Chapter 1

Introduction
Conceptualisation of female empowerment proved to be an overriding issue throughout the seminar. No single definition of female empowerment emerged. Instead, the seminar revealed the complexity of defining empowerment and the need to view it as incorporating many dimensions and facts. There was general agreement that empowerment is about the transformation of power relations; that it includes both control over material resources, and a change in self perception and confidence in one's self, that it can be viewed both as an outcome and a process, and that women's empowerment involves the transformation of power relations at four different levels: the household/family, the community, the markets and the state.

Paula England (conceptualizing women's Empowerment) and Gita Sen and Srilatha Batliwala (Empowering women for Reproductive Rights) in this session, presented empowerment in different contents of power. England focussed on access to resources (i.e., economic resources, favourable laws and institutional rules, favourable socials norms) as the key to power. Sen and Batliwala both emphasized the extrinsic control over resources of women's rights.

In 1913, a young American author and avid supporter of women's suffrage in his country wrote a book entitled *Women as world Business* in which he said." The idealism of women is one that works itself out through the materials of workday life, and which seeks to break and remake those materials by may of fulfilling that idealism... Women as reconstructor of economics, women as political agents of enormous potency, women as worker, women as organizer of the forces of labour-the real women of today and tomorrow."
Despite progress, gender disparities persists

The last half of the 20th century saw great improvement in the absolute status of women and in gender equality in many parts of the world - with respect to schooling, health status, labour force participation and wages. Despite the progress, however, significant gender inequalities in rights, resources and voice persist in all developing countries.

For example: -

- In no region do women and men have equal rights. In a number of countries women still lack independent rights to own land, manage property, conduct business or even travel without their husbands consent.

- Women continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources, including land, information and financial resources.

- Despite considerable increase in women's education relative to men, women continue to have limited opportunities and earn less than men in labour market - even when they have the same education and work experience as men.

- Women remain vastly under represented in policy and policy making. They hold less than 10 percent of the seats in parliaments in most regions and less than 8 percent of government ministerial positions.

When women and girl bear the most direct and severe costs of these inequalities, the costs cut more broadly across societies, ultimately harming everyone. Among the poor, these disparities contribute to significant risk and vulnerability in face of personal or family crisis and during economic shocks.
Gender inequalities tend to be greater among the poor

One of the striking patterns from data across countries is that gender disparities, especially in basic indicators of well being and development, are greatest on average in poorer countries. And within countries, these disparities tend to be greatest among the poorest households.

Philosophically, one can approach the issue of gender in development from at least three perspectives: equality, empowerment and development effectiveness. The first view stresses equality as the basis of the social contract: every body male or female, should be treated equally in the economy, in politics, under the law and in society. The second argument is derived from the notion of empowerment and the concept of "development as freedom". Development is about expanding the choices and control that people have over their own lives.
From this perspective, stressing gender means emphasizing that empowering women, as well as men, is central to development.

The third approach, argues that gender concerns have an impact on development effectiveness. Although narrower than the other two perspectives this argument may serve to persuade those who are skeptical about the role of gender in development and policy making. Five years ago in Beijing, the Neo Forum an women organised of series of panels around five themes that were identified as the global forces with the greatest impact on the human community, especially women. These forces were the globalisation of the economy, including the impact of the technological revolution on work; threats to peace and human security, including the effects of militarization, violence and poverty; approaches to governance, including questions of citizenship and political participation, the rise conservatism in its various forms - religious, nationalist, racial/ethnic and homophobic; and the globalisation of media, culture and communication. Panelists spoke of the erosion of such rights resulting from the wide range of negative circumstances now facing women. The two important areas in which women and the poor are trying to engage in local budgeting and auditing are decentralised government and the implementation of centrally funded safety-net programs such as food subsidy systems and employment generation schemes. Auditing government spending at the at the local level enables citizen to witness and comment upon the direct links between planning and the actual implementation of public policies. Local level auditing contributes to more gender and poverty sensitive planning and policy implementation in that it makes it easier to pin-point both poorly targeted spending and outright corruption.

The gender impact of transition differs by country and regions. In general, there is evidence that in most countries women take over a
disproportionally high share of costs of systematic changes while their access to opportunities remains low. However, the lack of opportunities has also devastating effects on many men especially those with narrow technical skills. In many declining regions, including one company towns and rural areas, jobs are different to find even for young men, leading to anti-social behaviours such as drinking drug use, crime and domestic violence.

In transition economics, women have limited impact on establishing new laws, institutions and policies as they remain vastly underrepresented in new decision making structures, especially at national level. The share of women in parliaments varies, with few exceptions between 1.5 percent to 15 percent of all seats. Women's losses in the labour market have been very high in a number of countries and the erosions of the welfare system of the past has required that women play a much bigger role in performing caring functions. Although the full extent of female poverty is difficult to evaluate due to the lack of data, deep cuts in women's employment and income, lower wages, dependency on shrinking family benefits and increasing costs of living and raising a family strongly suggest that poverty among women is widespread. The reversal of these negative trends in gender equality is crucial in terms of respecting human rights of individuals. Engendering transition policies is also necessary to fully use human potential which is a key factor in economic growth. Gender equality is thus a priority for improving economic efficiency and development prospects.

Indian development planning has always aimed at removing inequities in the process of development to ensure that the fruits of development are an equal privilege at all. In recent years it has become increasingly evident that women are lagging behind a great deal of both
in availing of the benefits of development and as participants in the process of development due to several socio-economic-cultural political impediments. This has became a cause for concern since women number several millions and constitute nearly half of our population.

