

Chapter - I

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has presented new challenges in the realization of the goal of empowering women and now women empowerment has become the slogan and motto of many social reformers, governmental agencies and voluntary organizations. There is a long cherished wish among all the women to have better avenues in life in order to lead the life in a more fruitful way. However, the concept of women empowerment is a matter of controversy even now. Empowerment is a process of acquiring knowledge and awareness which enable them to move towards life with greater dignity and self assurance. In fact, an empowered woman is a nation's strength. The United Nation's Organization had declared the year 1975 as women's year and the decade 1975-1985 as women's decade on an international level. Many economists and social scientists are willing to unveil many issues related to women. So various studies were conducted and made a consensus that so long as women remain depressed and exploited, no nation can enjoy freedom and justice. It is found that when half of the population is denied the opportunities for utilizing their full potential, the economic parameter like growth, development and welfare remain undefined. So various steps were taken to define the concept of women empowerment and to find out ways through which women can be empowered.

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussions on women political right are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns

worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment of our nation. India is poised to become superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 is fast approaching; it is just 13 years away. This can become reality only when the women of this nation will achieve empowerment. India presently account for the largest number of illiterates in the world.

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has, however, led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demand of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is

yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Something has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economy in the world, it is being hindered due to the lack of women's participation.

1.1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION

The history of Indian women can be divided into three periods i.e. Ancient, Medieval and Modern. The East India Company established its rule over India since 1757, which is called modern period. During this period education of men was modernized and institutions were opened to promote educational growth but nothing was done to promote women education.

In 1858, the British government took upon itself the direct responsibility of the administration. But they did not pay any attention towards the education of women of this country. In 1904, Annie Besant established Central Hindu Girls' School at Banaras and Prof. Karue established SNDT Women's University at Pune for the promotion of women education.

After independence, Government of India introduced some committees and commissions for the development of women education in India, i.e. Radhakrishnan Commission or University Education Commission (1948) Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh Committee (1959), Smt. Hansa Mehta Committee (1962), M. Bhaktvatsalam Committee, Kothari Commission (1964-64), Resolution on the National policy on education (1968), Report of the Committee on the status of women in India(1974), Challenge of Education (1985), National policy on

Education(1986), Programme of Action(1986), and (1992), etc. On the other hand, to develop the primary education and to achieve the aim of universalisation of primary education up to age level 6-14 years, some schemes or programmes like, OBB, DPEP, SSA, NLM, National Programme of Nutritional Support of Primary Education (NPNSPE) or (Mid-Day Meals), RTE Act 2009 and Knowledge Commission etc. were introduced to achieve the national goal i.e. hundred percent literacy. Despite these government efforts to the education, still women are lagging behind than men. Women of India generally remained unlettered and uneducated. As a result of ignorance, women become victims of man dominated society.¹

1.2. HISTORY OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma, Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Sahib Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various

¹ Mukut Kr. Sonowal (2013), "Impact of education in women empowerment: A case study of SC and ST women of Sonitpur District, Assam", IJCAES Special Issues on Basic, Applied & Social Sciences, Vol. III, January 2013.

measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and in fact, the growth of female literacy has been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72% of that of male literacy rate.

1.3. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

1.4. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

Education is a gateway to information, opportunities and empowerment. It is a milestone of women empowerment, because it enables them to respond to the challenges that confront their traditional role and changes their life. Empowerment is an active and multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Education is the first step towards empowerment and the most crucial factor in development of the individual as well as the nation.

Literacy rate in India has risen sharply from 18.3% in 1951 to 64.8% in 2001 in which enrolment of women in education has also risen sharply 7% to 54.16%. Despite the importance of women education, unfortunately only 39% of women are literate among 64% of the man. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. From the fifth five year plan (1974-78) onwards, a marked shift has been witnessed in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level.

