td>27.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>81.09</td>
<td>64.05</td>
<td>73.08</td>
<td>17.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>24.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2001</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>71.40</td>
<td>46.70</td>
<td>59.40</td>
<td>24.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>86.70</td>
<td>73.20</td>
<td>80.30</td>
<td>13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>21.69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census of India, Govt. of India, Delhi.*
3.5.3 EMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN IN INDIA

Women's economic empowerment is essential for raising their status in society. Women’s access to savings and credit gives them a greater economic role in decision making. Economic empowerment holds positive correlation with the employment status of an individual. It is widely accepted that one of the major ways by which women can financially empower themselves is to get engaged in employment\textsuperscript{34}. Women having income of their own are believed to be more empowered than others. As observed in Bangladesh micro-credit program, husbands resort to violence when their wives borrow and setup independent economic enterprises, perhaps because; these enterprises allow these women to become more independent from and less submissive to their husbands\textsuperscript{35}. Thus employment of women can very well be used as an indicator of female empowerment. An employed individual is generally observed to be economically empowered over and above an unemployed individual. The access to employment opportunities however shows a wide gap between male and female population.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Census Year & Female & Male & Persons \\
\hline
1981 & 19.7 & 52.6 & 36.7 \\
1991 & 22.3 & 51.6 & 37.5 \\
2001 & 25.7 & 51.9 & 39.3 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Gender based Work Participation Rates in India (1981-2001)}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{Note: WPR is proportion of workers to total population} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Table 3.5 states the Work Participation Rates of male and female population in India. An increasing trend is observed within the female WPR. According to the 2001 census the work participation rate for females has increased to 25.7% from 19.7% in...
1981. On the other hand the WPR for males has decreased from 52.6% in 1981 to 51.9% in 2001. However, a wide disparity in the work participation rates between male and female population still exists as is evident from table 3.5 above.

The Indian census divides workers into two categories: "main" and "marginal" workers. Main workers include people who worked for 6 months or more during the year, while marginal workers include those who worked for a shorter period. The work status of the Indian population as per 2001 census is given in table 3.6 below. Women account for a small proportion of the formal Indian labor force, even though the number of female main workers has grown faster in recent years than that of their male counterparts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Workers</th>
<th>Marginal Workers</th>
<th>Non Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2291.87</td>
<td>1691.01</td>
<td>600.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>838.18</td>
<td>710.47</td>
<td>127.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td>3130.05</td>
<td>2401.48</td>
<td>728.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A Handbook of Statistical Indicators of Indian Women, 2007
(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

A glance at table 3.6 clarifies various aspects related with work status of Indian population. It is clear that of the total population of 10286.1 lakhs 30.4% are main workers while 8.7% are marginal workers and 60.9% are non-workers. Of the total main workers (3130.05 lakhs) a huge proportion of 76.7% are male workers while only 23.3% are female workers. A reverse view is observed in case of marginal workers. The women account for almost 61% of the total marginal workforce against 39% of male marginal workers. Of the total non workers 41% are male and 59% are
female. This further affirms the wide gap between the male and female work status in India.

It is ironical to note that in 1911 the proportion of women in the female work force (33.7 per cent) as well as proportion in the total workforce (34.4 per cent) has substantially declined, to 16.4 per cent and 22.3 per cent respectively in 1991.

Hirway and Roy\textsuperscript{38} (1999) have stated that though relatively more women participate in work in rural areas than in urban areas, yet rural females enjoy much lower occupational diversification, very poor employment status and high unemployment rates. This is an alarming situation, where economic independence of women seems to be seriously impaired. Women's work is characterized by features such as high labour, high intensity, seasonal work and low skill. This is compensated by low remuneration and irregular income. Thus, the employment scenario of Indian women is highly pathetic and abject\textsuperscript{39}.

It is thus quiet clear that not only is the women population declining in proportion to the men population but also the literacy levels and employment levels do not fare well in comparison to those of men. Realising this grave background, the programmes and policies relating to women were shifted under the VI Five year plan from curative to preventive and welfare to developmental approach. Although this woman in development approach benefited a section of women, their status in the family and society could not be lifted to the expected level. Further the VII Five year plan emphasised on the improvement of the economic and social status of women in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development. It also pointed out that due recognition need be given to the role and contribution of women in the various socio-economic, political and cultural fields. With a similar belief the 1995 UNDP report was devoted to women’s empowerment and it declared that if human development is not engendered it is endangered. It laid emphasis on equality, sustainability and empowerment mainly of women.
Thus for the economic and societal development, upliftment of women is necessary. In the context of the third world countries, wherein India also is placed, empowering women has been identified as an urgent necessity for balanced growth and development. Exploring the voluminous potential within women by providing them with conducive opportunities is the need of time. This however has been recognized and adopted lately by the policymakers on both the national and international platforms.

3.6 DEVELOPMENT TO EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: A PARADIGM SHIFT

Caroline Moser⁴⁰ (1989) has identified five paradigms towards women’s development in Third World countries (table no.3.7).

The first paradigm is related to welfare approach. It is based on the traditional view of marking the women’s role in development or the basis of customary gender division of labour.

The second paradigm came in existence during 1975-85, when the decade was declared as the ‘Decade of Women’. This approach was aimed at gaining equity and absorbing her as an active participant in development process. It further aimed at providing equal opportunities to women even by creating positive discrimination or reservations.