In the early years of planning the concern for gender took a welfarist perspective which manifested itself in the form of grants, waivers, subsidies and freeships for girls and women in a few relevant programmes. But these concessions did not elicit the required level of participation. In the later half the 1970's the focus shifted from merely welfare to development and greater emphasis on integration of women into the mainstream of social and economic development. In due course many social and economic programmes like Non-Formal Education for Girls, Integrated Rural Development Programme .... were evolved exclusively for women or with a percentage set aside solely for them. The benefits derived from these programme had to be sustained and this was posing a challenge .... studies have shown that particular gender gains in improved livelihood, education nutrition and sanitation are not sustained and easily reserved if the 'strategic need' to give 'women a voice' in the decisions that so directly affects their lives, is not adequately taken care of the strategy in the 1990's has shifted to empowerment, of women and giving them a voice.

Poverty hits women the hardest as they balance means and ends at the household level and many a time skip a meal to let the rest of the household avail of the little that is available. These women are subject to economic and social discrimination, and credit is not easily available them. Millions of our women live in poverty and their social empowerment would have little relevance without first empowering them on the economic front. The World Bank studies have shown that
enhancement of women's earnings would have a major, profound effect on the welfare of the family as a whole since 'increases in women's income result more directly into better health and nutrition for children. Thus, grouping women for economic empowerment is of great importance.

A Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set in 1993 for extending credit with low transaction costs to poor and needy women and women's groups through non-Governmental organisations. At present (as in July, 1996), the scheme is being implemented in the fifteen states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar - Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujrat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal through a net work of one hundred and four Non-Governmental organisations.

The Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) launched in 1995 aims at coordinating and integrating sectoral programmes relevant to women like health, education, water, sanitation, housing and others at local, block and district levels and increasing their awareness and income through group activities and participation with the aim of empowering women. Indira Mahila Kendras should be established at village level and Indira Mahila Block Kendras at Block level for this purpose. The programme would be a centrally sponsored scheme. Non Governmental organisations would also be involved in this process. The programme has been sanctioned for a period of seven years commencing from 1995-96. During the inception year it was to cover two hundred blocks on a pilot basis and a thousand blocks each year in the subsequent years. The Central Government would provide a one time grant of Rs. 5000 to each Indira Mahila Kendra. Further funds provided at block levels would be used for payments of honoraria to individuals who involve
themselves in awareness camps, mobilisation of groups, training group members and functionaries and helping survival of groups through creation of outlets for marketing.

Grouping of women has increased their awareness and eliminated exploitation by the middleman, in the case of 'active' groups. In many trades like weaving, processing food items, giving women access to finance through revolving funds and cheap credit has resulted in women directly procuring raw materials and producing and marketing goods without having to depend on the middleman for raw materials to process on measly daily wages, that too at disadvantageously lower levels for women. Incomes have also increased in the processes studies by the self Employed women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad on the DWCRA groups helped by them in respect of crafts women and gum collectors clearly show that these groups have strengthened women's economic position increased their bargaining powers-self sufficiency and thereby social status. Women are held in esteem now and men have become more cooperative on the domestic front and even help women in fuel and fodder collection. Women in turn feel more confident and have a sense of belonging. These self help groups are a new source of social security with the crumbling of the joint family system. Other field level experiences and studies have clearly shown that despite all its limitations, the groups strategy has empowered women to approach functionaries and banks to their advantage.

Economic security and Rights

Promoting women's Economic Security and Rights

As globalisations continues to influence economic opportunities worldwides, its effects remains uneven, creating both
risks and opportunities for different groups. On one hand, globalisation has generated opportunities for local producers and entrepreneurs to reach international markets in developing and industrialised countries. But, for many poor women, globalisation has intensified existing inequalities and insecurities, often translating into the loss livelihoods, labour rights and such social benefits as the right to organise (Progress of the World's women 2000). The use of information and communication technologies is facilitating information and knowledge sharing and reducing the cost of conducting business globally. However, poor women have tended to be the least able to seize opportunities and are the most likely to suffer from the rapid changes societies undergo. The gains accompanying globalisation are mainly concentrated in the hands of those with higher levels of education and with greater ownership of resources and access to capital.

At the same time, there are numerous proposals and commitments that demonstrate a growing awareness about the importance of ensuring that poor countries and communities can benefit from globalisation. Member states of the United Nations have endorsed the Millenium Development Goals of halving extreme poverty by 2015 and of achieving gender equality. Social movements are fueling increased global networking, civil society activism and consumer awareness. Women's organisations and networks are taking on issues of economic justice and rights to influence economic policies and decisions at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Giving these trends and challenges, UNIFEM is seeking now and innovative ways to promote women's economic security and rights and contribute to the eradication of feminised poverty. Women's economic security and rights means more than helping women find jobs. It means improving the power relationships in a women's home in her
community and in the market place so that she can take advantage of
growing international markets. It means ensuring that women have
equal access with men to the increasing range of technological options
for production and are not excluded from the latest technological
advances. It means changing policies and legislations to ensure women
can exercise their right and benefits from economic development.
Ultimately, it means helping women lift themselves and their families
out of poverty.

To support women's economic security and rights we must focus on

1) Engendering macroeconomic frameworks and building capacity
of countries to manage of globalisation and economic transition
from the perspective of poor women.

2) Promoting enabling institutional, legal and regulatory
environments for women's equal ownership and access to
economic resources and assets such as land, finance and property.

3) Strengthening women's economic capacity and rights as
entrepreneurs, producers and home-based workers.

4) Bringing a gender analysis to economic policies and the
distribution, use and generation of public resources by means of
gender responsive budget analysis.