When Buddhism spread to India, some world famous educational institutions such as Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshila were established. Research shows that a number of women were enrolled in these temples of learning. These universities flourished from about 5th century to 13th century. In the 11th century the Muslim rulers helped establish universities at Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Women participated in all fields of knowledge like theology, religion philosophy, fine arts, astronomy etc.

1.5. WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the development of women's education and also, the forceful intervention by a bastion of female privilege, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes since independence of our country, the growth of women education is still in the state of an enigma in India for several reasons. The 2001 Census report indicates that literacy among women is only 54 percent. It is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women in India is even much lower than the other countries of the world. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, and so they are easily exploited and remain as a weak and backward force in the societal strata. Moreover education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 54% against 76% of men as per 2001 Census.²

² **Suguna, M (2011)**, "Education and Women Empowerment in India", International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Vol.1 Issue 8, December 2011, ISSN 2231 5780.

TABLE - 1.1
LITERACY RATE IN INDIA

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: *Census of India (2011)*

According to the Table 1.1 the pre-Independence time, literacy rate for women had a very poor spurt in comparison to literacy rate of men. This is witnessed from the fact that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7% to 7.3% where as the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8% to 24.9% during these four decades. During the post-independence period literacy rates have shown a substantial increase in general. However the literacy rate of male has almost tripled over the period e.g. 25% in 1951 and 76% in 2001. **Surprisingly the female literacy rate has increased at a faster pace than the male**

literacy during the decade 1981-2001. The growth is almost 6 times e.g. 7.9% in 1951 and 54% in 2001. From this analyze one can infer that still the female literacy rate (only half of the female population are literates) is wadding behind male literacy rate (three fourth of the male population are literates).The rate of school drop outs is also found to be comparatively higher in case of women. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women dependence on men and to play a subordinate role. The lack of education is the root cause for women's exploitation and negligence. Only literacy can help women to understand the Indian's constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. Thus promoting education among women is of great important in empowering them to accomplish their goals in par with men in different spheres of life.

1.6. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Motivation plays a vital role for being able to accomplish and perform well in education and to improve future life. Maslow's theory of motivation, the needs hierarchy, is used to examine how the women's motivations can be viewed. The concept of empowerment is used to examine if the women are motivated by empowerment. The results of this study show that control over their own life is a primary motivation for the women as well as having an income and a job. The results are connected to previous research showing that the goals of having a stable income and attracting a well-educated partner are

primary motivations. The women are primarily motivated by the higher levels of Maslow's needs hierarchy, i.e. the esteem needs and the study shows that women's motivations can be connected to empowerment. The study also connects Maslow's needs hierarchy and empowerment to development.

1.7. NEED FOR THE STUDY

“Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process”.

- ICPD³ Programme of Action, paragraph 4.2

Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Investing in girls' education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. Investments in secondary school education for girls yield especially high dividends.

Girls who have been educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. However, women's literacy rates are significantly lower than men's level of literacy in most developing countries.

³ International Conference Population and Development.

The education of parents is linked to their children's educational attainment, and the mother's education plays a vital role and, usually having more impact on the children than the father's education. An educated mother's greater influence in household negotiations may allow her to secure more resources for her children.

Educated mothers are more likely to be in the labour force, allowing them to pay some of the costs of schooling, and may be more aware of returns to schooling. And educated mothers, averaging fewer children, can concentrate more attention on each child. Besides having fewer children, mothers with schooling are less likely to have mistimed or unintended births. This has implications for schooling, because poor parents often must choose which of their children to educate.

Closing the gender gap in education is the first priority for any nation for its growth. The 1994 Cairo Consensus recognized education, especially for women, as a force for social and economic development. Universal completion of primary education was set as a 20-year goal, as was wider access to secondary and higher education among girls and women. Eradicating and eliminating the gender gap in education by 2015 is also one of the benchmarks for the Millennium Development Goals.

The men and the women are the two wheels of the society. If one of the two falls defective, the society cannot make progress. Hence we need education for the females as we need for the males.

