Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

“When a woman respects herself only then she can earn respect from others”

5.1 Introduction

The search or dream for an alternative social set up that would eliminate conflict and disparity and establish a ‘perfect’ society for all has existed throughout the history of humankind. Plato envisioned a ‘Republic’, Skinner a ‘utopian community’, and Marx hoped for a stateless and classless society. The list of socialist, reformist and revolutionary thinkers and organisations is long and the humankind will be indebted to them forever. But their dream and vision can come true only when there is gender equality in the society and every human being is given its due share irrespective of gender discrimination and this in turn is possible only when we achieve 100 % literacy on this earth.

Nature has gifted every boy or girl with specific unique capabilities and capacities. In comparison to other living beings human child has been gifted with bigger brain to think, reason, comprehend and take a decision for appropriate action. He has been rewarded with moving hands for acting and flexible legs for walking. A student cannot be dictated to accept the diction of the teacher, as an ignorant client of a doctor or a lawyer accepts their advice. Therefore, it is essential to educate the students (boys or girls) in a proper or logical manner and in a congenial atmosphere while teaching, so as to develop their capacities and capabilities. After developing these capacities and capabilities, man and woman become two equal familial social life partners. They perform more or less equal family life roles. They become two inseparable parts of human society and share joys and sorrows together.

Post independence India has made a lot of progress in the field of education. With the changing trends and circumstances, the reforms were carried out in the system from time to time. The British education system was later shaped to match the west and the Indian need. In 1947, a new education policy was formulated as per the aspirations of the countrymen. Due scope and provision was made for the development of women education. Since then a lot of progress has been seen in this field in all parts of the country.

After independence and the formation of the state of Rajasthan, many policies and programmes have been launched to promote women/girls education by the state government.
Due to these efforts the ratio of girls in schools has increased but still lot of awareness is needed in the community and specially the families towards educating their girl child. Rajasthan’s Hindu society has been the most conservative of structures, as far as the social scenario is concerned. The norms and traditions governing the society were so strict that they could not be violated or overstepped by women. There was particular emphasis on women’s adherence to the social customs and traditions, which shaped their behaviour and guided them at every stem. This structure remained very rigid and refused to let any liberal influence penetrate, by the end of the nineteenth century. The social customs, traditions and institutions attracted the attention of British officers. Customs like sati, child marriage, marriage and death expenses, female infanticide, etc. were widely prevalent in the society. Many British officers took an active interest in seeking remedies to cure such ills.

Factors such as age old customs and traditions like purdah, traditional forms of education, marriage, joint family etc. were inimical to the positive influences that were striving to enter this structure. However, the society maintained its conservatism and refused to respond to positive influences which were theoretically operating in all the other sections of society at large.

Despite such negative factors, today we see the State of Rajasthan emerging on an equal footing with the other States of India. Post independence in the last six decades we can see a new society having a new outlook affected by the change. But still to reach the expected level a lot has to be done and then only the dream of UEE could be achieved.

First step towards this achievement is to bring the awareness amongst the society, families and the girls themselves. The following efforts are suggested for the same;

i. try convincing the parents to bring more and more girls to schools, specifically from the rural and the disadvantaged sections of the society;
ii. to communicate with their parents and with them for their retaintion in the schools;
iii. improve their participation in learning processes; and
iv. help them grow up as confident persons with a positive self-image.

5.2 Strategies to Promote Girls Education

Government needs to device the strategies to improve enrolment, retention and participation of girls in schools. Some of the strategies are discussed below, but all these strategies cannot
work in isolation as they are all complementary to each other, therefore they are to be implemented together to make them work successfully.

5.2.1 Gender Sensitization of the Educational System

The entire educational system will have to become girl friendly and will have to create gender awareness in the educational system so that the entire educational environment is sensitive to the special needs of girls.

The Department of education and the ancillary bodies will have to work in close association and collaboration with the MWCD to ensure that the curricula and syllabi are gender sensitive. Our curriculum and syllabi which consists of text books and work books will have to portray the image of the girls in a positive manner reinforcing the social and economic empowerment of women. These images will help to develop and improve the status and self esteem of the girls. Our curriculum should incorporate the issues and problems the society is facing in concern to the women so that these issues could be discussed in the classroom and children could be sensitized towards gender discrimination and the issues of the girls. Some such issues are personal hygiene, early marriage and pregnancy, prevention against abuse, exploitation and violence, HIV/AIDS, modules to enlighten them on the benefits of education, health, hygiene and nutrition, economic empowerment etc. Same procedure should be implemented for the teachers also so that even they could be sensitized towards gender discrimination, the rights of the girl child, social problems faced by them and to provide counselling or help if required.