The third paradigm was concerned with anti poverty, directed at poor women to ensure and increase their productivity. This is still being followed under the assumption that women’s problems arise out of under-development. In this context, the approach of rural development is increasingly confronting itself to the formation of Self Help Groups (SHG’s), in stabilizing and linking with viable socioeconomic activities for sustainable livelihood. This is seen as the only solution of poverty eradication, equity and development of women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Project goal</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Type of Developmental Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare</strong></td>
<td>Women’s Poverty, women’s special needs, Women as a vulnerable group, women’s lower socioeconomic status</td>
<td>Build maternity clinic, health clinics, immunization, health education, nutrition education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of support services of health, nutrition, child care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic self-reliance</strong></td>
<td>Women as under employed, dependent, lacking in productive skills</td>
<td>Income generating projects for women, women’s clubs, soap making, school uniform making etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote self-reliance and interdependence provide productive skills, encourage women’s productive enterprises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>Women as previously overlooked resource in development planning, women as under develop human capital</td>
<td>Integration of women in development planning, maintaining of women’s development extension advice for women farmers, appropriate technology for women’s access to factors of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify actual productive roles of women, support women with skills training and improved technology, invest in previously over looked resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality</strong></td>
<td>Structure of inequality, discrimination against women in schooling, credit access to hand</td>
<td>Affirmative action to promote equal opportunity, revise development planning so that women are equal partners and beneficiaries in development process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality of opportunity for women in schooling, access to factors of production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>Unequal gender power relations, the patriarchy, patriarchal resistance</td>
<td>Grass roots projects, support for women’s collective action, project concerned with democratization and political action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conscientization, mobilization, solidarity, collective action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNICEF, based on Moser in ICECD, Making Development Gender sensitive, a Guide for Trainer, Allahabad, ICECD.
The fourth paradigm is related with efficiency which depends on the belief that policies of economic stabilization and adjustment rely on women’s economic contribution to development and their economic participation is seen as a mechanism to achieve equity.

The fifth paradigm is empowerment model, which envisages greater. This approach of empowerment focuses on overall development and particularly on enhancing social and economic capabilities. In this task, a number of non-governmental organizations are playing crucial role since government is seeking partnership to ensure sustainable, people’s centered and decentralized development and governance.

The present paradigm of empowerment of women is not a woman in development but a gender and development. The woman in development paradigm assumes that women have been left out in development process and hence need to be integrated to give benefit. While gender and development paradigm recognizes women’s triple role i.e. in reproduction, production and community management..

Therefore, the main objectives of development programmes in this context may be categorized as:

(i) sensitise women about their rights, entitlements and legal framework;
(ii) take up capacity building measures; and
(iii) initiate income generating programmes.

Gender and development approach emphasizes the need for gender analysis and identification of strategic gender needs before initiating any appropriate action for empowering women.

Women’s development has come a long way from the earlier welfare orientation. In the welfare approach, women were looked upon as vulnerable sections of the population, whose situation could be improved by providing support services like
health, nutrition and childcare. The economic self-reliance approach puts emphasis on income generation projects for women. The equality model put the blame on inequality and promoted affirmative action to promote equal opportunity. The empowerment approach focuses unequal gender and power relations and uses conscientization, mobilization, solidarity and collective action as a remedy. The empowerment approach is conceived from a strong commitment to women’s rights and capacity to make their own decisions about development strategies. Towards empowerment the SHG philosophy offers the canvas to conduct social intermediation, provide women the opportunity to acquire the ability and entitlement to their own lives, set their own agenda, gain skills, solve problems and develop autonomy.  

3.7 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN EMPOWERING WOMEN

The women empowerment programs in India were initiated since 1954. However, then the scope and reach of these programmes was quite confined. It was in 1974, with the publication of the report of the committee on the status of women in India that the actual participation of women in mainstream activities was focussed upon. In the seventies, the government emphasized on poverty alleviation for development of women. In the eighties the government introduced various programmes designed specially for women. Some of the important initiatives taken by the government included setting up of National Commission on self-employed women, support to employment programmes for women (STEP), networking of state level women’s development corporation (WDCs), constitution of women’s credit fund etc.

The five year plan framed by the government also incorporated efforts towards overall development of women. The intensity of these efforts deepened gradually over the years.

The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) proposed a number of welfare measures for women. Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), organization of
Mahila Mandals and the community development programmes were a few among the others. The second Five Year Plan (1956-61) followed an intensive agricultural development approach. The welfare approach continued during this period. The III-Five Year Plan (1961-66) supported female education. Priority was given to rural welfare services and condensed courses of education. The IV-Five Year Plan (1969-74) continued the emphasis on women’s education. The plan initiated promotion of women’s welfare within the family. V-Five Year Plan (1974-79) emphasised the need to train women for income generation. The plan coincided with the International women’s decade. It was during this period that the report of the committee on the status of women in India, was also published. It can be said that the V Five Year Plan witnessed recognition of need for women development. In 1976, the women’s development bureau was set up under the ministry of Social Welfare. The VI-Five Year Plan saw a shift from welfare to development approach. Women’s lack of access to resources was identified as the important factor impending their growth. The VII Five Year Plan (1985-90) showed concern for equity and empowerment. The qualitative aspects like generation of awareness, training in skills for better employment, confidence building were emphasised. The VIII-Five Year Plan (1990-95) directed towards empowering women, especially at the grass roots level. The IX-Five Year Plan (1997-2002) adopted a women’s component strategy. This plan provided for more than 30% of funds to women oriented programmes. The objective of the plan was to empower women as the agents of social change and development. The X-Five Year Plan aimed at empowering women by means of adopting the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001). The XI-Plan provides for reducing the disparities across regions and communities by ensuring access to basic physical infrastructure as well as health and educational services to all. Gender budgeting forms the focal point of this plan.

These rigorous efforts of government have been equally supplemented by NGOs in facilitating women empowerment. In India the NGOs have been highly active over decades. Of late a large number of NGOs are supporting women in capacity building and enabling them to know about women oriented programmes and policies.
3.7.1 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

The Indian Constitution has always held an impartial outlook towards women. Moreover, keeping in view the subjugation to which the women have been subject over years, the Indian Constitution has provided for many articles specially directed towards the socio economic development of women and upholding their political right and participation in decision making. The major ones that seek a mention are:

Article 14 - Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.

Article 15(1) - Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.

Article 15(3) - Special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women.

Article 16 - Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.

Article 39(a) - The State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood.