The female education is highly necessary for the society. Because mothers are the first teachers of the children. They are the first teachers of the future citizens of the country. If the mothers be ignorant, they cannot take proper care of the children. They cannot infuse good qualities in them. Hence, the very foundation of our people will remain weak, if the females will be ignorant the society will lose the services of a powerful part of our society. So, female education is quite necessary for the girls. The women are in no way inferior to men. In western countries the women are writing books, driving cars and aero-planes, running banks and big business firms and doing research in the laboratory. There are women scientists, women officers and women writers. The typewriters, the news agents, the sales agents the commercial solicitors are mostly women. Hence, we cannot decry the women-folk in our country.

Indians are conservative by nature. So, their blind faith and age old superstition stood against the female education. Now, people have felt the virtue of female education. They do not hesitate to send their daughters to schools. Now in India we find women professors, lady doctors, lady scientists, lady politicians and lady ministers. But a large number of women are still in dark. They should be educated in the interest of our national progress.

1.8. SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Viewed from the angle of social feasibility and the present pattern of educational empowerment of women is somehow or other detrimental to the

pace of the growth of economy. Gender equality denotes a study area of society in which women and men enjoy the equal opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of existence. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the allocation of power and authority. They can get equal opportunities for monetary autonomy through work or through setting up businesses and also, they can enjoy equal access to education and they will have the opportunities to develop their personal ambitions. A serious aspect of promoting gender impartiality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing influences, imbalances and giving women more self-sufficiency to manage their own lives. Women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all people who live in the civilized society. Where women's status is low, family size tends to be large, which makes it more difficult for families to be successful in the process of educational growth. Population and development and reproductive health programmes are more effective when they address the educational opportunities, status and empowerment of women.

When women are empowered, the whole families can get advantages, and these reimbursements often have ripple effects to potential generations. The roles that men and women play in society are not biologically determined - they are socially determined, changing and changeable. Even though they may

be acceptable as being required by culture or religion, these roles vary widely by locality and change over time.

Social empowerment means the upliftment of women and also the main fact is that the advancement of our society is associated with a changed status of women. This approach offered a special opportunity to change the lives of women, particularly poor women. Batliwala (1994), a developmental researcher says “women empowerment is the process of challenging patriarchal relationship, distributing power in such a way that women gain greater equality than men”. Goetz (2001) defined women’s empowerment as “weakening the basis of gender subordination”.

1.9. GAPS FOUND

- ❖ The education of women was not in a process of development at the dawn of 19th century. The society had general prejudice against female education. The prohibition against women learning to read was probably due to various causes.
- ❖ Until 1997, the topic of educational empowerment of women did not even see the light of the day which leads to the research gap in this field.
- ❖ It was believed that education was considered rather profane and immoral by aristocratic ladies. There was a very strong social prejudice against the education of women. But there was a small section of women who had received education.

1.10. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Barrier to education in India is the lack of adequate school facilities. Many states simply do not have enough classrooms to accommodate all the school-age children. Furthermore, the classrooms that are available often lack basic necessities such as sanitary facilities and water. In Uttar Pradesh, a recent survey found that 54 percent of schools did not have a water supply and 80 percent did not have restrooms (The World Bank, 1997b). Lack of restrooms can be particularly detrimental to girls' school attendance. In some states, the inadequate supply of classrooms is further compounded by the large increase in the number of school-age children due to high population growth rates. For instance, in 1993, Uttar Pradesh needed to build 284,000 additional classrooms to achieve full enrollment of children age group from 6 to 10 (The World Bank, 1997b). The need for new classrooms will persist as the population continues to grow. On the other hand, in states where population growth rates are low (e.g., Kerala), the number of primary-age children is beginning to decline and state governments can focus on improving the quality of education rather than increasing the supply of classrooms.