The finance minister in his budget speech of 2000-01 had announced that the year 2001 will be observed as "women Empowerment Year". He had also announced setting up of a Task Force to chalk out specific programmes for observing the year 2001 as a women Empowerment year.
The announcement has been made in the context of an urgent need for improving the access of women to national resources and for ensuring their rightful place in the mainstream of economic development. The government is committed to improve the status of women in India and towards this end, apart from the constitutional guaranteed; several schemes and programmes have been planned and executed from time to time. The declaration of the year 2001 as the "Women's Empowerment Year" is therefore significant as it reiterates the Government's commitment to bring about equality for women in all walks of life.

The objective of the women's Empowerment Year is to create large scale awareness with the active participation of women themselves. Women used to have control of their lives in order to be physically and mentally healthy. Poverty, gender power relations, gender discrimination and violence against women as the main social determinants of women's mental health have reduces this control and thus these factors need to be urgently addressed. Central to women's NGO work in Asia and the pacific for the last two decades is the goal of improving women's mental health and well being. Based as the experience of the women's movement and women NGOs' provision of crisis services for women, women NGOs know that women suffer extensive obuse, suffering and happiness.

Now that the world Health organisation (WHO) and government had acknowledged in 2001 that mental health is a neglected but a priority public health problem, it is critical that women NGOs' perspectives and women's experiences are taken into account as key stakeholders' views in designing mental health policies and services. There is well documented research evidence that women experience
psychological distress and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety because of their subordinate social position and gender roles. Women affected by violence may fall several forms of psychological distress simultaneously, for example depression. Post-traumatic stress disorder and panic disorder as well as somatic or physical complaints.

Women comprise 70 percent of the world's poor, head most single-parent families, have most responsibility for child rearing, suffer the consequent over work and experience more domestic violence and sexual abuse. Depression and anxiety are much more common in women than men. Women particularly at risk are those who poor, migrant, indigenous, young with preschool children and are family caregivers.

In recent years these has been an increased need for gender-based data to plan and implement gender-sensitive development programmes. At present, conventional data sources do not have the comprehensive framework to generate gender-based data. In addition, whatever data is available is difficult to access. The government of Gujrat is committed to integrating gender development concepts in programmes and projects in order to create needs based programmes for gender equality. In this respect, the need for easy access to gender-related data with a "one-window approach" was expressed. In view of this critical need, the commissionerate of women and child Development (CWCD), Gujrat initiated the process of compiling available data to provide easy use friendly data access. In this endeavour, the centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA) developed strategies, activities as well as the concept and contributed relevant case studies with the objective of providing qualitative data on gender and development issues. In continuation, a state-level meeting was held on 7 December to get feedback from NGOs and
Empowerment is the capacity of women to increase their self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources [Moser in Rowlands, Jo, 1997, Questioning Empowerment working with women in Handuras, United Kingdom : Oxfam].

Globally and for the Asia and Pacific region, the social change of societies modernising, family ties becoming less supportive, migration becoming more common, work becoming more demanding, global culture becoming more influential and more relative poverty, are leading to negative consequences for people's mental well-being. Unfortunately, the model of globalisation and development is not increasing society's experience of satisfaction and happiness. For the future, the WHO warns that one in four people will be affected by a mental disorder at some stage in their life on top of these general social determinants, women experience almost double the incidence of depression and greater anxiety than men. Theories on depression point very strongly to the overwhelming significance of severe life events and difficulties especially those involving loss, humiliation, extrapment and a sense of lack of control and inferiority. Women's social status, greater poverty and subordinate gender roles thus place them at greater risk of such sadness loss of confidence and self esteem and less energy.

The levels of violence against women in a society are key indicators of the extent to which gender equality exists in the society and the family. Levinson, who researched 179 societies, found a direct relationship with less violence in societies in which there was more equal value of men and women.
Indicators of wellbeing

- Extent of women's satisfaction overall with their lives.
- Extent women feel in control of decisions regarding their lives.
- Extent women's experience of joy and happiness of life events.
- Extent women are free from abuse by an intimate partner, sexual coercion and harassment.
- Extent of women's control, choice and pleasure of their own sexuality. What is globalisation? Is it merely a buzzword or a meaningful concept of theoretical enquiry? What is new about globalisation? When one looks at the maze of literature on globalisation, one finds that the interpretative context of globalisation has been the fast changing world events in the last one and half decades pointing towards the globe as an inclusive single place. However, a close look at its various conceptual constructions reveals that globalisation is beset with the problems of theoretical inadequacies. Current formulations of globalisation include several antithetical and mixed concepts such as homogenisation, differentiation, hybridisation, plurality, localism and relativism and also the mixed concept like "globalisation". The process of globalisation has also been perceived as a corollary of advanced modernisation, modern capitalism or imperialism.

The roots of newly emerging forces of globalisation have been traced in specific economic and political developments in the late 1980s or early 1990s. These events include the end of cold war, dismantling of state socialism in the USSR and the collapse of the Berlin wall all that marked the victory of the western liberal economic thoughts. "As a result" argues G. Thompson, "in the early 1990s, everyone wanted to
imitate the west, adopt its institutions, and its Philosophy, privatise state industries, deregulate and reduce government expenditures. In the 10 years from 1988 to 1998 almost all governments in the world, regardless of ideology, downsized their activities while private sector expanded theirs thus gradually replacing governments as major economic players on the world scene. All this has created new markets (service, financial and consumer), new actors (MNCs, WTOs and international NGOs regional blocks and policy coordination groups such as G-7, G-10, G-22 and OECD), new rules and norms (individualised liberalism, democracy, human rights movements. Consensus on global environment and peace and multilateral agreements such as Intellectual Property Rights) and new faster and cheaper means of communication channels such as internet, cellular phones, fax-computer aided design etc.

Regardless of the problem of its conceptual construction and debates over its newness, globalisation is increasingly viewed as the only explanatory tool for the analysis of almost all the current social and economic issues.

Globalisation can then be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such happenings may move in an adverse direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space.

