Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Development, as traditionally understood, meant only industrialisation, building roads, constructing schools and hospitals, creating jobs providing incomes above subsistence level and shift in the occupational structure from agriculture to industry to services.

But now the dimension of economic development has been changing. Defined in its complexity and interaction, among all dimensions of human life - political, economic, social, cultural etc. development has been convinced as an integral process of economic growth and social progress. This position represents a collective articulation of the desire of the majority of mankind to humanize the conditions of people lives through the process of development.

We are witnessing a trend in which human development and economic development are being strongly linked. Economic development is only a means to achieve the end - the end being human development. Economic development and human development must be fully engendered to be sustainable because sustainable development is one which is people centred, pro-poor, pro-jobs, pro-nature, end pro-women.

Development is a very wide and multidimensional term. It is difficult to cover a complex and vast subject such as "Development" within the confines of some pages. It has been obvious that development is not class neutral or race neutral but development is not gender neutral is the discovery of recent
feminist consciousness. "Human development if not engendred, will be endangered."¹

The world development can be interpreted in many ways. The economist would measure development in terms of growth rate of national income, increase in exports, increase in per capita incomes and a host of other economic indicators. For a sociologist, a general definition of development would be the improvement in quality of life. One measure could be to see how people's conditions have improved in terms of education, health and employment. These three spheres are by no means exhaustive and an improvement in one affects improvement in other.

Development has been defined by the U.N. as "Development is here interpreted to mean as total development including development in political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life as also the development of economic and other material resources and also the physical, moral, intellectual, and cultural growth of human person. The improvement of status of women requires a change in the attitudes and roles of both men and women. Women's development should not only be viewed as an issue in social development but should be seen as an essential component in every dimension of development. Such development should be an integral part of the global project for the establishment of a new international economic order based on equity, sovereignty, equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all states."²

¹. UNDP, Human Development Report 1995
The term development signifies a state of involvement, maturity, completeness, improvement and positive change transiting to a desirable / higher level of quality of life.³

Dominant development paradigm until early 1970's equated development with economic growth. Gross National Product (GNP) was its main indicator. Economic development implies raising the productive capacities of societies; in terms of their technologies, technical cultures and the physical, technical, organisational capacities and skills of those engaged in production. However, the GNP is a limited index of development. It ignores how GNP is distributed in society. It assumes that women benefit equally from development. In reality, high economic growth does not necessarily lead to better human living conditions for many countries. The GNP is useless as a gender - sensitizes index.

The United Nation Development programme (UNDP) constructed the Human Development Index (HDI), which reflects the most important dimensions of human development, such as life expectancy (long and healthy life), educational attainment and real GNP (decent standard of living). The underlying logic is that HDI captures the distance to be covered by a nation to reach the goal of human development. The closer the HDI is to 1.00, the lesser the distance to cover.

The failure of earlier approach to development and growing in equalities across and within countries despite economic growth, paved the way for the broader

conception of development that brought people to the central stage. Development in this perspective is perceived as enlarging people's choice. However, if development implies enlarging people's choice then discrimination in terms of gender, race and class indicates that 'progress' is flawed. With growing recognition of gender inequalities across nations, the HDI in 1995 attempted to integrate gender based discrimination. The gender related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) are modest attempts to develop gender sensitive indicators. GDI is nothing but HDI adjusted downward for accessing gender inequality in a given country. It discounts achievements in same basic capabilities on the HDI when there is inequality.

The GEM examines women's participation in the three selected areas - economic, political and professional. It measures access to economic resources (per capita income), access to professional opportunities (professional, technical, and administrative) and access to political opportunities (share of parliamentary seats). In other words, the GEM focus on assessing the extent to which men and women actively participate in decision making in various spheres of life and the extent to which they have opportunities to use their capabilities.

Self development is one facet of development which exerts a strong influence on women's development and growth of her personality. Unless her interests and creativity are provided space for growth and expansion, her decision making capacity, ethics, morals which govern her life and design her individual personality will be affected. For example, in a specific case of rural woman, she
There are various dimensions of the term development which are shown by the following chart.