Article 39(d) – Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 42 - The State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Article 51 (A)(e) – To renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

By means of these articles the government has made a strong effort towards providing an independent environment to the women to grow, develop and be empowered in its real meaning.

3.7.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO SAFEGUARD WOMEN

The state in which the women have been for generations together called for immediate concrete remedies with strong foundation. The government observed that to free women from all types of oppression it was necessary to provide with strong
legal framework. With this motive the State enacted several women-specific and women-related legislations to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriages, dowry, rape, practice of Sati etc. The recently notified Prevention of Domestic Violence Act is a landmark law in acting as a deterrent as well as providing legal recourse to the women who are victims of any form of domestic violence. These various laws framed from time to time have acted as a protective shield for the women at large. Some of the important legislations are enlisted below:

**Equal Remuneration Act of 1976** provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work.

**Hindu Marriage Act of 1955** amended in 1976 provides the right for girls to repudiate a child marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not.

**The Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2001** amended the Hindu Marriage Act, Special Marriage Act, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure providing for speedy disposal of applications for maintenance; the ceiling limit for claiming maintenance has been deleted and a wide discretion has been given to the Magistrate to award appropriate maintenance.

**The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act** of 1956 as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence. It is being amended to decriminalize the prostitutes and make the laws more stringent against traffickers.

**Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987** have been enacted to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation.
The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. It provides for immediate and emergent relief to women in situations of violence of any kind in the home⁴³.

In addition to the above stated acts the Indian government has designed many more acts related to dowry, marriage, divorce of women, protection of rights of working women, right to property, crimes against women etc.

### 3.7.3 GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In addition to the legislations and constitutional provisions for empowering women, the Indian Government has run a variety of schemes and programmes focusing on women empowerment.

#### a. SHORT STAY HOMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

The government established short stay homes for women and girls in 1969. The objective of this programme was to rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and physical danger due to family problems, mental strains, social exploitation or other causes.

#### b. SWAWALAMBAN SCHEME

The Swawlamban Scheme was initiated in the year 1982-83. The major objective of this scheme was to provide training and skills to poor women to facilitate them to obtain employment or become self-employed. This scheme is an endeavour to make the women independent and capable to stand on their own.
There are 36 traditional and non-traditional trades for which assistance is provided under the scheme. The State Women Development Corporations (WDCs) are the nodal agencies for implementation of the scheme mostly through voluntary organizations in the States. However, in the States with no WDCs, the programme is being implemented by CSWB/State Social Welfare Advisory Boards, through the NGOs.

c. SUPPORT TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN (STEP)

This Programme was launched in 1987. It provides for updated skills and new knowledge to poor and asset-less women in the traditional sectors such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Khadi and Village Industries, Sericulture, Social Forestry and Wasteland Development. The objective of this programme stands to be enhancing the productivity of women and income generation. This would enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment and development of entrepreneurial skills. A comprehensive package of services, such as health care, elementary education, crèche facility, market linkages etc. are provided besides access to credit.

d. MAHILA SAMRIDDHI YOJANA

The Department of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for MSY’s implementation. Started in 1993 the main objective of this scheme is to enable poor woman in rural society to exercise greater control over household resources. This programme operates through the rural post offices. It encourages women to open MSY accounts with the post offices, wherein money can be deposited by the women in installments.
e. RURAL WOMEN’s DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT PROJECT: (RWDEP)

This project was launched in 1998 for a period of five years in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka and Gujarat. It focused on creating an enabling environment for empowerment of women. The strategy used was establishment of Self Help Groups with 15-20 members each. The purpose was to improve the quality of life of the women, provide them with greater access to and control over resources.

f. SWADHAR - A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances.

This scheme was launched by the Ministry during the year 2001-2002 for the benefit of Women in Difficult circumstances with the following objectives:

1. To provide primary need of Shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support;
2. To provide emotional support and counseling to such women;
3. To rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness, skill upgradation and personality development through behavioral training etc;
4. To arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for women/girls in need of those interventions by linking and networking with other organizations in both government and Non-Government Sectors on case to case basis;
5. To provide Help-line (24 hour Telephone facility) or other facilities to such women in distress; and
6. To provide such other services as will be required for support and rehabilitation of such women in distress.
g. SWAYAMSIDHA

Swayamsidha is an integrated scheme for empowering women by means of formation of women Self-Help Groups. The scheme was launched in February 2001 across the States and Union Territories of the country with a total budget outlay of Rs. 116.30 crore. But subsequently the scheme was discontinued from Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh due to lack of interest among the Union Territories. The long-term objective of the programme is holistic empowerment of women through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all the ongoing sectoral programmes by improving access of women to micro credit, economic resources etc.

The programme is being implemented in many States through ICDS infrastructure; while in some States, the scheme is implemented through State Women Development Corporations.

3.8 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The principle of gender equality is provided for in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. A step ahead the Constitution has also empowered the states to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. To execute these measures effectively an institutional framework is also provided by the government. Institutions are established both at central as well as state levels.

From the fifth V-Year plan the approach to women issues has changed from welfare to development. In the recent years the empowerment of women has been recognized as the important factor in determining the status of women. The setting up of National Commission of Women (NCW) in 1990 was one among the other commendable steps.
3.8.1 NATIONAL COMMISSION OF WOMEN

The NCW was set up by an act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. It was a step taken by the Indian government towards expanding the horizons for women. NCW is established to deal with all matters related to the Constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women. It reviews the prevailing legislations and suggests amendments, wherever necessary. It is highly empowered to ensure that proper legal shelter is provided to secure the rights of women. It mainly works to ensure equal participation of women in the development of nation.

3.8.2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The Indian government adopted the National Policy on 20\textsuperscript{th} March, 2001. The objective of this policy was to create advancement, development and empowerment of women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This policy was framed to bring the women into the mainstream activities. The policy strived for providing opportunities to women in all spheres. The objectives of this policy include\textsuperscript{44}:

(i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential

(ii) The \textit{de-jure} and \textit{de-facto} enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil

(iii) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation
(iv) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.