While the logic of economic globalisation follows the logic of capitalism, the main lines of sociological explanations of globalisation are drawn from the perspective of modernity and its various aspects
such as reflexivity, risks and culture. Globalisation as a dependent variable of modernity.

Globalisation is almost akin to culturisation of social life. It is the realm of culture rather than economics or politics that is potentially more powerful to define the modes of globalisation.

The idea of empowerment has taken a hold over the minds of increasing number of persons in the last few years. It is now widely employed in the press, on television and in political, academic and even legal circles. There is talk about the empowerment of the poor, of backward communities of women and of various other disadvantaged sections of society. Empowerment is seen by many politicians, publicists, social activities and a growing section of the intelligentsia generally as the only effective answer to oppression, exploitation, injustice and other maladies, with which our society is beset.

The idea of empowerment contains exciting possibilities. It seems somehow to fit our present Indian reality particularly well. But in its current, widespread use, the idea is new and as with most attractive ideas that are new, it means different things to different persons. It bears the risk of being put to too many uses by too many persons to serve the requirements of systematic social analysis.

Empowerment is about social transformation; it is about radical social transformation; and it is about the people - ordinary, common people rather than politicians, experts and other socially or culturally advantaged persons. Above all it is about power, although the concept of power contained in it is generally left unspecified. Empowerment is both a means to an end and an end in itself. The term adapts itself differently situations and its signification is both variable and fluid.
The idea of empowerment may be involved in virtually any context: in speaking about human rights, about basic needs, about economic security, about capacity building about skill formation or about the conditions of a dignified social existence. It is well known that our constitution has created many rights for all members of society, irrespective of their social or economic standing.

When defining and understanding female empowerment power is the central word from which the definition and understanding have to depart. The power structure in which to intervene to empower women must be known to be able to create a sustainable change.

The theoretical framework departs from Marxist theory by looking at historical processes of how the power relations have been set up. Access and control over certain resources makes some groups gain control over others in the society. However the need to move beyond the Marxist theories, which focuses on the control over material resources, productive resources and human resources is clear. The control over the intellectual resources such as knowledge and information and also the capacity to have ideas and think in new ways, gives a great deal of power. In South Asian context the significance of intellectual resources is even greater, because the feudal system and the caste system denied education and intellectual resources which might help them challenge social relations in which they are trapped.

Merely access and control over resources do not explain the persistence control over power relations. It is necessary to go beyond the resources themselves to the more complex dimension called ideology in order to understand the power relations. Ideology is the broad term used to signify the value systems, attitudes and beliefs which surround power relations. The term ideology can make us understand
why changes in resources do not necessarily lead to changes in for instance gender relations. The whole element of ideology seem to explain why even when women are bringing in the bulk of women are bringing in the bulk of resources they continued to uphold male power and continued to participate in their own subordination. The ideology is deeply embedded in the consciousness of women.

The family - the last frontier of patriarchy

When women get organised and raise their consciousness about their disempowerment, and the their critical understanding to organise themselves and struggle for greater access to resources there are very few problems from the men. The problems come when the women challenge practices, within the home and men's control over them. Force and violence or threat of force and violence is deeply internalised in women in the South Asian Society and is the outer boundary which perpetuates existing relations. Internal control is exercised by women out of fear for that force if they go beyond certain boundaries. When women get organised and raise their consciousness about their disempowerment and use their critical understanding to organise themselves and struggle for greater access to resources there are very few problems from the men.

Various institutions and structures in the society such as the family, the educational system, the religion and several others as well as the social, economic, legal and political structures constantly reproduce these power relations, because inherent in these institutions and structures in this ideology. The ideological element is embedded in the institutions and structures, therefore they reinforce the ideology and through this inequitable access and control over the resources.
Then, what is empowerment if this is power? Empowerment is a process which changes existing power relations by addressing itself to the three dimensions material, human and intellectual resources. It is a process which must challenge and change ideology, the set of ideas, attitudes, beliefs and practices in which gender bias or social bias like caste, class, regionalism and communalism are embedded. The failure to address the ideology makes many empowerment programs ineffective in really changing gender relations in the long term. Empowerment processes must of course also change power relations through redistribute resources, by giving people much more equal access and control over sources. And since the ideology is embedded in institutions and structures it must work to transform these institutions and structures. If not, the gender contact is rethought, particularly at the household level, the ideology will keep on influencing.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic change

At essential factor emerging logically from this analysis is that empowerment has to operate at two levels. There has to be an extrinsic process where things in the outside environment are changed, by which is meant women's greater control over resources. But just as important and much more critical is the intrinsic process, the change of the ideological environment. There is a need to increase women's self-confidence. This make women gaining strength and motivation to sustain their empowerment. The women's image of themselves understanding of their capacities have to change otherwise they are conditioned from birth to uphold male power, privilege and prestige.

The change in the intrinsic level is critical in any process of empowerment. In practice, you cannot separate the two levels, extrinsic and intrinsic, they are best addressed in an interwoven way.
With an example from South Asia, women always say that "the men do all the work that is why they need to have all the prestige." Through a simple exercise where the women list when they do and what the men do during the day it becomes obvious that this not is the case.

Women also say "what do we know, we are just ignorant women". The activists then make an exercise where two teams one with women and the other with activity.

The 1994 International conference on population and Development placed issues of gender at the centre of discussion of population and development (United Nations 1995). The leading theme of the conference was that, in less developed countries, higher levels of gender equity are a necessary component in the achievement of lower fertility. In apparent contradiction with the 1994 ICPD, postulated that every low fertility in advanced countries today is the outcome of a conflict or inconsistency between high gender equity in individual-oriented social institutions and sustained gender inequality in family oriented social institutions (McDonald 1997). The implication is that higher levels of gender equity in family oriented social institutions are necessary to avoid very low fertility. Thus, one hand, a higher level of gender equity in social institution is claimed to lead to lower fertility, while on the other hand, a reorientation of social institutions towards a higher level of gender equity is claimed to prevent very low fertility. What do you mean by women Empowerment. Empowerment is both a process and a goal.

