SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Women form a vulnerable section of the society and several macro indicators related to education, employment, economic participation and participation in domestic decision making etc. point towards an adverse status of women. Empowerment and education of women has been a priority in successive plans and several public expenditure programmes are directed to this objective. However, outcomes of administrative intents are not often realize.

The first aspect to empower women is to make them literate and educated. Education is the key to progress and unless Indian women are educated, they will not be able to enjoy their freedom and liberties. The education of women has been sadly ignored in the past. Historically, in the Indian situation the rearing of girl child and her education has always been taken with indifference. The only exception may be the Vedic period. The women accepted their subordinate status for centuries. It is only in the later-half of the 20th century that the Indian women started revolting against stipulations that women are inferior to men. Women are seeking for employment, and the old conservative norms and traditions are changing in the enlightened households. In many families, this
changing phenomenon is creating conflict, particularly in those families where women's role is confined to being housewives.

Women education leads to empowerment. Since woman’s empowerment is a global issue, UNO has also expressed concern in this matter. Illiteracy adversely affects the personality of a woman by making her timid, unconfident, insecure, dependent and helpless identity. Hence, right to education as well as economic independence are some of the keys to women’s emancipation and empowerment, eradication of gender based discrimination and an assurance of all other human rights on equal footing, which is a continuous process for realizing the standards of parity, liberation and freedom. Thus it implies, growth of life chances, participation in different spheres of life – economic independence, social, cultural, development process and decision making etc. A woman may said to be powerful when she has control over a large portion of power resources in society. Mukherjee and Mukherjee (1997) explained that “The concept of women’s development has been talked about and explained by different people in different ways, but the essence of it is that it aims at change and development in the position of women, especially in terms of education, employment and making them self
reliant in such a way that they recognize their roles and perform them as equal partners in life both in their families and in society”.

In terms of employment as well as promotion in work and profession, women often face greater difference than men. Though career and job for women have now been recognized as an indicator of women empowerment yet there are many families in which women are looked upon as housewives. These families do not expect women as to work and earn wage. Education as well as awareness, change in women’s self-perception make them able to take their own decisions on various issues regarding health, education and employment. Economic independence is the major mean of empowerment of women. Generally women with higher education are more capable of taking decisions firmly because education and further job improves their awareness.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to assess the role of education in empowering women and its relationship with economic independence and decision making by keeping in mind the following objectives:

- To study socio-economic and demographic profile of the selected sample.
- To study educational level of the selected sample.
- To assess the economic independence of the respondents.
- To assess the relationship between decision making and educational empowerment of the selected sample.
- To analyze the relationship between economic independence and educational empowerment.
- To analyze the relationship between education and educational empowerment.

District Saharanpur of Uttar Pradesh state was selected purposively out of 71 districts in the state. Urban area of Saharanpur was selected. The city was divided into five zones: east, west, north, south and central. Each zone consists of 10-12 mohallas. 2 mohallas were selected from each zone, thus 10 mohallas were selected at random. Forty families having married woman aged 30 to 41 were chosen purposively from each selected mohallas. In this study, education of the respondents was taken as independent variable, it was studied through questionnaire prepared with the help of expert.
Economic independence, decision making and educational empowerment were taken as dependent variables and studied through questionnaire prepared.

**Findings related to general profile of the sample**

The findings of the present study lead to the following conclusions.

- The study consists of population of 400 married women respondents.
- The respondents included in the study were in the age range of 30-41 years. It was found that 112 respondents were of 30-32 years and 68 were of 33-35 years. Respondents of age group 36-38 years were 76 whereas out of total sample 36 belong to age group of 39-41 years.
- The majority of respondents were Hindus (92%) whereas Muslims were only (8%).
- The percentage of the respondents who belonged to forward caste was considerably large (49%) in the sample. The respondents belonged to backward caste schedule castes were 33% and 18% respectively.
• The nuclear family was most common type of the family in which the majority of respondents live. The nuclear family is defined as one in which husband and wife live with any number of unmarried children or with no children at all. The study found that (45%) respondents belonged to joint family and (55%) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family.

• The study consists that majority of respondents (46.5%) had 2 children and (23%) respondents had 3 children whereas 30.5 respondents had more than three children.

• Out of 400 respondents (72%) were housewives and (28%) were working outside the home.