(v) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

(vi) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.

(vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.

(viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and

(ix) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations.

3.9 INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Gender equity and women's empowerment have acquired an important place in government policy, non-governmental sphere and academic research. The terms, women empowerment and gender equality have now dominated the various policy measures governing women, locally, nationally and internationally. On the international plethora also efforts for empowering women have been undertaken on a priority. The need and significance of women empowerment was identified and the journey from welfare to empowerment of women began worldwide. The crucial role played by women and the status given to them do not match. This fact needed to be revised. Since last three decades efforts have been intensified at the global level with the strong support of United Nations to understand and restore the status of women worldwide. The United Nations General Assembly declared the International Year of
Women in 1975. In addition various International Conferences held by the United Nations on Women since 1975 symbolize the same.

3.9.1 WORLD CONFERENCES ON WOMEN

The women oriented issues were first discussed on an international level at the First World Conference on Women at Mexico city in 1975. Since then, there have been four successful conferences that addressed the obstacles blocking the advancement of women. The second conference was held in 1980 at Copenhagen, while U.N. at Nairobi organized the third conference. However it was the fourth conference at Beijing (1995), which was the first significant milestone in the journey towards ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. The platform offered strategic objectives and actions that should be taken by governments, international organizations, communities and individuals.

The goals of the Conference were;
(i) Sharing power equally;
(ii) Obtaining full access to the means of development;
(iii) Overcoming poverty;
(iv) Promoting peace and protecting women's rights;
(v) Inspiring a new generation of women to work together for equality and equity.

These world conferences have given a boost to all nations looking forward for women development and empowerment. India has always been very receptive towards these conference outcomes. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for action (1995) have been endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.
3.9.2 CAIRO CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In the year 1992 International Conference on Population and Development was held at Cairo. This conference focused on various women-related issues and discussed on strategies that can be adopted for making women empowered.

The action plan, as recommended by International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo (1992) included:

(i) establishing mechanism for women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process;
(ii) promoting the fulfillment of women's potentials through education, skills development and employment, giving paramount importance to the elimination of poverty, illiteracy and ill-health among women;
(iii) eliminating all practices that discriminate amongst women and assisting them to establish and realize their rights;
(iv) adopting measures to improve women's ability to earn income beyond traditional occupations, achieve economic self-reliance and ensure their equal access to the labour market and social security systems;
(v) eliminating violence against women;
(vi) eliminating discriminatory practices by employers against women;
(vii) making it possible through laws, regulations and other appropriate measures for women to combine the roles of child-bearing, breast-feeding, and child-rearing with participation in the workforce;
(viii) strengthening policies and programmes that improve, ensure and broaden the participation of women in all spheres of life as equal partners and improve their access to all resources needed for the full exercise of their fundamental rights.

The Cairo Consensus established three areas of emphasis related to women’s empowerment: improved health, access to economic resources and reduction in gender inequality.
3.9.3 MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG)

Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been established in the Millennium Declaration at the General Assembly of the United Nations in the year 2000. These include promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and improving maternal health. Though only these two are explicitly gender specific, gender equality is at the core of achievement of MDGs – from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, to expanding education and lowering child mortality, to increasing access to safe water, and to ensuring environmental sustainability.

3.9.4 CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

The UN General Assembly adopted the convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in the year 1979. This convention is referred to as an international bill of rights for women. It defines what can be said to be discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

The definition of discrimination against women as given in the Convention is “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

The acceptance of the convention led to the States to undertake certain measures to end all forms of discrimination against women. The major among them were:

45:
• to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
• to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
• to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

This convention has been a unique step undertaken by the United Nations Assembly. Its main objective is to ensure equal access to and opportunities for women thus seeking equality between men and women. It affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. The countries that have ratified to the Convention are legally bound to execute its provisions. They are also required to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

In the Indian context, it is observed that India has been very positive about CEDAW. India signed the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 30th July 1980 and ratified it on 9th July 1993. India has also been submitting it’s reports regarding the manner in which it has adopted the CEDAW from time to time. In addition the Indian government has realized the need of greater efforts to be taken by various ministries directly and indirectly involved with women oriented issues for achievement of women equality. For the sake of this a special Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development. India is the second country in the world to have such a Committee for implementation of CEDAW.

3.10 INDICATORS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

There is no uniform set of indicators towards women empowerment. These indicators change according to the situation the woman hails from. The Beijing conference
provided with a set of both qualitative and quantitative indicators of women empowerment. These indicators can be looked upon as a broad framework within which women empowerment can be measured. It moreover is an attempt to direct the policymakers and the researchers to adopt these indicators for measurement of empowerment.

**Beijing conference 1995 indicators of women empowerment are as follows**⁴⁶:

**Qualitative indicators:**
1. increase in self-esteem, individual and collective confidence;
2. increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition reproductive rights, law and literacy;
3. increase or decrease in personal leisure time and time for child care;
4. increase or decrease of workloads in new programmes;
5. change in roles and responsibility in family & community;
6. visible increase or decrease in violence on women and girls;
7. responses to, changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows;
8. visible changes in women's participation level attending meeting, participating and demanding participation;
9. increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective;
10. increase in access to and ability to gather information;
11. formation of women collectives;
12. positive changes in social attitudes;
13. awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household;
14. women's decision-making over her work and income.

**Quantitative indicators:**
A. Demographic trends
• maternal mortality rate
• fertility rate
• sex ratio
• life expectancy at birth
• average age of marriage

B. Number of women participating in different development programmers
C. Greater access and control over community resources/government schemes-crèche, credit cooperative, non formal education
D. Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level
E. Change in literacy and enrollment levels
F. Participation levels of women in political process

Various authors have proposed different and distinct models for measuring empowerment. The indicators of empowerment also change as per the situation. It is an accepted fact that empowerment indicators change from one situation to other as also from one point of time to another. An exhaustive review of various empowerment studies has been made by Malhotra, Schuler and Boender\(^4\) (2002). Based on their study a brief summary of the dimensions of empowerment as proposed by various authors can be understood as follows:

In 1983, Acharya and Bennett surveyed men and women belonging to seven villages in Nepal. The women’s role in farm management, domestic and resource allocation decisions were the indicators used in the study. The study stated that bringing women into the market economy possibly affects their influence in resource allocation and domestic decision making.