An understanding of empowerment is difficult, it not possible, without an understanding of power. Many of the authors who have wrestled with the implications and components of empowerment come back to discussions of power. They stress that power can be understood
in many different forms and that it has different dimensions. They tend to argue for a vision of power that moved beyond the 'zero-sum' definitions common in many dimensions of international and state to state relations (Bridge 1997; Rawlands 1997; Rao et al. 1999). The zero-sum view of power (if A has more power, then B has less) was a dominant paradigm in international relations theory for decades. Many definitions of power central on the ability of A to influence B or get B to act in a way that B might not normally respond.

Feminist discussions of power argue the consideration of other types of power including power to (productive power which creates new possibilities without domination); power with (the ability of a collective or group working to achieve a goal that would be impossible for individuals) or power from within (the uniqueness or strength within each person).

Women's empowerment should be understood in a "rational context" - in other words, the obstacle to women's empowerment can not be understood without a clear vision of the relationships, roles, responsibilities and inequalities between women and men. This is not the same as putting forward a simple dichotomy that sees women as 'good' or 'oppressed' and men as 'bad' or the 'oppressors'. The focus on gender relations and inequalities calls for a much more specific and nuanced analysis that looks at both the divisions and connections between and among women and men.

Empowerment is not something that can be "done" to people, rather women need to be the agents of their own empowerment. Outsiders and outside organisations can help create the conditions favourable to women's empowerment and they can support processes that work in these directions.
Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control and to transformative action (Karl, 1995).

Empowerment is "the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power". "The goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology ..... to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination, and social inequality .... and to enable poor women to gain access to and control over, both material and informational resources." (Batliwala, 1994).

It is important to consider which of the strategies developed and used by women have empowered them. The strategies considered effective are those which increase the quality of women' s lives by enabling them to contribute to the decision - making processes in their communities and societies, to achieve a more equal status with men, and to participate in changing their environments in the direction of greater social justice and democracy (Bystydzienski. 1992).

**Different Dimensions of Empowerment**

**Personal**: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internationalised oppression.

**Rational**: developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationships and decisions made within it.

**Collective**: where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone. This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on cooperation rather than competition (Rowlands 1997).
Globalisation refers to the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the states and societies which make up the present world system. It describes the process by which events decisions and activities in one part of the world come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe. Globalisation has two distinct phenomena. Scope (or stretching) and intensity (or deepening). On the one hand, it defines a set of processes which embrace most of the globe or which operate world wide the concept therefore has a spatial connotation. On the other hand it also implies an intensification on the levels of interaction, interconnectedness or interdependence between the states and societies which constitute the world community. Accordingly, alongside the stretching goes a deepening of global processes.

In short, globalisation is a process leading to the structural transformation of firms and nations. It represents a discontinuity in the process of internalization in the sense that it creates new and deeper cross-border relationships and dependencies.

A Framework for Globalisation Processes
To structure discussion, we propose a framework in which globalisation processes are treated as exogeneous variables that impact firms and governments, thereby creating incentives to respond to them.

On a positive note, there have been broad improvements in the conditions of daily life for many of the world's women. Women's and girls' education rates have shown considerable improvement, as have literacy rates. More women have the anatomy and opportunity to work for wages.

Empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). It means not only greater extrinsic control, but also a growing intrinsic capability - greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology. Geneine empowerment includes both these aspects and can rarely be sustained without both. A development programme that changes women's control over resources must also build their confidence in themselves, if women are to have the resilience and motivation to retain and build on that control. Vice versa, programmes that change awareness without leading to greater access to material resources can lead to frustration and high drop out rates. It is important to recongnize that neither aspect leads automatically to the other; a programme that starts with one aspect may well have to work consciously to develop the other. The absence of this recongnition is often a major flaw in programmes for improving health services that emphasize the improvement of infrastructure in a community without paying adequate attention to the processes by which the girls and
women of that community can gain the confidence to use the improved facilities.

The role of the state and civil society in empowering women

We have argued that gender power relations are constructed in the family and community and are then replicated and reinforced in the economic, political and legal structures and institutions controlled and mediated by the state and the market. It is also apparent that both the state and civil societies have a critical role to play in empowering women at different levels.

The role of the state

We have contended that experiences from different parts of the world suggest that women's empowerment processes often take the form of social movements located within communities and that the intrinsic component of empowerment is critical - viz, raising the consciousness of oppressed women themselves to initiate and lead struggles for change within their own contexts and according to their own priorities. But it is also evident that the state can and often must create certain enabling conditions which support, reinforce and match grass roots efforts by women for their empowerment. This is not deny the possibility that economic or other changes by themselves may sometimes create an enabling environment for women's empowerment. But it is precisely because the state can play such a critical role in empowering women that women's advocates have devoted years of effort to campaigns and advocacy for changes in laws, government policies and programmes and even formal information systems. This was both an implicit and explicit recognition that the state has a responsibility to legislate and protect certain formal rights and
entitlements for women, so that grounds well for change does not meet with resistance from state-mediated structures like law and policy.

Thus, the process of women's empowerment requires two synergistic processes: social change agents and the women of their constituencies working at different levels to renegotiate gender-power relations, and the state working to facilitate and legitimize women's entry into new spaces. The role of the former is to raise consciousness, motitive, and organize women and engage in struggles for change at various levels. The role of a state genuinely committed to gender equality, on the other hand, lies in creating conditions that enable this process. In other words, the state must create a kind of sanction effect, which both accelerates the momentum of and absorbs the thrust for change emerging from the ground.

