CHAPTER - II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was indeed the foremost international initiative which paved the way for the empowerment of women who constitute 50% of the global population. The Constitution of India has incorporated most of the provisions created by the international for which intended to bring about the empowerment of women which is a multi-dimensional revolution. In India, the post-independence period witnessed several progressive constitutional, legal, political, economic and allied measures for the empowerment of women. Scholars have upheld the view that sexual a quality is an important parameter of modernity along with democracy, distributive justice and human rights. Empowerment of women by safeguarding their basic human rights is the prime concern of all progressive mass movements, conventions, debates and research endeavors in India and elsewhere. Effective and efficient implementation of constitutional safeguards, reservation policy and economic development programs meant for the empowerment of women in India is the need of the hour. Policy makers, planners, administrators, academicians, activists, researchers and others have realized the need and importance of empowerment of women in a developing country like India. A brief survey of the notable works done in Karnataka State, Indian Republic and other parts of world on this vital issue of our times is presented in this chapter.

2.2 Studies Focusing on Empowerment of Women

Kirve and Kanitkar (1993) examined the income generating capabilities of rural women in India through entrepreneurship development especially at the grass-roots level. The study pointed out that grass-roots level banks, co-operatives and other developmental organizations did not contribute substantially for the enrichment of entrepreneurship among women. The scholars have also suggested certain intervention strategies for the entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment among the women.

Kumari and Dubey (1994) examined the women parliamentarians in India after independence and observed that privileged Indian women who had been related to politically influential families or leaders had the benefit of political representation. The study further indicated that women who represented the creamy layer of the Indian society
had the benefit of access to political power which widened the gap between the privileged women and under-privileged women in India.

Jogdand (1995) edited a book on Dalit women which provides useful insights into the ways and means of achieving the goal of empowerment of Dalit women who were the most oppressed and depressed section of Indian society. The scholar provided useful suggestions and guidelines for the empowerment of Dalit women in particular. The work provides thought provoking inputs and guidelines which could be adopted by the policy makers and officials who are responsible for the welfare of women in Indian society.

Saraswathi (1996) examined the role of women in Karnataka politics and reported that a majority of women electric representatives hailed from well educated and sound families. The study further indicated that women’s position in party politics was really insignificant. There were inadequate women’s pressure groups but increasing representation of women in local-self government bodies on account of the availability of reservation benefits in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Mitra (1997) examined the equality and empowerment of women in Indian society and observed that women could not gain the benefits of equality and empowerment due to ineffective implementation of constitutional provisions, administrative measures and empowerment programmes in India. The scholar has suggested that government agencies, non-government organizations, women’s associations and research/development organizations should put forth united efforts toward the empowerment of women in Indian society.

Mukhopadhyay (1998) examined the practical relationship between women and law in Indian society and reported that there were series of progressive legislations made by both Central and State Governments in order to achieve the goals of empowerment of women. However, most of the women in rural and tribal areas were least aware of these legal provisions which deprived them from certain welfare measures, according to the study. The researcher has called upon the state to popularize the beneficial effects of various progressive legislations and actively involve the women in various rehabilitation and empowerment centered programmes.

Rao and Rao (1999) examined the challenges and advancement with reference to the empowerment of women in Indian society. The scholars have pointed out that many opportunities existed in Indian society constitutionally, politically, educationally and economically from the point of view of women’s empowerment. The scholars have noted
that lack of political will and bureaucratic competence impeded the attainment of the goal of empowerment of women in Indian society.

England (2000) examined the relationship between women’s empowerment and demographic processes with reference to countries of the North block. The scholar broadly analyzed the North-South divide from the point of view of economic development and suggested that the women in the countries of the North block should be enabled to achieve the goal of empowerment through progressive legislations, projects, mechanisms and supportive measures.

Kapur (2001) examined the process of empowerment of Indian women and reported that a vast majority of Indian women who belonged to backward sections of the society were subjected to politics of marginalization. The state has failed to ensure integrated and sustainable empowerment of women in India because the policy makers and administrators hailed from the privileged sections of the society.

