V. CONCLUSION
Apartheid was institutionalised racism which believed in separating different races and restricting people to specific areas of residence. It developed the concept of 'Separate Development' for Africans and created "self-governing African states" (Bantustans) in South Africa. Accordingly, the laws enacted under apartheid discriminated against the Blacks in all spheres including employment, wages, education, housing, health and political participation. The entire legal system promoted discrimination rather than equality. An extensive security force was used to enforce the laws and subjected the Africans to physical and psychological hardships. All this created an atmosphere of tension and violence which morally and mentally affected everybody especially Black women and children.

While both Black men and women suffered under the system of apartheid, its impact was more on women as they were discriminated both by race and by gender. The laws which particularly affected women were the pass laws, forced removal from land and the laws on Bantustans. Under the migrant labour system women were considered 'non-productive' for the White economy and therefore not encouraged to settle in the urban areas. They were thus legally debarred from all employment except domestic service and casual farm labour. Pass laws not only represented the key mechanism for channelling labour into different sectors of the economy but also meant sexual abuse and sudden imprisonment for women. Under 'forced removals' women were sent to the resettlement camps which were characterised by unemployment, malnutrition, infant mortality, poverty, disease and lack of basic amenities. The conditions in Bantustans were no better. And women here were responsible for the care of the aged and the children. They practised subsistence agriculture, were either hired by White farmers as seasonal workers or employed in factories situated near the borders of "Homelands". Since they were less paid, Black women in Bantustans were less equal to Black women in the urban areas.
The personal experiences narrated by the South African women in chapter-I demonstrated that the laws subjected them to unique and unbelievable situations. While in other countries, women face more social than legal discrimination, women in South Africa faced both types of discrimination. Nowhere in the world did the law interfere so much in the day-to-day lives of women as was the case in South Africa. In more than one sense they were stripped of those rights considered basic throughout the world viz., the right to live with husbands, the right to care for children and the right to lead a normal family life.

My study, however, proves that South African women defied the laws of apartheid inspite of interference and harassment by others. Chapter-II illustrates this point. It analyses various social and economic factors like migration, urbanisation, unemployment, wage disparities, fertility rates, marriage, education, illiteracy, health, infant mortality, population control, family planning and the issues of abortion and teenage pregnancy with the help of statistical data. Black women are studied in relation to Black men as well as women of other races. Such comparison reflects the extent of their deprivation and oppression. It also makes comparison with the Indian situation and reaches the surprising conclusion that South African women were in a better position.

The data on 'migration' showed that African males and females were distributed more or less equally in the rural and urban areas. It reiterated the fact that women did migrate to the urban areas inspite of all the hurdles created by the system of apartheid. The demographic structure of the population revealed that the percentage of boys and girls below the age of 1 was equal which indicated the absence of female infanticide in South Africa. The reasons for this, however, were
not probed into. But this fact assumed significance in the context of prevalence of female infanticide in India and other Asian countries. It was also observed that male mortality rate was higher than the female's and female life expectancy was higher than that of the males. Yet another interesting finding was that the literacy rates were more or less equal between African males and females while in India male literacy rates are much higher when compared to those of females. In South Africa, in 1993 while boys outnumbered girls at the primary school level, girls outnumbered boys at the secondary school level. And surprisingly, the drop-out rate among boys was higher than that of girls. In India it is the other way round. Even the use of the contraceptives was higher among the South African women when compared to the Indian women. Lastly, regarding mental health, it was observed that both Blacks and Whites were affected by the system of apartheid. This suggested the possibility that under apartheid, both the oppressors and the oppressed were affected in various ways.

The basic problem in South Africa was that it set Blacks and Whites into conflict since 1910. The situation became worse after 1948. The economic, social and political inequalities between Whites and non-Whites arose out of such historical pattern of race relations in South Africa. The most fundamental issue was the racial attitude and behaviour of Whites towards the Blacks. In South Africa the Blacks were denied the dignity of being treated as human beings. They were rather considered as units of labour to suit the needs of the White economy. Their entire lives were designed and defined by apartheid's labour policies and the principle of racial segregation.

The stages of confrontation between Whites and Blacks were reflected in the evolution of apartheid legislation. From time to time, new laws were passed and the
old laws amended to suit the changing needs of Whites’ economic and political well-being. Initially the laws were meant to discourage the Black mine workers from competing with the White mine workers. This resulted in migrant labour system for Blacks who remained outside the mining compounds. They were further confined to manual labour and were denied the right to trade unionism. In the second stage, a series of laws were passed which aimed at racial segregation in all spheres. The separation took the extreme form of declaring a few Homelands as Independent African States. The next stage aimed at the denial of economic, social and political rights to the Blacks especially in the urban areas. The legislation in the fourth stage evolved in the context of the increasing role of resistance movements against apartheid. The laws were meant to remove political opposition. The political parties and leaders who were fighting for liberation were banned and declared illegal. Finally a series of laws were introduced to deal with the treatment and punishment of political prisoners, freedom fighters and activists.