Macro Context (level - 2)  

Wife's individual-level characteristics (level - 1)  

Wife's household 

Anatomy wife's decision - making inputs wife's material contribution  

Context Gender 

Equity  

Socio-economic characteristics Education Engaged in modern work as paid employee  

Reproduction 

Demand for children use of modern contraception procontraception  

Control variables Age No. of live children  

Unmeasured variables

Model of linkage between gender context and reproduction
The economic reform agenda in the global perspective is dominating the socio-economic culture scenario in recent years. The process of economic reforms, more community referred as 'globalisation', is affecting practically each country in the world in some may or the other although all the countries have not embraced the process very willingly. Strachan (2001) has identified three ways of involving countries into the process of globalisation - voluntary, debt/financial crisis and by force, India, where the reforms by force, India, where the reforms were formally initiated only a decade back, possibly falls under the second category.

Whatever may be the force behind, the process has affected all spheres of socio-economic structure in India. Higher economic growth was achieved in the initial years, but its effects on income distribution could not be avoided. Impacts on public sector activities are also significant. This has affected operations of economic development programs as well. Traditionally, the development programs in India were primarily conducted by the public sector. Effectiveness of most of such programs has been questioned with increasing importance on accountability under the process of economic reforms, situation has started changing. Participatory approach is gaining higher acceptance. Their roces in success of development programs are being accepted more widely.

Nature and operations of economic development programs targeting women in particular, are also changing under the overall impacts of economic reforms in India. Improving empowerment of women, one of the major targets of economic development programs, is highly dependent on accountability and participation. Non-government sectors are now increasingly being recongnised for these two special
features. Thus, the non-government sectors are becoming more and more involved in the process of economic development programs.

'Empowerment' has been a catchword now in the world of the economic development analysis for women. Empowering women in the development process has been one of centre concerns of almost all development strategies and programs related to women's development. Women suffer from different types of powerlessness in social and economic sphere of life. The lack of power or disempowerment reflects in their less educational level, less income, less control over their own income, less bargaining power in selling their own produce and labour, less participation in decision making body, less access to production inputs and resources and employment opportunity than men. This vulnerable situation resulted in an overall dependency of women on their male kin through their life cycle all over the world, particularly in developing countries. The dependency makes them as a burden of a family and lowers their value of life in some of the developing society development practioners are concerned to raise their empowerment level, which make women capable to challenge their dependency or oppressive situation in the family and society.

Development practitioners have been debating over to finding the best way by which they can increase the empowerment level of women. Some studies argue that income generation activities of poor women help them to raise their overall status in a family and society (Kandiyoti, 1988; Buvinnie, 1987). Some studies find no positive result in the empowerment level of women even after they are economically empowered. Some studies in South Asia find that economic empowerment has been the entry point for overall empowerment of women if they are organised under a common plat form (Carr et al., 1996)
The word 'Empowerment', according to Grosset Webster dictionary indicates "the situation of authority or to be authorised or to be powerful". In other words, "Empower" means to authorise, so "Empowerment" is a process, which gives women power or authority to challenge some situation. In the case of women's development issue Empowerment of women is a process nourished by development policies and programs that could enable women to get enough strength to challenge their submissive social condition or status. The definition of empowerment according to the concept of UNDP (1993) include the expansion of choices for women and an increase of ability to exercise that choices when women are empowered.

This definition has two parts: a) Expansion of different choices, and b) Women's ability to exercise those choices.

According to this definition, improvement in women's access to economic opportunities through credit and employment program could expand their choices to take over. Health and education related program could enhance their capability to take advantage of those choices.

The two elements in the definition of empowerment are not separate issue but interrelated. It is perceived that when a development program increase women's choices of employment by providing credit facilities, it expands choices before them and should raise also their ability to exercise those choices. Again programs or actions those attempt to strengthen women's capacity to choose or capacity to exercise their choices can expand their choices also. For example, schooling program for women should both increase their voice in the family and the range of job options open to them (Mehra, 1997).
However academicians are arguing over what actually should be the nature of development program which would increase the power of exercising ability of women or empowerment of women by which they could control their own life.

Gender Empowerment has been recognised as a key to the improvement of the women in developing countries. One of the main means for gender empowerment is education to women so that they utilise their qualification to gain employment, which in turn will lead to economic independence. Increase of one's educational qualification leads to enlargement of the endowerment factor, which is a part of Amartya Sen's work. However, Sen's theory of exchange entitlement does not fully take into the account the various social and institutional factors, which hamper exchange.

**Sen's Exchange Entitlement, Endowment and Poverty Relationship:**

A Brief Review

The entitlement relations as proposed by Sen (1981) is one kind of ownership relation which could be obtained by the following four methods: Trade entitlement, production based entitlement, own-labour entitlement and inheritance or transfer entitlement. One can exchange for other things what one owns. This exchange can take place either through trading, production or a combination of the two. *The set of all the alternative bundles of commodities that a person can acquire in exchange of what he or she owns may be called the 'exchange entitlement' of what he or she owns.*

The concept of entitlement is an advanced application of modern set theory with 'exchange entitlement mapping as the relation which mathematically specifies the set of exchange for each ownership bundle. The Exchange Entitlement Mapping' or E-mapping, as set out...
by Sen originally (Sen, 1981), in short helps to identify whether a man or a woman will be exposed to starvation; in other words whether the exchange entitlement for his or her ownership could provide him or her with enough food. E-mapping specifies the exchange entitlement set of alternative commodity bundles for each endowment bundle.

The entitlement set of a person depends on two parameters, the endowment of a person (the ownership bundle) and the exchange entitlement. The set of all such available commodity bundles in a given economic situation is the exchange entitlement of his endowment.