Bhatia Meera (2002) examined the role of governance in the process of empowerment of women in India. The scholar reported that Indian women were not adequately involved in the process of governance which brought about more underprivilegedness among the women. The study suggested that women should be adequately represented in state legislatures and national parliament in order to ensure better governance, budgetary allocation, monitoring and evaluation activities which would boost the empowerment of women in Indian society.

Biju M.R. (2003) examined the relationship between Indian democracy and empowerment of women and found that there was inadequate representation of women in the State Legislatures and national Parliament due to lack of political commitment and pressure groups. However, the women were adequate represented in the PRIs on account of extension of political reservation benefits through constitutional amendments. Political reservation is an instrument of empowerment of women politically and otherwise.

Goel Aruna (2004) edited a book on education and socio-economic perspectives of women’s development and empowerment in Indian society. The book contains 11 chapters dealing with various aspects of women’s empowerment in Indian society. The authors have stated that educational opportunities, economic perspectives, political strategies and social activism would bring about active participation of women in economic activities and thus lead to women’s empowerment in Indian society.
Deshpande (2005) examined the political empowerment of women in India and stated that women empowerment in national and state politics has just become in non starter. Of course, there is a bold beginning in respect of the political empowerment at the grassroots level during the regime of Rajiv Gandhi who provided 30% reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj bodies after 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

Kamaraju (2006) examined the problems of rural entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu and reported that the women entrepreneurs were not aware of the support schemes and special schemes offered by the state and central governments and banks mainly because of ignorance. The study suggested that the government should give more attention for the promotion of business conducted by the women.

Sharma Pushparaj (2007) examined the role of micro finance in the process of women’s empowerment and noted that self-help groups had become a viable alternative to achieve the objectives of community development and empowerment of women. The study also revealed that micro credit organizations enabled the rural women to achieve economic development without insisting on any collateral security arrangement. The scholars suggested that self help group – bank linkage programme would bring about socio-economic empowerment of the women and weaker sections in India.

Vasantha Kumari (2008) examined women empowerment through micro enterprises development in Kerala and noted that micro enterprises utilized the talent and potential of rural women below poverty line to meet their local needs. The study also reported that empowerment through micro enterprises in Kerala was calculated as a simple average score of empowerment obtained for three levels of empowerment namely – individual, family and social empowerment. The scholar suggested that such micro enterprises should concentrate on the social and economic development of women in the rural areas.

Rajan (2009) examined the relationship between gender equality and empowerment of women in India and noted that the concept of women’s development was mainly ‘welfare oriented’. The scholar stated that gender empowerment measure in India was not satisfactory. The scholar suggested that women and girl children should be actively educated and empowered through effective implementation of various development programmes in the country.

Pattanaik (2010) examined the rural women, panchayat raj and development in India and observed that women have received preferential consideration in the panchayati
raj organizations in India. The study also reported that the percentages of women at various levels of political activity shifted dramatically as a result of constitutional change in India. The scholar suggested that women should be encouraged to organize themselves through various social, economic and political organizations.

Rao Smitha (2011) examined the economic impact of political empowerment of women in India and noted that women were not included in the process of development at various levels even though they made significant contribution to the economy of the nation. The scholar suggested that women should be encourage to participate actively in the decision making process especially in the economic and political fields in order to achieve the goal of empowerment of women in India.

Sudha (2011) examined the education, employment and empowerment of rural women in India and noted that the prevailing social and economic structures were mainly responsible for women’s subordination and gender inequality in Indian society. The study also reported that gender inequality was very high in rural areas as compared to urban areas in India. The scholar suggested that government and other agencies should create an enabling environment with requisite policies and programmes, exclusive institutional mechanisms at various levels and adequate financial and manpower resources to achieve the goal of empowerment of women in India.

Khare (2011) examined the economic and social measures for the empowerment of women in India and noted that agriculture and allied industrial sectors did not contribute adequately for the empowerment of women in India even though they accounted for more than 90% of workforce. The scholar suggested that a clear vision is required to facilitate the empowerment of women through constructive social and economic measures.

