CHAPTER 1

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1.1 Introduction

With the progress of civilization and the advancement of science and the technology the compounded global store of intellectual capital has tremendously increased and the media of communication of the accumulated intellectual capital of the world have expanded. The vast and the increasing mass of knowledge that have been pouring in the exclusion of knowledge and information is being enshrined not only in books and serials, but also in technical and scientific reports, patents, standards and specifications, transactions, trade circulars, reprints, off-prints, micro-documents and photocopies. With increasing specialization has come increasing fragmentation not only of literature but also of groups of individuals engaged in producing and using literature. At the same time the necessity for communication among such groups has become still more essential. The researchers are in need of correct and up-to-date information in all the recognized languages of the world in the quickest possible time for the advance of science and Technology and Social Sciences as well as for avoiding the duplication of labour in any field of knowledge or area of discipline or subject of study. This is possible by what is now known as documentation.

The enormous volume of recorded knowledge, so important for scientific and technological research, would be entirely washed if it cannot be properly utilized.
The records of human thought and experience and of human achievements have to be systematically 'documented' so that the information contained in them is readily available for future progress, development and inventions.

Women's Studies was first conceived as an academic rubric apart from other departments in the late 1970s, as the second wave of feminism gained political influence in the academy through student and faculty activism. As an academic discipline, it was modeled on the American studies and Ethnic studies (such as Afro-American studies) and Chicano Studies programs that had arisen shortly before it. The first Women's Studies Program in the United States was established on May 21, 1970 at San Diego State College (now San Diego State University) after a year of intense organizing of women's consciousness raising groups, rallies, petition circulating, and operating unofficial or experimental classes and presentations before seven committees and assemblies. A second program followed within weeks at Richmond College of the City University of New York (now the College of Staten Island). In the 1970s a good number of universities and colleges created departments and programs in Women's Studies, and professorships became available in the field which did not require the sponsorship of other departments. These programs are seen as instrumental in promoting the feminist political party and its ideologies within educational institutions. Women's Studies education has been paramount to the feminist movement and its objectives. By the late twentieth century, Women's Studies courses were available at many universities and colleges around the world. 

(Academic Room, 2013)
The University Grants Commission in India has been playing a significant role in the promotion of Women's Studies through the creation of Centers for Women's Studies (CWS) by implementation of a scheme on "Development of Women's Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges". These centres in the university system have been functioning since 1986.

"...Women's Studies have to be understood as an instrument for Women's development and also as a necessary input to deepen the knowledge base of various disciplines. Thus Women's Studies have to be understood not merely in the context of research and teaching, but also action" (Mathu, 2008).

These Women's Studies Centers are doing front-line work, documenting and analyzing women's issues and experiences, and formulating new pedagogical approaches and methods. They have contributed to the visibility of women's concerns, tried to combine erudite knowledge with socially relevant theories and action, created a space for Women's Studies in the patriarchal setup of university system and succeeded in opening a dialogue in multidisciplinary collaboration (Jain & Rajput, 2003, p.19).

A critical aspect of Women's Studies is the creation of new information based on facts and analysis. Reports of the conferences, seminars, meeting, antedated case studies, surveys, issue based affirmative action and so forth generates knowledge, ideas and theories. This is an important resource for those engaged in designing policies and programmes for women's empowerment. There is an urgent
need to document these information resources and also to develop the literature on Women’s Studies.

Study and research is the major area through which literature can be developed in any subject area. Research in Women’s Studies programmes has ranged from critique and reconstruction of theory to developing new frameworks for identification and analysis of information both quantitative and qualitative. The Women’s Studies Centres (WSCs) need to experiment with interdisciplinary research using a range of methodologies. Purely academic as well as action research are encouraged by UGC. Collaborative research, regionally / nationally, is promoted under Women’s Studies scholarship as this would not only contribute to knowledge building but also academically strengthen the WSCs in its process of growth. There is still a great paucity of good books, readers and texts in Women’s Studies in India, and there is need for preparation of text books, reference lists, compilation of data banks of research on Women’s Studies, translation of women’s writings, documentation of oral narratives, which has come up as a major research area in Women’s Studies and ultimately; documentation of Women’s Studies literature as a whole to have proper access to the existing literature as well as to contribute for the growth and development of the subject.

In India there is an interesting diversity within Women’s Studies. Sources of research, information, documentation and action vary widely, ranging from individuals located in mainstream research and development institutions and university departments to specific Women’s Studies Centres that were opened within
universities and were supported by University Grants Commission. The range also includes Women's Studies units in colleges that are not necessarily part of the UGC scheme, as well as centres that have been funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and finally those that have been mushroomed in the NGO sector as participants in social and political movements, including the women's movement.