In 1995 Jejeebhoy Shireen reviewed multiple studies worldwide on the relationships between education and fertility. The indicators of empowerment used in her studies were Knowledge autonomy, Decision-making autonomy, Physical autonomy, Emotional autonomy, Economic and social autonomy and self-reliance. The study
concluded with a major finding as education decreases fertility by promoting women’s autonomy.

In 1996, Hashemi and others surveyed 1248 women from 6 villages under the project titled “Rural Credit Programs and Women’s Empowerment in Bangladesh”. They studied the empowerment in household and community spheres. The indicators used by them were mobility, economic security, decision making power and political and legal awareness and participation in public protests and political campaigning. The findings of this study were that microcredit provides greater economic freedom to the women and adds to their value in families and thus empowers them.

However another study carried by Goetz and Gupta in 1996 titled “Who Takes the Credit? Gender, Power, and control over loan Use In Rural Credit Programs in Bangladesh.” gave contradictory results. They interviewed 253 women and 22 men loanees in five regions. The comparative control over loan by men and women, control over productive process, marketing etc. were the indicators used in this study. The study surfaced a major finding that men often control loans given to women. Thus, microcredit programs necessarily do not empower women.

In 1997 another study “Women, Wages and Intra-household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh” led by Kabeer focused on men and women working in garment factory in Dhaka. The women’s perceived status in the household was used as an indicator for measuring the empowerment level. The women under the study reported a greater status in the household as an outcome of the factory work. On the other hand the men understudy reported that the women factory workers held low status.

Shireen Jejeebhoy conducted a study on women’s autonomy in two Indian states in 2000. Women’s role in decision making, in child related decision making, mobility, freedom from threat, control of resource were the indicators used under the study. The study stated that some dimensions of autonomy are more closely related that
others. Proxies are good estimates of autonomy for some indicators in some regions only.

Linda Mayoux in 2001 conducted a study on women from Cameroon as “Tackling the down side: Social Capital, Women’s Empowerment and Micro-finance in Cameroon”. The women’s individual income, control over income and development of collective social and economic activities were used as indicators in the study. The study concluded that using existing forms of social capital to channel microcredit limits benefits to women, especially the poorest women.

Another important study by Kishor Sunita undertaken in 2000, titled as “Empowerment of Women in Egypt and Links to the Survival and Health of Their Infants” was a demographic health survey. It used women’s role in household decision making, freedom of movement, financial autonomy, participation in the modern sector, lifetime exposure to employment, family structure amenable to empowerment, marital advantage and education as indicators of empowerment. It concluded that decision making and freedom of movement have different effects on unmet needs. Further it stated that empowerment needs to be measured directly and in conjunction with proxies.

It is thus clear from the above given summary that the empowerment indicators vary from one study to another. It mainly depends upon the scope and nature of the study. To a larger extent there are no clear guidelines or directives pertaining to the use of indicators. However it can be understood that mobility, awareness, decision making and financial independence have been commonly used indicators.

3.11 HDI, GDI AND GEM : Concepts

Various attempts have been made by the policy makers to study the inequalities based on gender and focus on gender development. A commendable contribution in gender relations is that of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It has been
accepted that gender disaggregated data and indices can be used as tools to identify gender inequalities, determine the issues that must be addressed, take steps to redress the inequalities, provide feedback on the effectiveness of actions and decide upon the preferable allocation of resources.

The Human Development Reports (HDRs) have changed their focus from uni-dimensional, income or Gross Domestic Product based indices to inclusion of non-income and multi-dimensional variables in measurement of development.

The Human Development Index (HDI) was first introduced by UNDP in its first Human Development Report published in 1990. The report calculated the HDI as a measure of education, health and income of the nations. It is a simple average of three dimension indices that measure average achievements in a country with regard to Life expectancy at birth, Adult literacy Rate and the gross enrolment ratio, and the Purchasing Power Parity in US dollars.

Furthermore in 1995, the UNDP introduced two more indices in association with HDI viz.:

1. Gender Development Index (GDI)
2. Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

1. **GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX:**

The GDI adjusts the average achievements in the same three dimensions that are captured in the HDI, to account for the inequalities between men and women.

2. **GENDER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE:**

The Gender Empowerment Measure on the other hand focuses on opportunities and captures gender inequality in three key areas:
a. ‘Political participation and decision making power’, as measured by women’s and men’s percentage shares of parliamentary seats;
b. ‘Economic participation and decision-making power’, as measured by two indicators—women’s and men’s percentage in employment as legislators, senior officials and managers and women’s and men’s percentage shares of professional and technical positions; and
c. ‘Power over economic resources’, as measured by women’s and men’s estimated earned income (PPP US$).

The GEM was an attempt to measure women’s and men’s abilities to participate actively in economic and political life. It also seeks to account their command over economic resources.

3.11.1 HDI, GDI AND GEM IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Gender inequality has been a focus area since last couple of decades. A recent World Bank report confirms that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay the cost of greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker governance, and a lower living standard of their people\textsuperscript{49}. The UNDP found a very strong correlation between its gender empowerment measure and gender-related development indices and its Human Development Index. Evidences worldwide have shown that improved gender equality is a critical component of any development strategy.