Mishra (2012) examined the issues and challenges of empowerment of women and reported that women were subjected to violation of human rights due to system related lapses. The study also reported that women representation increase in Bihar assembly over a period of time. The scholar suggested that women leadership development and entrepreneurship development programmes should be organized in Indian society to facilitate gender justice and empowerment of women at the grassroots level.

Bhat (2012) examined the relationship between micro finance institutions and the economic empowerment of women and noted that self help groups brought about silent revolution in the lives of women in India. The scholar also suggested that micro credit
service institutions including self help groups and cooperatives should be encouraged to extend adequate financial support for the development of women.

2.3 Studies Focusing on Women Cooperatives

Maithreyi (1980) examined the approaches to self-reliance for women in Indian society and observed that women membership in different types of cooperatives was not adequate. The scholar suggested that women organizers should be carefully selected and trend in the principles and practices of cooperative management in order to enlist their active participation in the cooperative management and income generating activities.

Rukmayi (1981) examined the role of women in cooperatives with reference to India and observed that women were not consulted by the authorities concerned while designing development programmes at the grassroots level. The scholar suggested that women industrial and agricultural cooperatives should be established across the country in order to empower women economically and otherwise.

Heggade (1982) examined the an empirical women’s participation in cooperatives with reference to Karnataka and noted that women participation in cooperative sector is increasing steadily over a period of time. The scholar suggested that women should be encouraged to participate actively in cooperatives in order to reduce exploitative tendencies and create conducive environment for development and leadership of women in Karnataka state.

Kurian (1984) examined the cooperatives in India and noted that women had adequate opportunities to participate in the process of diary management and improve their economic status. The scholar has also rightly indicated that women should be encouraged by the government, banks, cooperatives and SHGs to participate actively in dairying sector in order to gain the benefit of economic self-sufficiency.

Kindo (1987) examined the role of women in nation building through cooperatives in India and noted that the participation of women in the cooperative management was inadequate due to social and conventional inhibitions in the Indian society. The scholar suggested that women should be organized and motivated to participate in cooperative management through leadership development and entrepreneurship development opportunities in India.

Mascarenhas (1988) examined the role of diary cooperatives in India from the points of view of national development in general and empowerment of women in
particular. The scholar specifically evaluated the development strategy adopted by the diary cooperatives and suggested that experts in diary management, technologists, scientists, opinion makers and activists should be involved adequately in the process of diary cooperatives management in India. The study has also emphasized the need for adequate representation to women diary formers in the decision making and strategy making processes.

Kalaimathi (1989) examined the women’s participation in consumers’ cooperatives in Tamil Nadu and noted that education, family planning, healthy environment, political support and micro credit services played a crucial role in the enhancement of women’s participation in cooperation management. The scholar suggested that the problem of unemployment and backwardness of women should be tackled effectively through appropriate credit services, skill development programmes and self employment opportunities.

Arunachala Jaya (1991) examined the role of women in the development of cooperatives and pointed out those cooperatives extended small loans to very poor women for self employment projects that generated income. The study also reported that micro credit programmes were helpful in attaining millennium development goals by reducing poverty, hunger, malnutrition, diseases and other disadvantages which hindered the progress of women. The scholar suggested that orientation programmes, leadership development programmes, entrepreneurship development programmes and adequate credit services would lead to greater levels of women empowerment in modern society.

Rose (1995) examined the Sewa Movement in India which was spearheaded by certain progressive features and forces in India. The movement was able to create awareness on various aspects of empowerment of women in India among the women beneficiaries. The movement further created a new force which led the women towards socio-economic transformation. The study also has suggested that similar progressive movements should be launched in other parts of the country to ensure gender justice and women’s empowerment.