Lack of female teacher is another potential barrier to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend schools and have higher academic achievement if they have female teachers. This is particularly true in highly gender-segregated societies such as in India (Bellew and King, 1993; King, 1990). Currently, women account for only 29 percent of teachers at the primary level

(MHRD, 1993). The proportion of teachers who are female is even lower at the university level and the present scenario is alarming at the school. These proportions reflect the historic paucity of women with the educational qualifications to be teachers. However, the proportions are likely to change in the future as women currently account for nearly half of those being trained as teachers. Again there are differences among the states; the states with the highest literacy rates are also the states with the highest proportion of female teachers.

1.11. RESEARCH QUESTIONS RAISED

1. What are the characteristics of women in the study area?
2. What are the factors influencing the educational empowerment of women Manapparai block?
3. State the constraints faced by educational empowerment of women in the study area.
4. How do appropriate measures to overcome the constraints faced by the women in the study area?

1.12. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are framed:

- To find out educated and uneducated women's characteristics in the study area.
- To find out economic and non economic factors which determines the educational empowerment of women in Manapparai Block.

- To find out the constraints faced by educational empowerment of women in the study area.
- To suggest appropriate measures to overcome the constraints faced by the women in the study area.

1.13. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are framed

- There is a positive and significant relationship between the educational status and family condition.
- Women educational empowerment and social factors are positively correlated but the social factors are insignificantly related to the educational empowerment of women in the study area.

1.14. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Empowerment literally means becoming powerful. In that perspective, the empowerment of women and improvement of their status, particularly in respect of education, health and economic opportunities is highly important. Women need to be empowered in order to become strong and ready to take up new challenges for the building up of the family, society and the nation. In fact women empowerment leads to human empowerment. According to Sushama Shay (1998, p. 56), Women Empowerment is a process which helps women to change other women's consciousness through creating awareness.

1.14.1. ANCIENT VEDIC AGE (~1000 BC)

The history of female education in India has its roots in ancient Vedic age.

Maitreyi

The Rig Veda contains about one thousand hymns, of which about 10 are accredited to Maitreyi, the woman seer and philosopher. She contributed towards the enhancement of her sage-husband Yajnavalkya's personality and the flowering of his spiritual thoughts. Yajnavalkya had two wives Maitreyi and Katyayani. While Maitreyi was well versed in the Hindu scriptures and was a 'brahmavadini', Katyayani was an ordinary woman. One day the sage decided to make a settlement of his worldly possessions between his two wives and renounce the world by taking up ascetic vows. He asked his wives their wishes. The learned Maitreyi asked her husband if all the wealth in the world would make her immortal. The sage replied that wealth could only make one rich, nothing else. She then asked for the wealth of immortality. Yajnavalkya was happy to hear this, and imparted Maitreyi the doctrine of the soul and his knowledge of attaining immortality.

Gargi

Gargi, the Vedic prophetess and daughter of sage Vachaknu, composed several hymns that questioned the origin of all existence. When King Janak of Videha organized a 'brahmayajna', a philosophic congress centered around the fire sacrament, Gargi was one of the eminent participants. She challenged the

sage Yajnavalkya with a volley of perturbing questions on the soul or ‘atman’ that confounded the learned man who had till then silenced many an eminent scholar. Her question – “The layer that is above the sky and below the earth, which is described as being situated between the earth and the sky and which is indicated as the symbol of the past, present and future, where is that situated?” – bamboozled even the great Vedic men of letters.

1.14.2. British India

Women’s employment and education was acknowledged in 1854 by the East India Company’s Programme: Wood’ Dispatch. Slowly, after that, there was progress in female education, but it initially tended to be focused on the primary school level and was related to the richer sections of society. The overall literacy rate for women increased from 0.2% in 1882 to 6% in 1947.

In 1878, the University of Calcutta became one of the first universities to admit female graduates to its degree programmes, before any of the British universities had later done the same. This point was raised during the Ilbert Bill controversy in 1883, when it was being considered whether Indian judges should be given the right to judge British offenders. The role of women featured prominently in the controversy, where English women who opposed the bill argued that Bengali women, whom they stereotyped as “ignorant” and neglected by their men and that Indian men should therefore not be given the right to judge cases involving English women.