Apart from the endowment or ownership factor, the key determinants of a person's welfare is his or her exchange entitlement. For example, labour is the natural endowment factor for most people, a part of the endowment set for them. However, the key factor for his/her welfare is whether he or she can find employment (this is whether he or can exchange their endowment, or exchange entitlement), and if so, for how long and at what wage rate.

The exchange entitlement varies from person to person, based on his or her economic class structure as well as the modes of production of the particular economy. Even with similar endowment bundle, the exchange entitlement will very depending on his or her economic prospects. For example, two people with same educational qualifications, in rural and urban areas will have different exchange entitlements. One of the main causes of rural urban migration is based on the entitlement exchange factor. One of the main factors in exchange entitlement differential is the gender factor. The gender factor, generically speaking, opens up a whole array of issues which have not been fully accounted for in Sen's theory of entitlement exchange.
With the gender issues now prevalent, and being one of the core issues of development and the theory of entitlement. A host of issues come into play when we want to decide the factors of exchange entitlement of women. The issues are widely divergent, ranging from property rights to social customs, to gender empowerment measures for women's entitlement factors, to institutional and educational issues.

One of the main endowment factors in today's world is education, which is supposed to help gain employment. The indicators for development as prescribed by World Bank and United Nations take into account the gross primary enrollment ratio for that purpose. However, education itself in the endowment set of a female doesn't necessarily improve her chances for exchange entitlement because of various social and institutional factors which are related to traditional and cultural ideology. The ideology of seclusion plays a pivotal role in significantly reducing gainful employment for educated women in rural sector of India.

Due to traditional custom of getting married in the right age, which is quite early, importance of getting a job takes a backseat. Primary surveys have been conducted in the rural hinterland of India to investigate whether increasing the endowment factor, by way of education to women, will lead to higher exchange entitlement. The surveys conclude that social custom, institutional impediments and ideology of seclusion are the main obstacles in the entitlement factor.

Some Comments

This endowment can lead to entitlements which when exchanged can lead to the removal of poverty and improvement in the socio-economic status of the individual on the assumption that there are no institutional deterrents to exchanging entitlements.
Since these deterrents exist, endowment does not automatically lead to this exchange of entitlement.

Women tend to suffer from these institutional impediments more than men do and among women, rural women suffer more than urban women do. Sen was aware of gender differences. In later work (Anand and Sen, 1995). Sen has mathematically demonstrated that the exchange entitlement factor causes difference between male and female. However, he has not taken into account the institutional impediments, particularly the ideology of seclusion which is the key deterrent to the removal of poverty and empowerment of women in rural India.

**Women's Access to Education Employment and the Force of Institutional Impediments**

**Take the Case of Education**

Education is an endowment which enables a woman to use the skill and knowledge to obtain the entitlements. But due to gender discrimination embodying the 'ideology of seclusion' less attention is paid to and less emphasis is placed on the education of girls and females than on that of boys and males. As a result, females in villages and rural towns do not get the opportunity to acquire the same marketable skill and knowledge as the males. Even if they get the same endowment (education), it does not necessarily improve their entitlement exchange capacity due to institutional impediments although it helps reduce the population growth in the long run by making them aware of the beneficial effects of late marriage, use of contraceptives and of having fewer children. Hence, there is clear distinction between any education and appropriate marketable skills based education.

It is unfortunate that in the literature on women in development and on development studies in general (including Sen's
study) such a distinction does not appear to have been made and the importance of skill based education in women's empowerment has not been discussed. Thus the failure of girls and women in general and of rural girls and women in particular to acquire the appropriate education they choose, stems from the most powerful institutional deterrents called the ideology of seclusion which is the most powerful components of what we broadly term 'cultural impediments'. Furthermore, considerable emphasis has been placed in the literature on primary education being the key to the success of women's empowerment process. Therefore, primary school enrolment ratio has been used as a proxy to test the success of government's primary education programmes. But in India, in rural areas, the actual enrolment ratio in primary schools generally is considerable below the ratio reported in the official statistics. This situation exists due to certain culture impediments which include lack of work ethics, sense of responsibility and duty on the part of teachers which allow them to stay away from school during the school hours for carrying on their private business and on the part of government officials which allow them not to implement the rules and regulations properly and to penalise the teachers. Also even when the teachers are present, they may not be discharging their duties - although the students will pass their subjects. Even when the teachers impart adequate knowledge to their students, the education they obtain is mostly generalist and therefore does not help them in their empowerment process.

It should however, be noted that female teachers possess better work culture, greater sense of responsibility and are more motivated than male teachers. However, in rural areas in India most primary schools are co-educational and are dominated by male teachers.
Parents also do not want to send their children to school due to these above noted factors as well as to the fact that the opportunity cost of sending children to school is loss of family income. These are all part of the same 'cultural impediment' Hence, education does not always lead to the success of women's empowerment process in presence of the cultural impediments. Hence, Sen's theory and other studies on women in development do not seem to have recognised this fact.

**World Bank Study**

A World Bank (1991) study found that the following factors impede women's progress towards achieving higher education:

1. Parental and Social attitudes towards the education of their daughters are important factors in the non-enrolment and higher drop-out rates of female children in families which have very limited income, assets and low rank in the caste and occupational hierarchies. Parents of these girls are illiterate or semi-illiterate agricultural labourers, small farmers and artisan families or are urban slum dwellers working in unorganised sector in low status jobs.

2. Since the level of family income is very low, the children of these families, specially girls, are required to work both within and outside the home. Banerjee's study (1989) found that between 1971 and 1981, there was a sharp increase in female child labour in rural areas. While the absolute number of boys in the rural labour force went down by 8 percent, the number of girls increased by 30 percent.