Mathur (1996) examined the role of women in cooperatives and noted that cooperatives played an important role in the process of development particularly when subsidy and grant based schemes lost their importance in modern society. The scholar suggested that innovative micro finance approaches should be followed for the effective management of cooperatives for the empowerment of women.
Rusell (1998) examined the women in cooperatives and reported that formal financial institutions denied women the real social and economic base and opportunities for empowerment. The scholar observed that institutional reforms in the cooperative management strategy were absolutely essential to lead women and weaker sections towards empowerment. The scholar suggested that scientific management strategies should be adopted in the cooperatives to achieve the goal of financial inclusion especially for women and low income groups of society.

Hajela (1999) authored a book on principles, practice problems and practice of cooperation with reference to India and observed that rural women were not encouraged by the cooperative societies to improve their economic status. The scholar suggested women members should be encouraged to participate actively in income generating activities, policy making and implementation of development activities of cooperatives in India.

Sharada and Patil (2000) examined the cooperative development in Karnataka on the basis of a case study of Dharwad district and noted that women earned maximum income from agriculture, followed by trade related activities. The study further reported that many women beneficiaries encountered infrastructure related constraints, marketing oriented limitations and entrepreneurship development related problems. The scholars suggested that membership drive, adequate funds, training facilities, skill development programmes and other progressive measures should be adopted by the cooperatives to facilitate inclusive economic development of women.

Junara (2001) examined the status of women cooperatives in Gujarat state and noted that women beneficiaries encountered certain problems relating to, training, credit, marketing and entrepreneurship facilities in the study area. The scholar suggested that cooperative societies should be encouraged to provide liberal credit at cheaper interest rate to the backward women beneficiaries.

Kapoor Sandhya (2002) examined the involvement of women in cooperatives which is a pre-condition for their success and pointed out that cooperative societies enabled the women to improve their awareness, decision making power, bargaining power and other potentialities. The study also reported that there was a great potential for improving cooperative management through various leadership development programmes for women beneficiaries.
Bhimsen Shobha (2005) examined the role of cooperative sector in the economic empowerment of women with reference to Karnataka and reported that the cooperatives enabled the women to gain self-reliance through active participation and access to developmental opportunities. The study also suggested that cooperatives should develop leadership qualities and entrepreneurship spirit among the women in order to achieve the goal of economic empowerment of women through cooperatives in Karnataka State and elsewhere.

Singh (2010) examined the cooperative movement in India and reported that the share of cooperatives in India’s national economy was quite substantial. The study also reported that cooperative sector provided direct and self employment to more than 16 million persons which is next only to the public sector of India. The scholar suggested that cooperatives should be managed by a good number of women on the basis of leadership development and professional management programmes.

Sirajuddin (2011) examined the cooperative movement in India in the era of globalization and noted that cooperatives have failed to a large extent in delivering goods and services unlike the private sector for the empowerment of women and weaker sections. The scholar observed that cooperative system in India should be rejuvenated in order to reorient their functions according to the new market demands and developmental needs of women and other disadvantaged sections of society.

Patil (2012) examined the challenges faced in cooperative movement in India and observed that a large segment of Indian society including women primarily depended on agriculture and agriculture related sectors of the economy. The scholar also noted that Indian cooperative movement brought about social change and economic transformation of the backward sections of society in Maharashtra and other parts of the country. The scholar suggested that in the age of globalization, cooperatives must fulfill the needs of women, farmers and other backward sections of Indian society.

Arora Gunjan (2012) examined the relationship between cooperative movement and international peace and noted that the movement for worker cooperatives, work place democracy and social enterprises were resurgent around the world. The scholar suggested that free and fair elections to cooperatives, cooperative training to the managers, cooperative orientation to the members and women leadership development programmes should be organized to facilitate the empowerment of women in modern times. The
scholar also suggested international collaboration for better cooperative movement, international cooperation and global peace.

2.4 Studies Focusing on SHGs

Gupta (1999) examined the role of SHGs and micro credit in India and observed that micro level financial schemes helped people help themselves by starting small income generating projects and businesses. The study indicated that women constituted about 94% of the borrowers and the percentage of recovery was also higher than 97%. The study revealed that the borrowers had succeeded in overcoming the poverty by virtue of micro credit system and operations in the rural areas. The scholar suggested that effective management of people-friendly micro credit benefited the women borrowers.