"Beginning in 1987, Women’s Studies Centres were established in a select number of universities, and the number has been growing in the intervening years. It should probably go without saying that these centres are quite diverse in their structure and functioning. Women's Studies Centres established within universities were expected to perform many tasks. The UGC guidelines claimed that ‘Women’s Studies was neither a discipline nor an area of study, nor an end in itself,’ but ‘an instrument of social engineering to play multiple roles in bringing about both academic and social development’" (Sharma, 2002).

The Women's Studies Centres established in different universities and colleges at the initiative of UGC are engaged with their different activities in uplifting the status and position of women in society. The documentation centre which is attached with the sole purpose of empowering the women folk has also a positive and realistic role to make them aware of their circumstances and also help them to the leadership in the society both in social and academic fields. So an ardent endeavour is taken up to make an exhaustive study of the Women’s Studies Centres
functioning under the university system thereby covering the North Eastern states of India.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women's Studies Centres are results of yearlong struggle of women against oppression, for their rights towards equality. University Grants Commission is doing a significant work by supporting the Women's Studies Centres to be established in the University system.

Documentation is earmarked as one of the major functions of these WSCs along with teaching and research. Other functions to be performed by these WSCs cover advocacy, extension, consultancy, publication etc. Women activists all over the world support women's underrepresentation in history as one of the major cause of women's subordinate position in the society. Therefore women must write her history, because without knowing the roots the next generation cannot progress. In the absence of written evidences of her past, oral history and narratives have come up as major research methodologies on Women's Studies. Women's Studies Centres are taking the responsibility of collecting, organising and documenting Women's Studies literature in a systematic way which would prove as a basis for further research and development of the area. Through this research programme, an earnest effort has been taken to know the state of the art of documentation of Women's Studies Centres of North East India, and the extent to which these centres are able to contribute in the research and development activities in the field of Women's Studies. Along with these, it has also been aimed to know the trend of growth of
Women's Studies literature. In view of this, the research programme is titled as "Documentation of Information Resources in Women's Studies Centres of India with reference to North East India".

1.3 Objectives of the Study

i. To study the current status of documentation of the Women's Studies Centres with reference to North East India.

ii. To conduct a systematic study on the information resources available in different formats on Women's Studies.

iii. To know the various aspects of literature growth in Women's Studies by way of conducting bibliometric study on a select Indian periodical “Indian Journal of Gender Studies” covering different areas.

iv. To study the extent of coverage of Women's Studies literature appeared in different formats and to identify the contributions covered from India in two important citation indexes namely SSCI and A&HCI.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The Women's Studies Centres in India can be grouped in many ways; one way is to group them according to their financial support from the nodal agency. For example,
a. Women's Studies Centres attached to the University/College, funded by the University Grants Commission;

b. Women's Studies Research Institutes being supported by grants from the ICSSR.

c. Women's organisations such as non-Governmental registered societies, or a department of Central Government or State Government for specialist sectors;

d. Grass-roots organisations as well as feminist resource centres which develop their funding base through projects which are commissioned by a broad spectrum of agencies, government, corporate, financial institutions as well as international donors.

In addition, there are individual scholars attached to development study centres and individual academicians who bring a gender studies window into the larger institution.

UGC has left selection of nomenclature for the Centre / Department to each university; however, UGC refers all Centres / Departments as Women's Studies Centres (WSCs).

For this study purpose only the Women's Studies Centres financially supported by University Grants Commission, India is considered. The geographical coverage is fixed as North East India. The following is a list of Women's Studies Centres available in the universities of North East India:
1. Centre for Women’s Studies (CWS), Dibrugarh University
2. Women’s Studies Research Centre (WSRC), Gauhati University
3. Women’s Studies Centre (WSC), Manipur University
4. Centre for Women’s Studies (CWS), Nagaland University
5. Women’s Studies Centre (WSC), Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh
6. Chandraprothya Saikiani Centre for Women’s Studies (CSCWS), Tezpur University
7. Centre for Women’s Studies (CWS), Tripura University

Out of the above mentioned centres, Women’s Studies Centre, Manipur University could not be incorporated in the study as after repetitive efforts no information could be collected from the centre due to the problem of communication and unfriendly circumstances.