Women, got involved in the struggle against apartheid. They mainly protested against the pass laws. The Bloemfontein Resistance (1913), Struggle in Potchefstroom (1930) and Resistance in Johannesburg (1952-1956), were discussed in detail in chapter III. Women carried out this struggle through petitions, deputations, passive resistance and acts of civil disobedience. They organised huge demonstrations and marches. This showed their strength, determination and capacity to organise protest at a large scale. It is important to note that women protested against pass laws and related legislation as these interfered with their family life. In South Africa, therefore, women defied laws to protect their traditional roles of wives and mothers.
Women joined men in important political campaigns like the Passive Resistance Campaign (1946), Defiance Campaign (1952), Congress of the People (1955), Treason Trial (1956-61) and Sharpville Massacre (1960) as discussed in chapter III. Though women did not spearhead these movements, they participated and contributed in their own way. Women took part in the armed struggle launched by the ANC in 1961. They went into exile and were trained in military and intelligence. As mothers, women played an active role in the Soweto Uprisings of 1976. Further, women joined trade unions to fight for their rights in the workplace. Many women like Ray Alexander started unions on their own. The Garment Workers Union, Food and Canning Workers Union, Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union and Domestic Workers Union were some of the important unions discussed in chapter-III. These unions demanded rights like paid maternity leave and better conditions of work. Trade unions played a significant role in directing the course of the women's movement. They dealt with working class women who were excluded from political organisations. Trade unions trained women in organising abilities and leadership skills. They prompted them to take part in wider political and liberation struggle. This was clear from the fact that they played an important role in the formation and functioning of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW).

Women's resistance to apartheid was met with arrests and detentions. Women were subjected to torture and abuse in the prisons. Black women were affected the most as racial hierarchy and discrimination were practised even in prisons. The treatment and torture varied with races. Whites were given more comforts and better food compared to Blacks who were badly assaulted and humiliated. This was substantiated by the statements of various women who were in prisons. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Public Hearings held at University of Western Cape, Cape Town during August 5-7, 1996, many women who were victimised
narrated their personal experiences as mentioned in chapter III. Issues of physical torture, sexual harassment and pregnancy were discussed with the help of first hand information on these aspects by the South African women. They all suffered from the after effects of torture like anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome. Thus in prisons women were tortured physically, psychologically and sexually. Through detentions and torture the government aimed to discourage women from opposing apartheid. But according to Andrey Coleman it was because of detentions that those who were not politically active often joined the struggle. In the same way, the torture made women stronger and even more determined.

But surprisingly, women were treated as a separate group and were subjected to discrimination on the basis of their gender. Such discrimination within political parties like ANC and IFP was pointed out in chapter IV. It was questioned why progressive organisations like ANC and SACP had separate women wings. Cherryl Walker pointed out that by establishing a separate Women's League, ANC recognised that women occupied an inferior position within ANC. But being 'separate' does not necessarily mean being 'inferior'. Her statement is therefore debatable. However, it must be recognised that this dilemma is not unique to ANCWL but to any women's group or organisation. While "sexism" within ANC should be condemned, the need for separate women's organisations cannot be ruled out given the existing inequalities between the sexes in society. But, to what extent women should be treated separately is a matter of debate. While in ANC only women dealt with women's issues, in SACP men joined women in dealing with women's emancipation. SACP, thus, brought a new perspective to the national liberation movement. But both ANC and SACP subordinated women's struggle to the broader freedom movement.
It is relevant to raise the issue of 'feminism' in South Africa in this context. Women were not organised along sexual lines in South Africa. Under apartheid, 'feminism' was absent owing to the factor of race. Women's organisations were therefore not based on any feminist ideology. Under apartheid both men and women were oppressed by the State. White women shared with White men in the exploitation of Black men and women. Black women joined Black men in their struggle against apartheid. Women identified 'state' and not 'men' as the reason for their oppression. In South Africa, therefore, there was a situation where women shared equality with men as their partners in the struggle against apartheid. South African women, thus, attained a unique status unknown in other third world countries.

The focus of the women's struggle changed in the post-apartheid era. The lifting of ban on the liberation movements in 1990 and the revocation of the race as a constitutional and legal measure created space for the gender struggle to be waged as an autonomous aspect of the struggle for democracy in South Africa. The adoption of the Interim Constitution of Republic of South Africa in 1993 and Charter of Fundamental Rights created new context for the struggle for gender equality of South African women. It was during this time that ANC committed itself to gender equality and the development of a policy for the advancement of women. This allowed men and women within ANC to address gender equality during the process of negotiating and writing a new constitution. In addition, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality, designed to convey to the new government the concerns of women, was launched by the National Women's Coalition in 1994. The Charter was a holistic, comprehensive document consisting of twelve articles covering every aspect of women's lives. It demanded equality in areas of legislation, economy, education and training, social services, political and civic life, health care and family.
life (see appendix II). Its intention was to give substance to a future Bill of Rights and the Equality Clause of the Constitution.

Women took part actively in the elections of April 27, 1994 both as voters and leaders. The data on women's representation in National Government as discussed in chapter IV indicated that in South Africa 106 out of 407 members of the National Assembly are women. South Africa was thus placed among the top seven countries in the world with regard to female representation in the parliament. However, there are only 16 women in the Senate comprising of 90 members. This shows that women are under-represented at the higher levels of political sphere.

My interviews substantiated the fact that women were and are still subjected to discrimination both on the basis of race and gender in economic, social and political life. However, from the personal interaction with the South African women, I observed that though they suffered under the system of apartheid, they also did show immense strength. This is reflected in their recent achievements. First, the incorporation of their demands and ideas in the National Constitution. Secondly, in institution of a Commission on Gender Equality in Parliament to ensure that all future legislation in South Africa is gender-sensitive. Affirmative Action for women and inclusion of their problems in the Reconstruction and Development Programme are yet other achievements. But they must realise that having a progressive Constitution is one thing and translating it into reality is quite a different matter. In this context they must learn from the mistakes of India which has a beautiful constitution but in reality even after fifty years of independence the position of women has not improved much.