Veluraj (2001) examined the role of self-help groups as an alternative approach to empowerment of rural women and noted that women actively participated in the formation, management and implementation of programmes of development through cooperatives. The scholar suggested that government should strengthen self-help groups and cooperatives for women and facilitate their economic empowerment.

MYRADA (2002) examined the impact of self help groups on the social/empowerment status of women members in southern India and observed that self help groups rendered fruitful services to the society including the women in the study area. The study also reported that empowering women through social and economic entrepreneurship assumed profound significance in a developing country like India. The study suggested three ways of empowerment of women such as economic security, entrepreneurship development and leadership development through self help groups.

Zubair (2003) examined the role of credit based SHGs in the empowerment of rural women and observed that community mobilization and organization of the poor and needy women was crucial in the urban and rural areas. The study suggested that ground rules and norms should be developed by the government and non government agencies for smooth functioning of SHGs in general and promoting the economic status of women in particular.

Galab and Chandrashekar (2003) examined the role of self help groups in the process of empowerment of women in India and found that there was a silent revolution in the Indian sub-continent mainly because of the active role played by the SHGs in transforming the socio-economic sectors in India. The scholars identified certain gains of
this new economic movement and suggested that women should improve their bargaining power and developed leadership qualities in order to gain absolute control over the environment.

Jessica and Sireesha (2005) examined the role of nationalized banks in promoting Self-Help Groups for generating self employment for women. The study revealed that SHGs primarily created self employment opportunities to the women in the un-organized sector. The study identified certain strategies which could be adopted by the nationalized banks while providing financial support to SHGs for the attainment of women’s empowerment in India.

Sultana (2005) examined the women’s empowerment through Self-Help Groups in Vikarbad Mandal of Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh. The study reported that Self-Help Groups were instrumental in facilitating the empowerment of women but the respondents of the study area suffered from illiteracy, superstitions and inadequate understanding of there rights. The study suggested that the SHGs should make of various incentives offered by the government agencies and develop skills and competence to manage SHGs on sound footing of knowledge, experience and expertise.

Yamuna (2007) examined the women empowerment through self help groups in Solamadevi village and noted that the income of the women considerably increased after taking up micro enterprises through self help groups in the study area. The study also reported that the provision of micro finance through self help groups had helped the women to achieve social and economic empowerment over a period of time.

Swain (2007) examined the role of self help groups in the empowerment of women and observed that self help groups had become a viable micro finance mechanism in developing countries. The scholar suggested that suitable institutional reforms would boost the status of micro finance development strategy in a developing like India. The scholar also advocated that active participation of women in micro finance management would enhance their economic status in modern society.

Sreeramulu (2008) examined the empowerment of women through self help groups and noted that in pre-self help group situation most of the members were dependent on income from agriculture and labor but in the post-self help group situation their main sources of income became dairying and trade related activities. The scholar suggested that self help groups should be managed on the basis of modern techniques of
scientific management and human resources development strategies in order to empower women and weaker sections.

Nagaraj et.al. (2009) examined the empowerment of rural women through self help groups in India and noted that without economic and social liberation of women, no empowerment of women is possible in a pluralistic society like India. The scholars suggested that organizational behavior is the key to women’s empowerment. The study also noted that self help groups of women should be formed democratically without any political affiliations in order to organize and lead women towards economic freedom, self sufficiency and inclusive economic development.

Amudha and Ramakrishnan (2011) examined the role of women self help groups in cooperative bank linkage with reference to Nagapattinam district of TamilNadu and observed that systematic strategies beyond women empowerment to increase the endowments of the poor/women enhanced their exchange outcomes. The scholars suggested that government should launch innovative programmes for the empowerment of the women and organize suitable training programmes for the development of leadership of women in cooperatives.