The Development Chart

- **Development**
  - **Self**
    - Interest
    - Decision Making
    - Moral ethics
  - **Social**
    - Socialisation through family
    - Community
  - **Economic**
    - Satisfaction of Primary Needs
    - Finance
    - Credit
    - Income
    - Expenditure
    - Institution
    - Others
  - **Intellectual**
    - Mental
    - Opinions
    - Value
    - Attitudes
  - **Emotional**
    - Feelings
    - Behaviour
    - Control

may nurture an interest in painting but she gets married while she is still a child. Her marital status and familial presssures will hinder her growth and development. Her decision to abandon her interest in painting is due to the societal morals and ethics which would restrict a married girl, a young mother to develop self interests which would be contrary to conventionally accepted family roles and responsibilities. At a point she may even begin to feel guilty for even having a thought for herself. Such instances are not uncommon. Since the women has had no or little exposure to education and had no training. She can only seek the informal sources of credit like the local money lenders. She feels awed when visiting a bank for credit to set up any small enterprise. She seeks and get employment in unorganised sector. Her autonomy in spending in the self income earned through hard labour is nil. The familial and societal demands dictate the expenditure of her income. The women is hard pressed to satisfy even her primary needs of food, clothing and shelter. Her mental frame of mind is made such that she is persuaded or persuades herself to be influenced by others, attitudes, wishes, desires. All this affect her emotional development. She becomes unsure and insecure fearful of expressing thought and feelings. Hence a woman's development includes an array of features which have an influence on each other and affect her personality development.

Therefore, "development is more than passage from poor to rich, from traditional rural economy to a sophisticated urban one. It carries with it not only the ideas of economic betterment but also of greater human dignity, securing,
justice and equality." Most development plans would look very different if their pre-occupation were with people rather than with production. Hence we have finally began to accept, the axiom that human development, welfare - not GNP is the true end of development.

"Men, women and children must be the centre of attention with development woven around people, not people around development, which means human development and economic developemnt should move together, strongly linked and fully engendered."

The day is not far off when the progress of nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, not by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings but by the well being of their people, levels of health, nutrition and education, opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labours, ability to participate in decisions that affect their civil and political liberties, by the provisions that is made for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children.

**The Need for Women Development**

The role of women as equal partners in the process of development has now become a central issue in development literature. The declaration of U.N.

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Decade for women and the convening of the U.N. conference on women, Nairobi and the emergence of various women organisations at national and international levels demonstrate the national communities concern about the problems affecting women and the need to ameliorate their lot. Although these events are proofs, no doubt, that women's problems have stirred the conscience of the international community as well as that of most of nations, policies and programmes put into action in many developing countries have not been very effective to improve the socio-economic conditions of their women.

It was Ester Boserup's Pioneering work "Women's Role in Economic Development", (1970), which drew attention to the special role and particular ways in which the changes over the last couple of centuries in the process of under development and the connections of present developmental efforts to international capital system having profound significance for women, the ways in which they affected women in each country depended much on the prevailing social structure.

At the time of independence in 1947, India committed itself to establish a socialist society based on the principles of equality and social justice. In keeping with this ideal, the constitution of India declared equality for all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and sex. We find a complete neglect of women in earlier plans as their is no separate chapter regarding women development in these plans who are the vulnerable section of society and comprise half of countries population. It was not until 1975 that the wider realisation came to surface in India that their
remains a much larger group of Indians which has suffered and continue to suffer
inequalities and injustices and this group consists of women irrespective of caste
and creed.

The cause of women specially in the third world is all the more
significant today, because these countries cannot afford to let a large part of human
resources remain unused. For a poor country like India, people are the only
abundant asset. This is clear by the fact that Indian population that has reached the
stage of explosion and women constitute about half of this population, they
represent 48.2 million as per 1991 census. But it is a matter of great sorrow that
the myriads of activities and multidimensional roles of such a significant and
major part of human asset that is women are generally ignored or by passed.
What has been generally done so far is to recognise and support the contribution
that a woman can make as a mother or as a sister or as a house wife.

Women constitute a special case in development studies because of
their dual role; they are responsible for the reproduction and maintenance of the
future labour force and at the same time are participants in the production process.