Gender differences are found to create lasting losses to the economy of any nation and largely of a developing nation. India is not an exception to the same. In India, issues relating to this are more acute and contribute considerably towards social injustice\textsuperscript{50}. Resolving these problems is necessary on an emergent basis. This has led to special initiatives being taken by the UNDP through various Human Development Reports nation wise.
In the Indian context the Human development Index and the Human Poverty Index have been estimated for the early eighties and early nineties for all the states and union territories. At the same time the Gender Equality Index was also constructed for measuring the attainments in human development indicators for females as a proportion of that of males. These indices play a pivotal role in identifying the trends in the development of the human resources of any nation. They act as a guiding line for the government and the policy makers in deciding the future direction of their plans and policies.

3.11.2 GLOBAL POSITION OF INDIA ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & GENDER DEVELOPMENT

India’s human development if considered in the international context, it is referred to as a country with low human development. India’s ranking in 1998 was 139, in 1999 it was 132 and in 2000 it further improved to 128. In 2001 the same line of progress was continued and India stood at 115th position in the HDI ranking.

However, 2002 witnessed a major fall in the HDI ranking to 124. It further receded to 127 out of 175 countries as per the 2003 HDR. As per 2007 HDR India is at 128th position, which in itself indicates the slow pace of development in India. The 2008-09 HDR has added to the same trend of downfall to 134th position. This has put India at the bottom level of the category of countries with medium human development.

The dismal performance of the country is indicated by its slow progress on HDI values. It is necessarily a time to retrospect and decide upon the focus and priorities of the nation once again.
Table No. 3.8

India’s Global position on Human & Gender Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORWAY</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>0.939</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRILANKA</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>0.730</td>
<td>0.660</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.288</td>
<td>0.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>0.578</td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDONESIA</td>
<td>0.619</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>0.519</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAKISTAN</td>
<td>0.440</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0.360</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPAL</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.334</td>
<td>0.496</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANGLADESH</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOZAMBIQUE</td>
<td>0.317</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.341</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>0.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGERIA</td>
<td>0.264</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Taken from: www.indiabudget.nic.in

From table no.3.8 above it is observed that India lagged substantially behind Norway, Srilanka, China in its HDI, GDI as well as GEM in both 1990 and 2001 years. The increase in HDI over a decade for India is 13.7%, while the GDI shows a rise of 43.1% over eight years. The GEM also underwent an increase though marginal from 0.226 to 0.240 (6.2%).

According to the Summary Report by the Ministry for Women and Child Development on ‘Gendering Human Development Indices’ (2009), the recasting of GDI and GEM were considered necessary in the context of the third world countries. It was observed that the GDI and GEM as developed by UNDP were most suited for
the northern countries and it was felt necessary to mould them as per the requirements of the Southern countries. In this initiative taken by the Ministry for Women and Child Development, the UNDP also extended its support, both technically and financially. The report provides for the comparative figures for 1996 and 2006 of HDI, GDI and GEM for India. The HDI, GDI and GEM are the measures that present the facts regarding the human welfare as well as the status of gender equality in the nations across the globe. This gives the direction to the policy making and the programme design for overall development.

Table 3.9
HDI & GDI of India (Years 1996 & 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Gender Development Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summary Report, Ministry for Women and Child Development (2009)

The table no.3.9 above shows a positive trend in both GDI and HDI for India over a decade. The value of Human Development Index increased from 0.584 in 1996 to 0.648 in 2006. On the other hand the Gender Development Index also has shown an increase from 0.568 in 1996 to 0.633 in 2006. It is also observed that the GDI score is lower than the HDI score for both the years viz. 1996 and 2006. The reason may be attributed mainly to the existence of gender disparities to a larger extent. This clearly indicates that despite of extensive measures being made by the Government from time to time gender equality still lies to be a matter of deep concern.

Similarly the report also has highlighted the GEM for 1996 and 2006 in Indian context. The GEM is based on gender inequalities in three key areas as mentioned earlier.
Table 3.10
GEM scores for India (1996 & 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PI</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>PoERI</th>
<th>GEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summary Report, Ministry for Women and Child Development

Note: PI = Index of ‘Participation in Political Arenas & Decision Making’,
EI = Index of ‘Economic Participation and Decision-making Power’ (based on three indicators for 2006 and two indicators for 1996 as data for men and women judges was not available for 1996),
PoERI = Index of ‘Power over Economic Resources’,
GEM = Gender Empowerment Measure

According to the 1998 UNDP-HDR the GEM scores for India were estimated to be as low as 0.228. However the GEM scores as per the above stated indicators are more relevant and are almost double with 0.451. However it still reflects the disparities in gender empowerment. The PoERI in 1996 is observed to be the lowest among the three key indicators at 0.231 (table 3.10). It can be inferred that up to 1996 the scarcity of economic resources was prevalent to a large extent. This has over the decade up to 2006 gained momentum and raised to 0.319 which is almost 38.1% increase.

The PI stands at the highest with 0.566 in 1996 which increases by mere 2.65% over the decade to 0.581. The EI which is observed to be 0.442 in 1996 raises to 0.452 in 2006 which shows a rise by meager 2.26%. Thus it is reflected from the above table that all the three indices increased over the decade. But the fact still stands, that the government needs to deepen its efforts and provide for corrective policies and programmes. This also calls for proper implementation.
3.11.3 HDI AND MAHARASHTRA

In India, the Human Development Reports are prepared at the state level as well. It has been a joint initiative by the UNDP and the Planning Commission of India as also the State governments. The state level HDRs are prepared mainly to focus upon the allocations made to the priority sectors.

India is a diversified nation. Every state in India has its own strengths and limitations. Each state holds its distinct identity which may be treated to be the motivation for state HDRs. The State HDRs provide for the assessment and evaluation of various programmes and policies implemented by the states. They also reflect the ground realities pertaining to the various problems faced by the states. The preparation of State HDRs can also provide disaggregated data and indicators that enable the policy makers to identify the gaps and map the road ahead.

The principles followed by the UNDP and Planning Commission in their co-operation with the State Governments are that52:

- The analysis and contents of the HDR should be undertaken by an independent team of experts at the behest of the State Government.
- The integrity and coherence in the contents of the HDRs should have added value to the users of the HDR.
- There should be a commitment to widespread dissemination of the HDR and discussion by a variety of methods, including oral and visual means of communication.
- The preparation of the HDRs should be cost-effective. Maharashtra too has now undertaken this exercise, concerned as it is at profiling the status of its people, and using it to chart its future course of action.