Sindhuja (2011) examined the economic empowerment of women through self help groups in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala and noted that women participated actively in the activities of self help groups which generated income for their social change and economic progress. The scholar suggested that entrepreneurship development programmes should be organized exclusively for women in order to facilitate their inclusive economic empowerment in India.

Wale and Deshmukh (2011) examined the women empowerment through self help groups and noted that self help groups made a lasting impact on the lives of the poor, needy and women in Indian society. It was found that individual loans were mostly utilized for productive purposes and the repayment of loans was 100%. The scholars suggested that non-government and community based organizations should strengthen self help groups which provided microe services which were financially sustainable.

Kumar Surendra (2012) examined the role of self help groups in empowerment of rural women in Bihar and reported that self help groups had become a prominent tool for the social modernization and economic empowerment of women in rural Bihar. The scholar suggested that state government, funding agencies, training institutions and media
organizations should play a major role in the inclusive development of women through self help groups.

Rao Vekanteshwara (2012) examined the role of self help groups in the empowerment of women in Andhra Pradesh and noted that formal banking institutions failed to provide adequate credit facilities to the women and other marginalized sections of Indian society. The study further reported that self help group-bank linkage programme brought about considerable progress of women through viable micro credit services.

Dass and Vasanthi (2012) examined the socio economic empowerment of women through self help groups in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu and noted that self help groups provided adequate scope for the rural house holds especially women to develop their self confidence and self sufficiency. The scholars suggested that women should be encouraged to play a crucial role in the process of cooperative management and self help groups.

2.5 Studies Focusing on Government policies and Programmes

All India Women’s Conference (1980) submitted a memorandum to the Government of India on various aspects of empowerment of women in Indian society. The memorandum has pointed out that women’s empowerment is a multi-dimensional revolution which demands educational, social, economic and political packages in India at grass-roots level, provincial level and national level. The conference has urged the government to provide suitable protective measures and promotional opportunities towards attaining the goal of empowerment of women in India.

Ministry of Human Resources Development (1988) submitted a national perspective plan for women relating to the period 1988-2000 to the Government of India. The ministry also highlighted the existing human development indicators and stated that a vast majority of Indians regardless of religion, region, class, caste and other factors remained backward from the point of view of attaining the goal of comprehensive human development. The report also highlighted that education, health, employment, security and other vital factors should be primarily taken into account while designing the human development strategies in India.

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (1989) examined the role of women in development and pointed out the women were not actively involved in the process of decision making. The study has suggested that women representatives and
beneficiaries should be actively involved in developmental programmes which intended to bring about the development of women.

United Nations Development Programme (1990) published a comprehensive report on the state of human development in the world. The pioneering works of the UNDP in publishing a series of human development reports measuring and ranking countries of the world on various human development indicators have earned world wide recognition among academicians, researchers, planners and policy makers. The indicators developed by the UNDP include the human development index, gender related development index, gender empowerment measures and the human poverty index. In particular, the gender empowerment measures suggested by the UNDP have opened the eyes of the policy makers and development administrators all over the world with respect to achieving the goal of women’s empowerment.

World Bank (1991) examined the sorry state of affairs which prevail in India regarding the poor economic status of women mainly due to gender bias. A vast majority of women in India remained without ownership and control of financial resources even though some progressive legislation and development programmes existed in the post-independence era. The report highlights the importance of intervention strategies which could improve the economic status and bargaining power of women in India.

Saini (1993) examined the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programmes in Northern India and observed that north Indian women could not achieve the goal of entrepreneurship development due to lack of planned, deliberate and sustainable entrepreneurship development programmes and opportunities to women in particular. The study suggested that entrepreneurship development programmes should be conducted regularly to create new awareness among women and lead them towards economic empowerment.

United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strength and their own capacities is a main objective of development, and that empowerment of women requires the full participation of women in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well being of societies.

World Summit on Social Development (1995) called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strength and their own capacities is main
objective of a development, and that empowerment requires the full participation of women and men at local, regional, national and international levels.