5.2.2 Flexibility in the Educational System

To increase the retention rate of the girl students in schools we need the following flexibility in the system:

**Clear Progressive Routes:** Educational guidance and counselling should be made available for the girls who are interested in studies so that their educational goals can be clear in their mind and they can choose a proper course of line for themselves.
**Flexible Delivery Models:** Facilitators who are dealing with women’s learning should be flexible in presenting the material; their style of delivery of the teaching material should be creative.

**Time Flexibility:** As women have lot of burden back at home therefore the time of the educational institutions should be flexible to suit their need.

**Accreditation:** Women should be encouraged and motivated by giving credit to the courses they undertake so that they get opportunity of job promotions or further studies in the colleges and universities.

**Modular Courses:** All colleges and Universities should be flexible in allowing the students to undertake the certificate, diploma and degree courses in modules that do not follow each other. This will give freedom to the students to break down the task of getting a degree into modules of their choice and the place they are comfortable.

**Variety of Courses:** For adult women courses should be of varied range like hand crafts, flower arranging etc. This will boast the confidence and self-esteem of women and they will become ready for more challenging courses. As there are multiple intelligence, e.g. mathematical, interpersonal....... courses should reflect this diversity. The curriculum offered to women in educational centers should allow women to map a path through various types and standards of courses, so that they are progressing on a route that will allow each one to achieve her educational goal.

**Honouring Women’s Experience:** Previous experiences of women should be honoured and valued by the facilitators of learning and the new learning should be developed on the previous one. At the same time women herself should also value her experiences and believe in herself.

**Affordable Childcare:** Women having children face lot of problem in pursuing her education, for such women childcare facilities should be made available at an affordable rates.

**Relaxed Atmosphere:** Learning environment for the women should be relaxed and safe.
5.2.3 Role of Teachers in Women Education

5.2.3.1 Awareness Generation

- Teachers should sensitize their nearby community/society about providing equal access and opportunities for growth and development, including education to both boys’ and girls’. They can visit nearby village or town, interact with parents and local community and discuss with them the need and ways to promote gender equality and girls education. They can also take help of drama, radio, and local folk media and can also contact members of Village Education Committee, Mahila Mandals and various NGOs actively working for girls’ education (if any) to organize special enrolment drive such as Ma-Beti Melas for enrolling girls at primary and upper primary levels especially those girls who belong to SC/ST, minorities and other disadvantaged groups.
- Make parents aware about various incentives given by Central/State Governments and NGOs to school going girls especially girls belonging to SC/ST, minorities and other disadvantaged groups e.g. merit scholarships, residential facilities, Balika Shivir, KGBV etc.
- Sensitize parents about health and nutritional requirement of girls as education and development is affected by these factors to a great extent. Moreover, make parents understand that the girls studying at upper primary level (i.e. girls in the age group of 11-14 years) require additional nutrients especially iron and calcium as they have already entered puberty. they can take help of local health worker or doctor in this task.

5.2.3.2 School Curriculum and its Transaction

Once girls are enrolled in the schools, all efforts have to be made;

i. To retain them in schools as nearly 60 percent girls leave schools without completing upper primary education; and

ii. To improve their participation in educational process and their achievement also.

The above said goals can be achieved when the curriculum and the content taught to them is gender friendly therefore, the school curriculum, textbooks, supporting teaching/learning materials, etc. should be free from gender bias and stereotyping (showing men and women in
their traditional roles). For this, women’s contribution should be acknowledged and duly represented in active and unconventional roles.

The National Policy on Education 1986 recommends undifferentiated curriculum for both the sexes; boys and girls in school. As a result we are following common undifferentiated curriculum for both boys and girls in schools till date. Also, the National Policy on Education 1986 and its POA (revised in 1992) emphasized the need to use education for promoting gender equality and for removing gender bias from school curriculum, textbooks, and curriculum transaction.

To make unequal, equal NCF 2005 recommends, “The formal approach, of equality of treatment, in terms of equal access or equal representation for girls is inadequate. Today there is a need to adopt a substantive approach towards equality of outcome, where diversity, differences and disadvantage are taken into account.” It further states, “In order to make it possible for marginalized learners, especially girls to claim their rights as well as play an active role in shaping collective life, education must empower them to overcome the disadvantages of unequal socialization and enable them to develop their capabilities of becoming equal citizens” (NCF 2005, p.6). NCERT is a research cell always writing new set of textbooks on the basis of NCF 2005. Text books are free from gender bias and gender stereotyping but also reflect contribution of women in different walks of life.