Following these principles various state governments published their Human Development Reports. Maharashtra also was one of these states and published its
HDR in 2002. This report brings forth various demographic, economic and social characteristics of Maharashtra. The report points out both the lighter as well as the darker shade of the state affairs. It is a comprehensive document that clarifies various issues in the context of the state development and growth. In comparison to other states the position of Maharashtra in context of HDI can be understood on the basis of the following table no.3.11:

Table 3.11
State Wise Comparative Figures for Life Expectancy, Poverty and Literacy Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth 1996-2000</th>
<th>Percentage of population below poverty line (30 day recall period) 1998–99</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (per cent) 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>68.19</td>
<td>65.31</td>
<td>25.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>63.36</td>
<td>61.73</td>
<td>20.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>71.40</td>
<td>68.39</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>62.77</td>
<td>61.53</td>
<td>14.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>57.21</td>
<td>56.83</td>
<td>37.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>67.58</td>
<td>65.21</td>
<td>21.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td>63.39</td>
<td>62.36</td>
<td>26.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (1) Government of India, 2001; (2) RGI, 2001.

From the above table 3.11 it is clear that surprisingly Maharashtra has a higher female life expectancy at birth than male. But almost one fourth of the population of Maharashtra lies below poverty line. However in general though Maharashtra seems to be doing well than the national figures it is put behind by states like, Punjab in the life expectancy at birth, Goa, Gujarat, Punjab in the BPL population or Goa in the literacy rates.

Despite its higher level of economic growth and being one of the higher income states with growth rates that exceed that of several States, in terms of Human Development
Index (HDI) Maharashtra was ranked third among 17 States in 1991 with a HDI value of 0.532.

In the Summary Report by the Ministry for Women and Child Development on ‘Gendering Human Development Indices’ (2009) the dimension-wise HDI, GDI and GEM scores for all states are given. The scores and overall position of Maharashtra state are as highlighted in table 3.12 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>GDI</th>
<th>GEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>0.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td>0.488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All India Rank (2006) 8th 9th 5th

*Source: Gendering Human Development Indices, Report by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2009

It can be clearly understood from table 3.12 that the HDI for Maharashtra has increased from 0.665 in 1996 to 0.716 in 2006. The GDI also shows a rise from 0.652 in 1996 to 0.704 in 2006. The GEM scores also follow an increasing trend from 0.438 in 1996 to 0.488 in 2006. When overall ranking of Maharashtra is considered it is 9th in the GDI ranking for 2006 while it stands at 8th rank in the HDI for 2006. On the other hand for GEM score ranking Maharashtra finds a place at 5th position in the overall tally.

Thus in comparison to the national figures Maharashtra though performs better than the average scores, it still has a long way to go. There is lot of space for improvement
since over a span of one and a half decade Maharashtra has fallen from 3rd position in HDI in 1991 to 8th in 2006.

The Maharashtra Human Development Report of 2002 points out certain startling facts about Maharashtra. These can be summarised as:

- The Infant Mortality Rate is 48 deaths per 1000 live births which is far higher than that of Kerala (14).
- The IMR for urban Maharashtra is 31 and that for rural is 58. This wide gap itself indicates the scarce availability of education, health care and their access to people from the rural Maharashtra.
- There is also a decline in the overall sex ratio from 936 in 1961 to 922 in 2001, which can be mainly associated to son preferences or neglect towards girl child.
- The sex ratio for the age group of 0-6 years also shows an acute decline from 946 in 1991 to 917 in 2001.
- The women literacy rates show a wide rural-urban gap. As per 1991 census the female literacy rate was 70.87 for urban and 40.96 for rural Maharashtra. However the rural literacy rate witnessed a phenomenal growth to 59.12 in 2001 in comparison to 79.25 for urban Maharashtra.
- The female employment rates for year 2000 in the Central government jobs is merely 10.02%, while that for State government jobs is 11.16% and in local government women amount for 25.70% of representation in the total workforce.
- The work participation rate in 1961 was 47.91 for all while that for women workers was 38.10. The Work Participation rate has undergone a substantial decrease in 2001 to 36.78 for all and 23.95 for women.
- According to Census 2001 estimates, 89% of the women population working in rural areas of the State is employed in agriculture. Of these 41% are cultivators and 48% are agricultural labour. A small percentage also works in household industry and in the other non-farm occupations. It is thus clear that more women than men work as farm workers i.e. 1311 females per 1000 males.
In the urban Maharashtra only 13% of the female population is in the workforce. A large rural-urban gap has always existed and is partly a reflection of the very different conditions faced by women in the two labour markets.

Women do not find strong penetration into the formal political structure in Maharashtra. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly had the highest participation in 1957-62 (12.87%) which has shown a steep fall in 1995-2000 (3.81%).

The women participation in the Legislative Council accounted for 13.88% of total members during 1952-58. It is worth noting that the percentage of women in the Legislative Council is at the all time peak in 2000 (20.5%) since 1937.

The HDR concludes with the crude finding that Marathwada districts are the most backward among all districts of Maharashtra and score low on the HDI.

The above stated facts confirm the subordinate status of women in Marathwada. It can be gathered that the growth rate of women in Maharashtra is far ahead of those in Marathwada. It indicates the emergent need of remedial measures to be taken for providing better environment to the women in Marathwada.

### 3.11.4 HDI STATUS OF MARATHWADA

The human development report of Maharashtra also throws light on the region-wise development. It further provides for the district wise growth and development status. Unfortunately Marathwada region is found to be at the backseat of the growth engine of Maharashtra. The HDI for all the eight districts of Marathwada as given in table no.3.13 below depicts the backwardness of Marathwada as a whole.