Bengali women who supported the bill responded by claiming that they were more educated than the English women opposed to the bill and pointed out that more Indian women had degrees than British women did at the time.

1.14.3. Independent India

After India attained independence in 1947, the University Education Commission was created to recommend suggestions to improve the quality of education. However, their report spoke against female education, referring to it as: “Women’s present education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste but often a definite disability.

However, the fact that the female literacy rate was at 8.9% post-independence could not be ignored. Thus, in 1958, a national committee on women’s education was appointed by the government, and most of its recommendations were accepted. The crux of its recommendations were to bring female education on the same footing as offered for boys.

Soon afterward, committees were created that talked about equality between men and women in the field of education. For example, one committee on differentiation of curricula for boys and girls (1959) recommended equality and a common curricula at various stages of their learning. Further efforts were made to expand the education system, and the Education Commission was set up in 1964, which largely talked about female education, which recommended a national policy to be developed by the government. This occurred in 1968, providing increased emphasis on female education.

1.14.4. Current Policies

Before and after independence, India has been taking active steps towards women's status and education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, has been a path breaking step towards the growth of education, especially for females. According to this act, elementary education is a fundamental right for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The government has undertaken to provide this education free of cost and make it compulsory for those in that age group. This undertaking is more widely known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Since then, the SSA has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of Indian education as a whole, including schemes to help foster the growth of female education.

The major schemes are the following:

1.14.5. Mahila Samakhya Programme

This programme was launched in 1988 as a result of the New Education Policy (1968). It was created for the empowerment of women from rural areas especially socially and economically marginalized groups. When the SSA was formed, it initially set up a committee to look into this programme, how it was working and recommend new changes that could be made.

1.14.6. Kasthurba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV)

This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where

literacy level for females is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) females.

1.14.7. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the “hardest to reach girls”. This scheme has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, “model schools” have been set up to provide better opportunities to girls.

A. Importance of women empowerment

Human development encompasses elements that contribute critical issues of gender and development. The dignity and culture of a society can be detected from the status of women in that society. According to Rameshwari Pandya (2008), empowerment has become the key solution to many social problems. Empowerment of women is empowerment of family/household and in turn development of a nation. Empowerment of women leads to benefit not only to the individual woman, but also to the families and community as a whole through collective action for development (2008, p.5).

B. Purpose of Women empowerment

Women must define their own needs and goals as well as strategies. A pre-requisite for women’s participation in developmental process is their

empowerment. Women must exercise full participation in decision making process in all walks of life and fully participate with men in finding equitable and practical solution to issues both in the family and society. It also declared that human rights of women and girl child are inalienable, integral and invisible parts of universal human rights. The first day of the year of Empowerment of women, the national commission for women chairperson Vibha Partha Sarathi said, “the year to come must see women in apex decision making bodies, enter professions that are denied to them so far, recognize their contribution on important and legitimate and help them to fight against disease and deprivation, indignity and inequity”.⁴

Besides using Maslow’s theory of motivation, the concept of empowerment through education is used. Amartya Sen’s book *Development as freedom* highlights that women can be empowered only through education. Further, Sen develops his thoughts about how women are strengthened through education and how this leads to decrease birth rates, which increases young women’s wellbeing (Amartya Sen, 2002, p. 208-209). Education increases the opportunities for their further growth and can therefore be seen as empowering the women force (Tengland, 2008, p. 86).