The problems affecting women are as long as human society itself.
While men have over time gaining socio-economic ascendency, women, particularly
in third world have generally been lagging behind. "Women represent nearly two
thirds of world's work, receive only one tenth of the world's income and own less
than one percent of world's property."1

These is the desperate need for women development because they face such acute problems that men do not face at all. The status of women in India is generally poor in the entire socio-economic-cultural setting. Widows still suffer from a fate worse than an animal particularly in rural areas. A history of 'Sati' or 'Jauhar' has still a distinct place. Child-marriages, frequent pregnancies, reproductive ill-health, high maternal mortality rates, adverse sex-ratio, low level of literacy, growing distance for collection of fuel-wood and water due to geographical environment, female, foeticides and infanticides, increasing, violence against women are significant factors about the lot of women. With the process of development, women problems have become more fatal and ugly than before.

General problems common to wage and non-wage employment include-

a) Exploitation and harassment by family members, employers, contractors, officials, and the community during the course of their work.

b) Problem of unemployment and underemployment of women, low wage-rate, under estimation of the work done, no economic value given to women's multi dimensional activities.

c) Child care, health and allied problems including non-availability of creches, improper working conditions, lack of sanitation, lack of medical facilities.

d) Lack of education, training and guidance facilities.

e) Lack of access to own earnings and misuse of earnings by husbands, alcoholism of husbands, absence of maternity benefits, medical benefits compensation for injury, absence of provident fund, pension and insurance

(10)
According to the 1991 census, only 22 percent of the total female population fall in the category of "workers", the unpaid economic activities of women and their contribution through work in the domestic sectors remain unreported in the census. Women play an important role in agriculture production, animal husbandry and other related activities such as storage, marketing of produce, food processing etc. Apart from these, they spend almost 10 to 12 hours per day doing household chores, including fetching of water and gathering of fuel. About 54% of rural women and 26 percent of urban women are engaged in marginal occupations in order to supplement the family income by collection of fish, firewood, cowdung, weaving and stitching, but the qualifications of these activities, in terms of work hours contributed or its income generating equivalent, has not been attempted or recorded.

Despite the existence of various constitutional and legal provisions safeguarding women's employment, a large number of women workers particularly in the unorganised sector suffer from various disadvantages relating to their working sites as well as their homes. The coverage of labour laws has not benefitted these women workers in many crucial areas especially, health, maternity benefits and social security. With the changing social and economic conditions, women's productive roles have assumed new significance but without back-up support, a healthy combination of women's productive and reproductive roles cannot be sustained.
Women's knowledge, skills, experience and instincts are not being taken into consideration. Yet, women constitute 50% of world's food producers - 80% in Africa, 60% in Asia and 40% in Latin America. They have always contributed to all areas of economic and social life as farmers, entrepreneurs, traders, workers home-makers and mothers. Still they share unequally in the fruits of their labour because of persistent discrimination. They constitute a majority of world's poor and continue to suffer disadvantages in education, health and employment.

The planning commission has identified three major areas under which they have paid special attention to women's development i.e. education, health and social welfare. There is a growing awareness among planners, administrators, and policy makers regarding the issue of 'gender' development in planning practices. A number of policies and programmes have been implemented to enhance the role of women in economic development of the country. The ninth plan launched in the 50th year of our independence includes empowerment of women as one of its major objectives and adopted integral approach towards women.

Important problems relating to the status and rights of women have to be dealt with by the legislation. Special organisation on part of central and state governments for promoting welfare of women and for participation of women in development process have not yet been developed to any great extent. Well organised social service departments are needed in the states if they are to initiate more comprehensive programs for women and achieve better coordination between the efforts of public and private agencies.
It may no longer be assumed that the benefits of economic development will automatically reach women. The theory of trickle down has failed. There must be clear understanding of women's status and position in society and of their importance to the economic development.

**Problems relating to women**

An average women finds herself surrounded with various types of problems in economic, social, familial set up. The problems start from the very day she is conceived in the womb of her mother and end on the dooms day when she rests in the tomb. Her birth is regarded unauspicious, she is regarded a burden, on the arrival of whom causes the family to sink in the ocean of grief. Attempts are made to destroy her before she opens her eyes in this world. Many a times she is poisoned or strangleholded just after the birth. Surrounded with such horrible situations if she still keeps alive, discrimination starts from the first day of her birth.