5.2.3.3 Curriculum Transaction

Girls from the childhood are taught womanly virtues like keeping quiet, speaking softly, be restrained in the family and be subdued; this develops a low self concept among the girls. This low self concept can be changed in the schools by the efforts of the teachers, their encouragement and attitudewhich in turn will affect the academic performance of the girls. The following steps may prove useful in improving participation of girls in schooling/classroom process;

- We should not segregate boys/girls in the classroom (if you are teaching in a co-educational school) e.g. letting girls sit at one side and boys on the other side of the classroom.
- Have two sets of monitors in a class – a girl and a boy.
• Give opportunities to both girls and boys to participate in all types of activities. Discourage gender-based distribution of roles and responsibilities in school like asking girls to receive a chief guest and boys to demonstrate gymnastics.

• For group activities make group of boys and girls.

• If girls in the class are passive listeners, make special efforts to improve their participation e.g. by asking them to read aloud in class and directing questions at them and encouraging them to answer.

• Avoid gender based allocation of activities under Work Education or work experience.

• Discourage gender based participation of children in games, sports and cultural activities organized in and outside the school.

Gender equality needs to be promoted through transaction of different subject area. Few examples are given below;

Teaching of Language

• Avoid use of sexist language denigrating either sex. Communicate using gender inclusive language in the classroom.

• Use language in such a way that it develops a sense of mutual respect and dignity, cooperation and sharing among boys and girls.

• Do not communicate in stereotypical language of calling boys as strong, intelligent and girls as delicate, emotional etc.

• Encourage children to speak about their personal experiences from home to school giving equal opportunity to girls and boys.

• Teachers may tell true stories of local brave women, educated women, women writers/poetess, women entrepreneur, eminent and talented women using their own resources such as newspapers and life sketches, magazine etc.

Teaching of Mathematics

It is a common myth that Mathematics subject is not for girls, they have no importance of this subject in their life. Another view is that in Mathematics syllabus and its teaching there is no scope of gender discrimination and stereotyping. To break this myth we need to revise our text books and curriculum as well as its delivery procedure by the teachers. While doing so the following points should be kept in mind;
• We do not use male pronouns/pictures to introduce a unit or concept.
• Work at the domestic level is equally important and productive and should be projected (through mathematical problems) as a responsibility to be shared by all members of the family.
• Dignity of work in all walks of life should be reflected through exercises projecting computation of time, labor, and energy consumed at each job.
• Reinforce growing participatory role of women/girls in all works of life. Depict women/girls in non-traditional, new occupational roles such as women as managers, traders, executive, businesswomen, driving their own vehicles, pilots, scientists, industrialists etc.
• Show both women and men in problems/visuals related to money transaction e.g. buying, selling.
• Highlight through mathematical illustrations that both sexes have equal right in the family property.
• Develop decision making competence in both boys and girls equally through teaching of mathematics.
• Through mathematical problems help students understand that female population is less than male population in our country and it is declining in each census.
• At the primary stage children shall comprehend the problems in numbers and by arithmetic computation only.

Teaching of Environmental Studies (EVS)

Environmental studies is integration of nature with human beings allowing the children to interact with social and physical environment as a whole. EVS teaches children to become sensitive towards their life, their rights and duties, caring and sharing, respect for each other, etc. Therefore, while teaching EVS teacher sensitises the children towards promoting the importance of girls’ education by keeping following points in mind:

• Physical attributes and difference do not reflect superiority or inferiority. Therefore, teacher should not discriminate between boys and girls being different in physical trait but she has to take note of individual differences in capabilities, abilities and aptitudes of children.
Basic body structure, functions and requirements are also similar for both male and female human beings, therefore, no discrimination should be made in providing food, health care and learning experiences.

Avoid describing women and men in stereotyping roles e.g. women fetching water, cooking, looking after children and men working outside homes in offices and fields.

Do not use only male pronouns (he) or male visuals to show persons in various economic activities e.g. farmer as he, scientists as he, surgeon as he. Women are also contributing in these activities. Show them also.

While teaching EVS involve girls in conducting experiments, practical activities. If they are hesitant for any reason, encourage them. Motivate them to ask questions.

Collect information about eminent women who may be a scientist, historian, social worker, panchayat member, activist, local leader and give their examples at relevant place while teaching EVS. This will motivate girls to continue their education and may help in developing a positive self-concept among them.