• Majority of the respondents 68% belonged to low income group i.e. Rs 8000 to 15000 monthly, whereas (17.5%) respondents belong to family whose monthly income was between 16000 and 20000. Only (14.5%) belong to high income group i.e. more than 20000 per month.
Major findings related to economic independence, decision making and educational empowerment of the respondents according to their educational status.

This study represents the relationship among education, economic independence and decision making. In this study it was accepted that education is highly beneficial and it is the fact that level or type of education from which maximum strength, skill and confidence can be derived, is important.

In this study mean scores obtained by the graduates 7.65 and post-graduates 7.28 were high as compared to others 5.48. Mean scores of illiterates were found 4.25 and the mean score of primary educated respondents was 0.59, who were high school and intermediate educated scored 5.95 and 5.7 respectively.

The mean scores on decision making were obtained by respondents according to their educational status. The researcher found that respondents who were illiterate scored minimum 13.06. It scored 15.59, 15.41, 15.34 and 15.10 for high school educated respondents, graduates, post-graduates and intermediate educated respondents respectively. The other category respondents scored 13.68 and for primary it scored 13.58.
It was found that education and awareness have greater impact on decision making. Findings related to educational empowerment of respondents according to their educational status were depicted that illiterate respondents scored highest 8.56 than high school 7.56, graduate 7.82, post graduate 8.24 and other category 8.24 like diploma holders, polytechnic, etc.

It was found that illiterates realized the important and empowering role of education because they were suffering due to low status in the society and family.

**Relationship of educational empowerment with economic independence and decision making respectively.**

Economic status of women is accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development. In this study relationship was observed between economic independence and educational empowerment of illiterate respondents were found positive (r=0.052). On the other hand the negative (r = -0.280) relationship was found between decision making and educational empowerment of women. It was found that illiterate respondents do not consider that educational empowerment can enhance their power of decision making.
The findings on the relationship between educational empowerment and economic independence was found positive ($r = 0.077$) among primary educated respondents and Relationship between decision making and educational empowerment was also found positive 0.292 among primary respondents.

High school educated respondents showed positive ($r = 0.120$) relationship between economic independence and educational empowerment. There was also a positive relationship (0.312) between decision making and educational empowerment of high school educated respondents. There was negative ($r = -0.314$) relationship between economic independence and educational empowerment between intermediate educated respondents. On the other hand same respondents showed positive ($r = 0.142$) relationship between decision making and educational empowerment.

Relationship between economic independence and educational empowerment of graduate respondents was found negative ($r = -0.040$) and positive ($r = 0.536$) relationship was observed between decision making and educational empowerment.
Relationship between economic independence and educational empowerment of post-graduate respondents was found positive ($r = 0.070$) and relationship between decision making and educational empowerment was also observed positive ($r = 0.374$).

There was positive correlation ($r = 0.103$) between economic independence and educational empowerment of other (polytechnic, education training or any diploma) respondents and the relationship between decision making and educational empowerment of respondents was also found positive ($r = 0.401$).

**Findings related to opinion of respondents on different aspects of empowerment.**

Researcher analyzed the responses of women on different issues related to variables of this study. These responses helped to find out the opinion of the respondents on different aspects of empowerment. Researcher examined the opinion of respondents through various questions related to household expenses, education, employment, changing role of life, etc. Thus, the opinion of women on different aspects of empowerment is summarized here.

All Women respondents were agreed that educated home maker will be an asset to the family. It was seen that educated home-maker is
more confident and more likely to send their daughters to school or college.

Out of 400, 60% women respondents (240) considered that in spite of educational empowerment, women are deprived from opportunity of leadership, while 65% agreed that women are becoming a tough competitor to men.

There were 78.5% women considered that decisions regarding expenses must be taken by both husband and wife.

Women respondents who, considered that employment of women outside the home is an additional burden for them, were observed 75%.

Researcher found that 56% respondents were in favor of it, that women should not start employment without getting permission from husband and in-laws.

Respondents were asked for their opinion on a situation in which woman is not getting handsome salary, she should leave the job, only 9.5% agreed with this statement, whereas 44% respondents had a firm believe that women should never leave the job and 46.5% were agreed to not to leave the job until a better opportunity is available.
Opinion towards employment was examined and it was found that a large number of women 112 (28%) were that economic independence is necessary to face problems, for betterment of future generation, for leisure time activities and to give full dimensions to life. Only 7 (1.75%) out of 400 said that it is necessary for leisure time activities.