Hashemi et.al. (1996) examined the role of rural credit programmes in the economic empowerment of women in Bangladesh. The scholars highlighted the decisive role played by the cooperatives in organizing, educating, motivating and facilitating the empowerment women in Bangladesh. The scholars have also suggested that rural cooperatives should play a decisive role in the economic empowerment of women and weaker sections in Bangladesh.

Government of India (1998) examined the status of human development of Indian Republic in particular. The survey revealed that there was considerable economic growth in the country but the state of development of women was not encouraging in India. The study pointed out certain areas where women lagged behind in terms of both human development and economic empowerment. The findings of the survey have opened the eyes of the policy makers and development experts on the future course of action with respect to the attainment of integrated national development in India.

Government of Karnataka (1999) examined the human development in Karnataka which revealed sorry state of affairs with respect to attainment of human development in the state. The study revealed that the people of Karnataka were backward from the points of view of education, health, nutrition, sanitation and other indicators of human development. The report has also identified certain areas which demand governmental intervention from the point of view of judicious human development in Karnataka State.

Roy (2001) edited a book on social development and the empowerment of marginalized groups which contains 11 scholarly writings on various aspects of the empowerment of women and weaker sections of Indian society. The scholars has emphasized that empowerment represents the hopes and dreams of the marginalized groups of people for a humane environment free of inequities disfavoring them socially, politically and economically. The work contains vital perspectives relating to socio-economic empowerment of the people in India.

Government of Karnataka (2002) conducted economic surveys for about 7 years (1995-2002) in order to assess the state of economic affairs which were closely associated with the development of the state in general and achievement of human development in the state in particular. The study revealed that Karnataka State marched towards significant progress economically and otherwise over a period of time mainly due to
expansion of developmental networks and operations. The study has also indicated that women and other weaker sections could not grow on par with the privileged sections of the society mainly due to inadequate budgetary support and ineffective implementation of various welfare programs.

Planning Commission of India (2002) examined the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) which envisaged 9% growth of Indian economy. The plan document also indicated the budgetary allocation made for the welfare and development of women in India. The document also revealed increasing budgetary support for the women empowerment oriented programmes in the Indian Republic.

National Commission for Women (2002) examined the status of women and reported that a negligible percentage of women were able to achieve the goal of empowerment while a vast majority of women representing dalit, backward, minority and other weaker sections were subjected to series of oppressive tendencies in Indian society. The report has also highlighted the existing legal mechanisms with respect to the empowerment of women in India.

Gopal Meena (2003) presented an article on the Sociology for the marginalized based on an empirical study. The scholar presents a report that emphatically alters the directions of the epistemology, organizations and pedagogy of sociology. The scholar as incorporated the women’s invisibility in the mainstream of national life. The inequities in education, economy, polity and other spheres of human life are brought to the fore by the scholar with a set of remedial measures for the empowerment of women in Indian society.

Nagayya (2005) examined the state of affairs in non-farm small enterprises from the point of view of empowerment of women and observed that non-farm small enterprises in urban and rural areas were adversely affected by the economic liberalization and globalization processes. A study suggested that product innovation, diversification, adoption of effective marketing strategies, formation of cluster association, technological linkages, financial tie-up and strategic alliance building would facilitate the development of small and medium enterprises in general and empowerment of women in particular.

Mohananarayana (2005) examined the relevance of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI) as an instrument of empowerment of people in India and reported that RTI Act became a strong weapon against corruption and bad governance. The study also indicated that RTI Act has made the process of governance transparent, responsible and accountable in the nation. The researcher has also suggested that the State should develop institutional
networks and people friendly operations management in order to make RTI Act a potent weapon in the hands of the public and instrument of empowerment of people including women and marginalized sections of Indian society.

Dasgupta and Goldar (2006) examined the family labor supply in rural India and reported that supply of female labor from below poverty line households in rural areas was inversely related to wage rate and the number of earning members in the family. The study also called for greater attention to the designing of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in which employment opportunities can be provided to the backward women in the rural areas.