5.2.4 Role of Administrators in Women Education

The educational administrators have great responsibility to meet the social challenge. They, in addition to educational administration, also plan the educational infrastructure. They should work as pioneers in educating the girls who are going to be women and mothers. They should play a parental role in this regard. They can contribute in the field of women education, a lot. Rather it would not be wrong to assume that proper women education cannot be possible without monitoring the girls’ education by educational administrators. They should not act as bureaucrats in offices and in industrial and economic organizations. They should work as guides and pioneers. Now-a-days all educational administrators lay emphasis only on good examination results. In their view each and every school should try for good examination results. The good examination results phobia has made the educational administrators quite unaware about true concept of education. It is they who pressurize the school principals and teachers to devote whole heartedly for good shinning annual examination results. For this end the teachers are required to teach the students very sincerely. They lay emphasis on teaching some important topics likely to appear in examination papers. Due to this the teachers generally ignore all other prime educational aspects as inculcating good life attitudes, good work habits, development of good
behavior, character and, enculturation. Also, for achieving the good examination results of their pupils, the teachers leaving aside their teaching professional ethics keep themselves actually engaged in teaching examination school subjects. They always whole heartedly desire that their students should achieve a remarkable success in their annual examination and should add glaring wings to the crown of the school. As such, the teachers always pray that their students should come in flying colours in their examination. This trend has also made the parents quite ignorant about familial education. They always have a craze for the good examination results of their wards in their annual examination. Such mothers do not inculcate necessary work habits in their children. This kind of education practice aimed at good examination results, under the present system of formal education has badly affected the total Indian socioscape. This has completely rooted out desirable work culture from the Indian society, as the younger do not get any motivation for doing any hard work due to examination phobia.

This is happening because the social milieu has been totally accustomed to Western culture. The people have totally forgotten the cultural traits of national culture. And generally the educational administrators add fuel to this non-stoppable fire of acculturation, because they generally pat and praise the schools whose students perform well in their annual examination. The examination system has become a kind of social concern. It has brought ‘Laissez Faire’ thinking in the Indian society, which has engrilled, the Indian society in cut-throat competition. In the olden days, there was no examination system at all in India under the old Gurukula system of education. Also, there was no need of examination under the non-formal system of education through which the artisans used to train their youngsters. And the students in olden days used to prove their epistemacy and proficiency in their future life. Old Indian seers – Rishi and Munis who had contributed in the field of epistemacy and religiosity were never examined. Neither the artists nor artisans who had contributed in the field of art and culture were examined. They were trained in non-formal way. But due to training of artisans in industrial institutes in formal way, the non-formal system of education used in training the wards of artisans has been totally gone. And examination system has totally vanished it. Because of this, skills acquired through non-formal way in family occupations have totally gone. In other words, the present system of formal education based on examination has totally rooted out the main life-building concepts of education. In other words, the examination system is not at all suited to the Indian social structure which is based on caste system.
The school administrators should look into all these pros and cons on Indian educational system and should try to reform it accordingly. The educational administrators should be eager to do this soon. They should look into the real life-building educational aspects. For this end they should give due importance to the life-building processes. Such life-building processes are more important for the girls. These life-building processes can be done through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in girls as well as in boys, through which the right life attitudes could be inculcated in the students. The administrators should advise the school curriculum planners to give a due place to the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in school educational program. The principal, vice-principal, all teachers and non-teaching staff who are interested in co-curricular activities should be involved in these activities. The academic activities and co-curricular should be equally treated and should be given equal weight age while assessing the students. The administrator should also find time, if not in all programs, at least in some co-curricular activities in some schools to attend such activities.

The school administrators should also see that the school teachers are sincerely following the teaching professional ethics. Whether they are sincere in inculcating the students? Whether they are inculcating good life attitudes and developing appropriate work habits? The educational administrators should also try to find out whether the educating of the students is done to achieve the desired educational aims. As such, the educational program should be planned and worked out accordingly. For girls education special steps need to be taken to prepare the girls for their future life roles. And for this purpose there should be a special provision for women teacher education in teacher training institutes. The school curriculum should have a place for life-building activities.

5.3 Conclusion

Time has come when we should change its outlook towards a girl child and cater to her needs. Steps should be taken to stop the discrimination against her and confine her in the age old stereotypical role of mother/daughter/wife etc. We should give her due recognition as a “woman of the future” and “a productive citizen of the country” as her contribution towards the social and economic progress of the country is equal to that of her male counterparts. Therefore, the provisions made in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-11) will have to be geared to enter in to a new era where a girl child will get her due respect, dignity, equality and will emerge as a completely empowered citizen of the country and will contribute to its progress and prosperity.
“A woman’s world is very small, it starts with one man (that is her father) and ends with one man (that is her husband). She deserves to live in this world with dignity and independence. She deserves to be free from her father’s clutches of stereotypical thinking about education and a husband’s domestic abuses. She deserves to live with rights and be treated with respect.”