Generally, it was considered that women were domesticated merely to bear and rear children and to perform household chores but researcher found amazing results that majority (80%) of respondents thought that the tasks which are considered women’s duty should be learnt by male members also.

Lastly when respondents were asked about problems related to health and nutrition majority of women (70%) accepted that lack of knowledge and ignorance about the available facilities are responsible for this problem. As separate Gunnawardena (2009) conducted a study on women’s autonomy in decision making and health care. Findings revealed that mostly decision making about their health increases with education and awareness. Women who earned and educated, were more powerful in taking decisions regarding to their health.
CONCLUSION

In the last millennium women have evolved and developed. We can claim strong presence of women in all walks of life, still conditions of women in our land have remained subordinate. It can be concluded that the education of women is a much discussed subject, but sensitization about this issue is grossly neglected at the grassroot level.

Education is central to the process of sustainable development of women. Women’s education and the need to pursue their career and to have their own independent income and involvement in decision making has begun to be accepted and respected by our families and society. Education, employment and involvement in decisions, made economic independent women conscious about their rights.

This study threw a light on the actual role of education for the empowerment of women with special reference to economic independence and decision making. It can be concluded that education of women creates great opportunities for them. These opportunities are experiences in the new role of women, decision making and bringing about change in family structure. Education further provides employment
for women and provides with them certain power in family decision making.

Improvement in the status of women basically depends on their education which improves their economic structure and decision making power. The need is for women to realize their inherent strengths.

This study analyzed that economic independence and decision making are the two main prerequisites of empowerment and these two variables (economic independence and decision making) can be improved through education of women.

**Suggestions For Further Research**

- Similar study need to be conducted in different areas of Uttar Pradesh and other states of India as well.
- Similar study can be under taken on a large sample for more valid results.
- More elaborated studies could be done considering more aspects of empowerment like cultural empowerment, political empowerment, etc.
- Research work could be done considering different age groups other than those in the present study.
• Comparative study could be done on married and unmarried women / educated or uneducated women.

**For Action**

Nobody will liberate women but only women themselves. It is often advised to shun evil, not evil people. Women have followed this dictum for too long. They have to bring in the change themselves.

The need is for women to realize their inherent strengths. They have to face the reality and the challenge. Women have to free themselves of religious convention and superstitions.

Women have to exhibit their worth. They have to safeguard their dignity and rights. Nobody has the right to violate any women's pride. Women have to make their own judgments.

Empowerment of women is the prime objective of all development programmes and policies in India in order to achieve self sufficiency and self reliance. These programmes could be framed properly and executed effectively. According to one of the ILO report, "Women are 50% of the world's population, they perform 2/3rd of world's work hours, receive one tenth of men's income and own 1% of world's property". Therefore there
is a lot to be done for women's equity and justice so that their dominant role in the economic development is not underestimated.

However a clear vision of an alternative future may speed that turn around and provide nourishments when the going gets tough. Here are some ideas to promote women’s education and empowerment.

- Promotion of education and awareness among men and women.
- Addressing the capacity building need of women, both for skill development and enterprise management to facilitate their economic empowerment.
- Promote involvement of women in decision making through consensus building, developing a system for power sharing and active participation in household decision making.
- Women are marginalized in decision making due to lack of experience in prevailing traditions in society which affects their self confidence and skill. This phenomenon needs to be looked into and remedial measures are to be evolved.
- Some women also find that there is no space for them to perform effectively as decision makers because men dominate. Necessary change in attitude of people in the society is to be instilled.
• In general, education needs to be expanded with special emphasis on female population.

• Women in the field of family planning, domestic hygiene, decision making related to child care, nutrition, household expenses, etc would be more effective than men and hence should be encouraged.

• The enlightened men can offer their help in the empowerment of women.

• It is observed that percentage of higher educated women is low. So attempt should be made to encourage female for higher education.

The remedy for empowerment lies in a strong will power and a gender –just reform in the whole system covering the major issues related to women as their welfare, social-economic justice, education, health and power of taking decisions at household level or outside the home.