Empowerment is a concept that is used frequently in development work (Rowland, 2008, p. 77). Research has found that empowerment can be used as a strategy that can lead to improvements in poverty reduction and community

⁴ **Beena Dominic, Dr. C. Amrita Jothi (2012)**, “Education-A tool of Women Empowerment: Historical study based on Kerala society International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 2, Issue 4, April 2012 1 ISSN 2250-3153.

health (Hennink et al., 2012, p. 203). Empowerment can have different meanings in different cultures and context, and its applicability may vary. The term is used in development work, and created in a Western context. Here the term will be used in a Tanzanian context, empowerment can therefore be perceived in differing ways by different actors. I have chosen to use empowerment due to its position in development work, and the positive implications it can have for both individuals and societies.

Concepts of empowerment will function as the theoretical framework. There are different definitions and concepts of empowerment. Autonomy and empowerment are concepts that are similar to each other and used in comparable ways. Different definitions of these concepts are explained in the section that follows.

Jejeebhoy uses the concept *autonomy* and defines it as having control over one's own life. It means being able to affect decisions that have influence on one's life. She uses the definition: "*the ability . . . to obtain information and use it as the basis for making decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimate*" (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 7). She argues that education can increase women's autonomy in developing countries. This in turn affects fertility behaviors. She discusses five aspects of autonomy that are affected by education:

Knowledge autonomy: Education increases women's awareness of the world and different ways of living which affects their opportunities and willingness to question authorities. Values and attitudes are affected by

education and women's increased knowledge improves their self-reliance and they are therefore more confident to question the established order (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 37-41).

Economic and social autonomy, and self-reliance: Women's economic independence increases with education which affects their social status and acceptance. They get more control over economic resources and rely more on themselves rather than on others. Women's control over material resources increases. They are also more likely to rely on their own incomes and savings when getting older. Education increases women's participation in the wage-sector which gives them an independent income (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 50-53).

Decision-making autonomy: Women's voice and participation in decision-making process increases through education, which helps them to ask questions regarding their own well-being and also their families. Woman is more confident to take part in decisions, which includes taking decisions about the size of the family, expenditures and contraception (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 41-45).

Emotional autonomy: The family dynamics can change as a cause of women's education. Education increases women's self-worth and there is a greater intimacy and equal relationship between spouses. Women's loyalties shift to the marital relationship and towards the children rather than to relatives. Their independence from the extended family increases (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 47-49).

Physical autonomy: Education can affect women's physical autonomy in two ways, due to their knowledge about other societies and of the world. First, their freedom of movement increases as a result of their contact with the outside world. Second, educated women are expected to use available services in a greater extent, due to their self-confidence. Educated women are more likely to demand their rights and more confident to communicate with officials and service-providers (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 45-47).

Jejeebhoy presents these aspects of autonomy and states that the literature supports the linkages between education and autonomy. Factors such as gender stratification and patriarchal structures also have an effect on women's autonomy and can therefore limit the impacts of education. The length of the education also affects the impacts of autonomy, and relatively high levels of education often have the most impact on their own lives (Jejeebhoy 1995, p. 36-53). She uses the concept autonomy, which is similar to empowerment. The definitions of empowerment will be examined and compared with autonomy.

Empowerment is strongly connected to power and being included in the decision-making process. People should be able to have access to political structures and formal decision-making. Further, empowerment helps a person to generate her own income which enables to take her economic decisions. In addition to that, it means being able to see one's potential and developing a confidence and also liberates from negative social constructions and, against the oppression of the social evils. One should also be able to influence close

relationships and involved in political structures and together be able to affect the society. Empowerment means being able to affect your situation by understanding it.

McWhirter (1991) defines empowerment as a process which involves powerless people, groups or organizations who get insight in the power relations that affect their life. To get control over their lives, they develop abilities and then utilize this control in their own life with respect for others rights. Finally they help others to achieve empowerment. This can be called a situation of empowerment; if only few steps are fulfilled it is referred to as an empowering situation.

Keller and Mbwewe (1991) define empowerment as when women are able to challenge their subordination. This occurs through a process where women increase their self-reliance when they develop skills to organize themselves to take independent decisions and take control over resources (Rowland, 2013, p.101-107).