Women Development Corporation (2009) examined the developmental initiatives and projects for the welfare and progress of women in the new millennium in Karnataka State. The reports provided detailed information about various women development projects implemented by the Government of Karnataka. These reports provide necessary information to the beneficiaries of women development programs implemented by the corporation.

Rao and Jayaraju (2012) examined the empowerment of women through DWCRA programme in Rayalseema region, Andhra Pradesh and noted that Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas Programme mobilized the women’s involvement and gained widespread support both in rural urban areas. The scholars suggested that team building, personality development, marketing management, leadership development and other constructive training programmes would enhance the status of women in India.

2.6 Research Gap

Many research issues have emerged from the review of above studies relating to women empowerment through cooperatives. Some studies are general in nature focusing at macro level, a few studies highlights women empowerment through SHGs though on a limited scale. The studies dealing with women empowerment through cooperatives are scanty. It is important to analyze the women empowerment through the cooperatives at the field level. Against this background the present study has been taken up.

From the review, studies connected to cooperative sector, it is observed that through cooperatives, many activities can be undertaken, which enables members of the organization to extricate themselves from poverty in the rural and urban areas. One may find that such studies use macro level data for examining issues like benefits of
cooperatives. These studies don’t address the important aspects of women empowerment at the micro level. A few studies on women cooperatives have studied only working and functioning of the women cooperatives leaving the influence of the cooperatives on socio-economic empowerment of women.

It is noted from the review on studies pertaining to women empowerment that the studies are general in nature, which deal with social, political, psychological and economic empowerment. These studies have not been given much importance to women empowerment through cooperative institutions. Therefore, the present study tries to examine the women empowerment through cooperatives.

With regard to studies on SHGs, it is found that they have methodological limitations. This is because some studies reported a linkage between cooperatives and SHGs on performance and impact of rural credit programme on SHGs. However this has not been analyzed in the larger context of different social groups and members and non-members.

It is observed from the review of studies on Government policy programmes that, though the Government is committed to the welfare of women through micro finance, the SHGs have failed to draw members from the poorer and weaker sections of the society. To understand these ground realities the present study has been undertaken.

Nevertheless, literature on the examination of women empowerment through cooperatives are limited. In this context there is an urgent need to concentrate on various issues on women empowerment. Thus, it is evident that a comprehensive study on women empowerment through cooperatives and other related issues at the household level is required. Hence the present study has been taken up in Mysore district. The approach of study is both micro and macro in nature. Thus this study examines the various issues pertaining to women empowerment through cooperatives.

2.7 Summary

The past studies examined the state of educational, social, economic and political empowerment of women in India and abroad. The review of literature clearly emphasizes that cooperatives are rendering fruitful services to women in modern society. Prominent recent studies which are conducted by various scholars on this aspect of cooperative management and empowerment of women include - Ramananda (2010), Chandrapal Singh (2010), Amudha and Ramakrishnan (2011), Shukla et.al. (2011), Sirajuddin (2011),
Gunjan Arora (2012), Poonam Choudhury (2012), Datta et.al. (2012), Usha Jha (2012), Joel et.al. (2012), Mishra (2012), Muralidharan (2012), Harshavardhana Patil (2012), Ramachandra and Hosamani (2012) and Vinayagamoorthy and Pithadia (2012). Various scholars have also noted that cooperative offered self-employment opportunities that contributed significantly to women’s social inclusion and economic empowerment. There is not even a single study conducted by any researcher in Karnataka State on the role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women. Thus, the present study assumes great professional significance in letter and spirit.

Reference

All India Women’s Conference (1980), Memorandum Submitted to the Government of India, New Delhi.


Government of Karnataka (1999), Human Development Report, Bangalore, India.


Rao, Digumarti Bhaskara and Digumarti Pushpalatha Rao (1999), Women, Challenges and advancement, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, India.


Women Development Corporation (2001-09), Annual Reports, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.


World Summit on Social Development (1995), The Copenhagen Declaration.