3. The direct costs of education also deter families from sending their girls to school. Although there is no tuition fee for primary
education in publicly funded schools, other expenses such as cost of books, other learning aids, uniforms and of transport can impose quite a heavy burden on poor families. Although some state-administered programmes offset some of the costs to scheduled castes and tribes, they do not cover all poor families.

4. Another important factor is the social perception about the return expected from girls' education. Since a girl once born will eventually get married, there is no long term return expected from investment in girls' education. Hence, for their future role as mother and unskilled workers, girls require little formal education.

5. Also the way the school system is run does not seem to provide an incentive to parents to send their children to school. Thus inconvenient location of schools, absence of teachers, irregular functioning of schools, lack of basic minimum facilities such as blackboards, benches, table, chair etc. and single teacher school, exert a demoralising influence on parents' mind.

6. Also there is a particular scarcity of female teachers which affects girls' attendance at schools.

The Other Side of the Story

However, extensive fieldwork in rural hinterland and in tribal belts in West Bengal, and private discussions and personal interviews with tribals reveals that there are other forces which work against women's empowerment, but which the World Bank failed to recognise.

Cost of and the Secondary Market for Education

The cost of education is high because there is gross inefficiency in the use of funds. A substantial part of the budgetary allocation to
Education is spent on wages and salaries of academic and non-academic staff in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. A vast proportion of total income of educational institutions is derived from government grants which in 1985-86 accounted for 87.7 per cent of total funds available for expenditure by educational institutions (Government of India, 1995).

Employment

In regard to the questions relating to the issue of employment, 100 per cent of women from every caste agree to the statements as given below:

1. They would like to make their education useful in their single as well as their married life.
2. They consider obtaining employment to be the most important and effective way of making their education useful.
3. They agree to the fact being girls and women, elders will impose the 'ideology of seclusion' on them, as a result job prospects and vacancies do not easily reach them.
4. Social customs prevent them from journeying to distance places in search for employment.
5. Even if they manage to get a job, they might be forced to turn down the offer as their movements are mostly confined to the surrounding of their home.
6. Ideology of seclusion has kept their latent qualities relatively undeveloped and as a result they are unable to follow some independent profession or start some commercial venture.
7. Being female prevented them from taking some job-oriented education instead of generalist education.

It is important to note, that irrespective of high and low caste, all the women agree to the above mentioned points of view. Therefore, increasing their endowment set will not lead to entitlement exchange and removal of poverty until those social and institutional problems are removed.

Social Mobility

One of the first points in social mobility factor is how importantly it is viewed by the educated rural women. In other words is it necessary for them to have the freedom to move freely to meet and communicate with people to utilise opportunities for their development?

Gender Discrimination

One of the main obstacles for women's development is gender discrimination. A number of social and religious customs are very powerful deterrents to women's empowerment. For example marriage without choice, dowry and other limitations on their freedom are the most important hindrance to social and economic progress in the country. 100 per cent of the schedule caste women, 77 per cent of the scheduled tribe women and 93 per cent of the upper caste women agree to this point of view. In total, 89 per cent of all the women surveyed agree to the problems relating to the gender discrimination.

Improvement of women's economic condition is considered to be one of the most important objectives in development issued. Both the World Bank and the United Nations have taken an active interest and participation in various projects trying to improve the economic situation of women. The effort of the United Nations have been reflected
in first constructing the Gender Development Index (GDI) and then the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). Gender Development Index is an extension of Human Development Index which takes into account the gender issues into consideration. Both the GDI and HDI to a large extent is based on Sen's work on endowment and exchange entitlement, therefore they are limited to the same extent as his theory. For example, primary gross enrollement ratio, one of the measurements of women welfare is a part of GDI, which is based on the concept that education will lead to endowment and higher exchange entitlement.

However, social, culture and institutional impediments which are very much country specific, have not been taken into account. For example the Panchayat Raj system in India has been taken into account. For example the Panchayat Raj system in India has been lauded by World Bank as an extension of Gender Empowerment Measure. However, even the empowerment of women could be very much limited due to cultural impediments and ideology of seclusion.

Nevertheless, one thing that has been firmly established is that education is the most important prerequisite for uplifting of the status of women in general and of rural and poor women in particular. Education as prescribed by Sen's theory will certainly increase the endowment set of a women, however, the more important aspect of the theory lies in the exchange entitlement of that endowment. If there is no exchange entitlement for the endowment set of an individual, there will be no economic progress and the poor will remain poor.

One of the biggest cultural impediments to improving women's status the marriage factor. In both the surveys conducted, women prefer very strongly to have a late marriage. They wish to have a late marriage so they can further their career. The second survey
pointed out very strongly that all of them want to get a proper job, however, being female they are automatically subjected to the ideology of seclusion and it is difficult for them to follow some independent profession or start some commercial venture. On these points the opinions are unanimous irrespective of caste and creed.

Another point which became obvious from the two surveys is that although most females prefer to have a late marriage, they are aware of the consequences of late marriage. Late marriage is looked down upon strongly in rural India. If the women are not married at early stage they will be subjected to various type of humiliation including taunting by youth, gossip by neighbours and criticism from elders.

Even the parents are not free from the social pressure which comes as the consequence of late marriage of their daughter. The pressure might become so high, that offspring seems to become more like a burden, to be rid of by a marriage. Under those circumstances marriage of the women becomes perhaps the most important thing in both the girl's and her parent's life.

Both the married and unmarried women are restricted from free movement in the rural hinterland. Even travelling too far to gain education is looked down upon. As a consequence, the prospect of getting a job becomes remote even with proper education. However, in most of the cases the education does not seem to be appropriate due to same problem. For example when a technical qualification is perhaps essential to get a job, the education best suited to social and cultural norms are provided. This way even a graduate degree becomes somewho irrelevant for obtaining a job.