It can be understood from table 3.13 that none of the districts of Marathwada has crossed the State HDI value of 0.58. The HDI for Jalna is lowest at 0.27 with state level rank as far as 33. Aurangabad with HDI of 0.57 comes barely close to the State average. None of the other districts of Marathwada has a value higher than 0.47. Eleven districts of Maharashtra lie ahead of Aurangabad in HDI values.
Table 3.13
District wise Human Development Index of Marathwada region (Year-2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parbhani</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hingoli</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beed</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Osmanabad</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Latur</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Maharashtra

Chart 3.3

![District wise HDI for Marathwada Region](chart3.3.png)

From chart 3.3 the comparative HDIs of the eight districts of Marathwada can be clearly understood. Within Marathwada, Aurangabad district tops the list followed by Latur and Beed at the second position. The districts of Parbhani and Hingoli share the
third position with 0.43 HDI. Osmanabad, Nanded and Jalna are the bottom three districts with Jalna at the last position.

This dismal picture of Marathwada finds its origin in low female literacy rate, high percentage of child marriages and wide disparity in rural and urban employment. Literacy amounts to be an important tool for development. However, the state of literacy in Marathwada is quiet depressing.

Table no.3.14 given below clearly shows the sluggish rates of women literacy in Marathwada. The table also provides the data figures for both rural and urban areas of Marathwada. The female literacy rates for years 1991 and 2001 are documented in the said table.

Table No. 3.14
Female Literacy Percentage in Marathwada Region (Years 1991 & 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>39.64</td>
<td>28.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>27.30</td>
<td>21.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbhani</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>22.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingoli</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beed</td>
<td>32.34</td>
<td>26.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>30.96</td>
<td>24.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmanabad</td>
<td>39.16</td>
<td>35.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latur</td>
<td>39.74</td>
<td>35.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>34.08</td>
<td>27.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>52.32</td>
<td>40.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed from table 3.14 that in Marathwada region, all districts are in the low female literacy category of below 60 per cent except Aurangabad and Latur positioned in the middle category of 60 to 70 per cent. None of the eight districts of Marathwada could get ahead the Maharashtra state female literacy rates in both 1991 and 2001. It is further observed that all the districts in Marathwada have the rural female literacy rates far behind their urban counter figures. Jalna district is specifically observed to be the most backward both in urban as well as rural literacy rates.

The mean of literacy rates of all districts of Marathwada was 34.08 in 1991 while it increased by 21.40 points to 55.48 in 2001. The mean female literacy rate for rural Marathwada in 1991 was 27.93% while it increased by 23.02 to 50.95% in 2001. The mean female literacy rate for urban Marathwada in 1991 was 56.78% which increased by 13.4 points to 70.18% in 2001.

Chart 3.4

Comparative Female Literacy rates in Marathwada for years 1991 & 2001
On the basis of chart 3.4 it can be stated that in the decade 1991-2001 each of the districts of Marathwada has witnessed growth in their female literacy rate. In majority of the districts the literacy rate as recorded in year 2001 is more than 50% over that in year 1991. This is a positive sign for the region. However the state female literacy rate is quiet high thus depicting the larger scope for development on the literacy aspect of the region.

If the figures are compared for urban and rural areas the difference is clearly visible. The urban areas have excelled over the rural areas in female literacy rates in both 1991 and 2001 years. However the gap between the urban and rural literacy rates has reduced. This can be understood from chart 3.5 given below.

**Chart 3.5**

The employment scenario too is not very different from the literacy status for women in Marathwada. Table 3.15 below provides the figures for the employment rate of women in various districts of Marathwada.
Table No.3.15
Female Employment Rate (%) for Year-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Year-2000</th>
<th>Central Govt.</th>
<th>State Govt.</th>
<th>Local Govt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>25.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>22.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbhani *</td>
<td>19.08</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beed</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>16.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>17.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmanabad</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>33.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latur</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>23.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>21.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Maharashtra HDR (2002) *Undivided Parbhani district

It can be inferred from table no.3.15 above that except Parbhani none of the districts from Marathwada excel over the state women employment percentage in central government employment. In case of the state government employments other than Aurangabad and Beed no other district fares well over the state percentage. In the local government employment also only Osmanabad district scores higher than the state percentage. It is also observed that in comparison with the central and the state government employments the local government employment has attracted the female workforce to a larger extent.

The oppressed status of women in Marathwada can also be understood on the basis of Reproductive and Child Health Survey. From the table no.3.16 below, the grave problem of higher percentage of child marriages can be understood.
Table No. 3.16
District wise percentage of Girls married below 18 years of age in Marathwada region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Girls married below 18 years (%ge)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbhani *</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beed</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmanabad</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latur</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean %</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maharashtra</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: HDR Maharashtra (2002)*

Table 3.16 gives the percentage of girls married before the age of eighteen years in various districts of Marathwada. It depicts that Nanded district tops the other districts with 63.7% of the girls being married before attainment of eighteen years of age. The mean of percentages of girls marrying before eighteen years of age for Marathwada region is determined as 54.4%. All the districts of Marathwada are far ahead of the state percentage, thus indicating the aggrieved status of women in Marathwada.

The Human Development Report of Maharashtra also points at Jalna, Parbhani, Latur, Beed, Osmanabad and Nanded as the backward districts. Thus, Marathwada as a whole is underdeveloped and needs special attention of the policy makers, government and the organisations. It is the need of the hour that extensive measures must be undertaken to reach to the women in Marathwada and direct efforts for their upliftment and development.
3.12 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that empowerment is an important aspect for everyone’s life irrespective of the gender. Infact, women being by birth an oppressed section of the society, empowerment for them is a more significant aspect. In India, as a whole, large regional disparities are seen in the context of the development of women. Also it is observed that the rural women still lack basic resources and facilities essential for survival. Within Maharashtra, the women, specifically in eight districts of Marathwada are backward in every area. They are exposed to more of exploitation than of exposure. Obviously their upliftment is the urgent need to be addressed.
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