Empowerment can be seen as a goal where one's ability to control one's life increases. This includes control over one's income and work, home, leisure, values, health and close relations. It means being able to decide and having opportunity to change and influence some aspects like communication or political actions such as voting. Autonomy is a central aspect of empowerment. Autonomy means to be able to reflect critically and choose one's values and wishes. Autonomy increases the ability to control one's life. Knowledge and

consciousness is another part of empowerment. To be aware of one's situation and knowing one's rights is empowering, as well as learning skills to know how i.e. to fill in forms to lend money from the bank. Self-knowledge is also a part of this, to be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses can help to develop as a person. Self-esteem, how one values one as an individual, and self-confidence, the beliefs about one's capacity to handle situations are other aspects of empowerment. These aspects can increase a person's ability to control one's life. Freedom is another aspect of empowerment, it can be defined as having opportunities in life, to get a job etc. to gain more control over one's life.

To reach the goal of empowerment, an increase in the knowledge aspects, health aspects (autonomy, self-confidence etc.) or the freedom aspect described above have to occur, so that a person gain more control over her life. Control is the central aspect of empowerment in this definition (Tengland, 2008, p. 77-90).

Empowerment can be defined as when persons, societies etc. obtain control over questions that is of most concern for them (Kar, Pascual and Chickering, 1999, p. 3). Kishor (1997) defines female education as a source of empowerment, where empowerment is defined as control. Control defined as "the ability to 'access information, take decisions, and act in their own interest, or the interest of those who depend on them (p.1)" (Sisask, 2001. p. 35-36).

Researchers for USAID examined how rural women in Nepal understood the concept of empowerment. The women defined empowerment as:

- Understanding issues, having knowledge and being literate.
- Making decisions, standing on your own legs, having a job and being able to support yourself.
- Having the ability to help and teach others.
- Having confidence, being able to speak in public surroundings.
- To be able to take distance from domination, especially from men.
- Having good relationships with others and being a leader.
- To be able to move freely (USAID/Nepal 1996, see Moulton 1997, p. 13-14).

Hashemi, Schuler and Riley (1996) developed empirical indicators for empowerment when examining women in Bangladesh and their participation in rural development programs and credit banks. Their definition of empowerment includes:

- Having political and legal awareness.
- Being involved in major decisions with husband.
- Having mobility to be social and doing business.
- Being able to do purchases.
- Being able to participate in political campaigns and protests.
- Being relatively free from domination from the family.
- Having economic security (owning, savings and cash) (Hashemi et al. 1996, see Moulton 1997, p. 14-15).

1.15. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Following are the main limitations of this research work:–

- Due to the vastness of the research topic, it is not possible to cover all the aspects within a limited period. Therefore, the study is strictly conducted only within the Manaparai Taluk of Tiruchirappalli District.
- The study is restricted within economic and educational empowerment of women in Manaparai taluk of Tiruhcirappalli district.
- The study covers only the factors determining educational empowerment and constraints experienced by the women in the Tiruchriappalli district.
- The study covers only rural area of the Manaparai taluk of Tiruchirappalli district.
- The present study is a pioneer research work in the selected study area. Therefore it has got several constraints to obtain reliable data. The validity of the results is subject to recall bias of the respondent's information.

1.16. CHAPTER SCHEME

The thesis is divided into seven chapters including the introduction chapter.

The first chapter includes introductory aspects such as motivation of the study, need for the study, social relevance, research gap, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, hypotheses, theoretical framework for the study area, limitations and plan of the study.

The second chapter deals with the review of literature.

The third chapter brings out the profile of the study area and methods and materials.

Fourth chapter is devoted to the analysis of characteristics of educational empowerment of women in the Manapparai taluk.

The fifth chapter brings out the analysis of factors which are determining the women educational empowerment of women in the study area.

The six chapter deals with the analysis of constraints on educational empowerment of women.

The last chapter furnishes the summary and conclusion.