Area of the Study

The area of study is made as such:

- A clear idea of the concept of Women’s Studies.
- Growth and development of Women’s Studies Centres in the country with special reference to North East India.
- A clear idea of the information resources available in different formats in Women’s Studies.
• Bibliometric analysis of an Indian Journal on Women’s Studies and to study the growth trend of Women’s Studies literature.

• Study of SSCI and A&HCI databases to know the coverage of Women’s Studies Literature and the pattern of growth.

Population

The target population for the study is the library professionals in charge of Women’s Studies Centres and the employees of Women’s Studies Centres as a whole. A survey has also been conducted among the users of Women’s Studies Centres to know their views regarding the collection, adequacy of materials, and users’ satisfaction over collection etc.

1.5 Methodology

To ascertain the basic requirements and needs of the users and to experience the status of documentation services being extended by the centres under study, the methodology consists of survey of Women’s Studies Centres and its users with the help of following methods:

➢ Questionnaire Method is put to the library professionals of Women’s Studies centres to gather information on documentation works and services performed by the respective centres. Discussion was also made with the library professional which was also helpful in this regard. Specially designed questionnaires were put to be filled in by the users of
the centre to know their views and satisfaction level over the collection of the centres under study.

- Interview Method is also resorted to collect some information from the Women's Studies Centres. Here both Personal Interview and Telephonic Interview method is used to collect the necessary information. The face to face conversations with the respondents results in better response as compared to other methods of data collection. For some of the questions, which were either left blank or incomplete, the interview was conducted with the library users and librarians and the gaps were filled up in questionnaires. Hence, this method was used to supplement the information received through questionnaire.

- Observation Method was also used particularly for collecting the information and forming an idea about the general environment in the library such as general environment and working conditions of the library, physical facilities available in the library, provision of library services, attitude of the users towards the library and its services, etc.

- Historical Method was also employed for searching literature related to the area of study, which are found in published form in different journals newspapers and books. Also some grey literatures distributed on some special occasions by different organisations are also consulted for the purpose.
1.6 Chapterisation

The thesis is arranged under the following chapters:

**Chapter 1: Introduction**- This introductory chapter gives an introduction to the topic of research. Also provides the statement of the problem, scope and objectives of study, area of study, methodologies adopted and a brief summary of the chapters under which the whole thesis is organised.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**- Literature review provides information about different literatures consulted during the research process to gather some idea of the previous works already made in the area. The review of the literature is organised under some key areas from the most general to specific; such as, Women's Studies in India, Documents and Documentation, Information Resources, and Bibliometric Analysis.

**Chapter 3: Women's Studies-Its Concept and Growth in India**- This chapter gives in detailed concept of Women's Studies, its growth in India and Role of UGC towards establishment of Women's Studies Centres in the university System with a brief note on growth of Women's Studies Centres in North East India. Brief description to some of the pioneering Women's Studies Centres is also given here. Nature of research in Women's Studies and the concept of Documentation are also discussed along with the documentation scenario of Women's Studies in India.

**Chapter 4: Women's Studies Information Resources**- Availability and proper organization of information resources determine the growth and development
of a subject in right direction. Women's Studies being a newly emerging area of study, information resources play an important role in its growth and development. In this chapter, an attempt is made to discuss the role of information as a resource. Discussed about some of the organizations who are playing active role in developing information resources on women and brief description is given to some of the online information resources on Women's Studies.

Chapter 5: Bibliometric Analysis: Indian Journal of Gender Studies - In this chapter, a bibliometric analysis is given of one of the major publication of Women's Studies in India, i.e., Indian Journal of Gender Studies. The study is done to know the different aspects of growth of Women’s Studies literature by the study of authorship pattern, geographic distribution of contributions, bibliographic format of citations etc.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Findings of Data- This chapter covers the analysis and findings of the study at Women’s Studies Centres of universities of North East India: This chapter is based on analysis of data received through questionnaire, interview, and telephonic conversation with the respondents. Study is made to know the present status of documentation of Women’s Studies Centres of North East India. A user study is also conducted with the aim to know the users attitude towards the collection of the Women’s Studies Centres under study. Also a study is made in two major databases- SSCI and A&HCI, to show the growth pattern of Women’s Studies literature by studying the extent of coverage of literature on women available in
different formats. The trend of growth is calculated with the help of Least Square Method of Straight Line.

Chapter 7: Conclusion - After careful analysis and observations made in the earlier chapters, the researcher has come to the conclusion which is given in this chapter in the form of a brief summary along with the findings of the study showing how far the study is able to meet the set objectives. Towards the end some recommendations are put forwarded along with some suggestions for further research in the area.

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