No festivities are made on her birth whereas the birth of a son is celebrated with songs, sweets, gifts and congratulations. She is less cared, less nourished, less breastfeeded whereas a son is breastfeeded more frequently and for more time. She is discriminated in terms of education, health and opportunities to work. Generally in rural areas when the family income is less, no investment is made on her education as she is regarded as Paraya Dhan (property of someone other). She is made expert in household chores. After marriage, her problems take new dimensions.
From dawn to dusk, she does back breaking household work of fetching water from many kilometers on her head, bringing logs of fuel and fodder from the fields for cattle. In the evening when she is tired painfully, she is scolded ill world or many a times beaten by the drunkard husband.

The discrimination, harassment, exploitation do persist in the form of molestation, eve teasing, kisnapping, in extreme cases rape also. Incidences of bride burning, wife battering are not uncommon. It is often said, "women ! Thy name is misery."

Women and work :-

Women, of course, have always worked. She has no moment to rest from dawn to late night, yet she is not regarded working women. A question which is generally asked, "Is the working ? No, she is a home wife. No economic value in given to her domestic work of maintaining a home, involving growing food, bringing fuel and fodder from fields, fecthing water, washing utensils, cooking food, stitching cloths, growing vegetables ......... and so an.

Today, in addition to the traditonal unpaid labour, required to maintain the house she increasingly take on to paid work outside the home to augment family income. This tendency has doubled her workload. She has become a machine restless, speechless, emotionless, and not a human being. She has no work, yet the grind of working is killing her\(^1\) .................

The world over, women's dual responsibilities, even in affleuent

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societies, translate into longer working hours than those of men, many unpaid. Some experts hold that if women's unpaid work were factored into national accounting systems, GDP would increase by 30 to 40%. Breaking down the traditional division of labour within the household is a pre-requisit for the success of wider attempt at economic and social transformation.

The report of the world conference of UN Decade for women, stated that it was essential that household chores and family care should be cared by men, and special emphasis should be placed on the obligation of couples to share house hold tasks with a view to facilitating the access of women to gainful employment.

**Women and Education :-**

The right of every individual to education is one of the first provisions of the universal declaration of Human Rights. But education is often neglected mainly in case of women, in the societies like India to meet the many needs of their people. India has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of illiterate of women in the world.

There is the need to provide women access to same curricula, examinations, and quality teaching staff as boys, eliminate any sterotyped concept of roles of men and women adopting new teaching methods to the need of girls, offer the same opportunities for career and vocational guidance and for scholarships and study grants, promote active participation of girls in sports and physical education, reducing female drop out rates, and organising programmes for girls
and women who have left school prematurely; access to specific educational
information to help ensure the health and well being of families, including
information and advice on family planning.

Early marriage and child bearing are major factors cutting short the
education of girls and women.

Reproductive Ill-Health :-

The reproductive health needs of women and adolescents as a group
have been largely ignored to date.

The global commission on women's health considered reproductive health
as referring to all aspects of well-being related to the reproductive system throughout
the life cycle. It encompassed fertility, infertility and the enjoyment of physical
health without fear of disease, family planning counselling information, education,
services for prenatal care, safe delivery and post natal care accessible to all through
the primary health care system.

Reproductive Rights :-

The very act of reproduction takes place from the womb of women but
they have hardly any right of decision about the number, timing and spacing of
children. Reproductive rights are the basic rights for women and one should have
the right to -

* Decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their
children.

* To have the information and means to do so.

(16)
* To be able to attain the highest standard of reproductive health.
* To make decisions concerning reproduction free of discriminations, coercion, violence, the right to safe motherhood, the right to plan one's family.

Unsafe Motherhood: -

Everyday of every year, 1500 women are dying due to "maternal Causes". The underlying causes of women's death during child birth as the lack of proper prenatal care, having too many children, fear of going to the hospital or using contraceptives, illicit and unsafe abortions, fear of husbands in using contraceptives, and malnutrition. There is the need for political commitment to reallocate priorities and resources to implement the available strategies that can reduce maternal mortality.

Increasing economic pressures and implementation of structural adjustment policies are, however, forming many countries to cut public health spending. This has detrimental effects particularly on marginal population.

Girl Child: -

The girl child as UNICEF categories the female child upto the age of 15, has become the focus of attention in recent years. As today's girl is tommorrow's woman and will bear the responsibility for a new generation. It is imperative that health needs of girls are met.

Women and girls often have a secondary place in the nutritional priorities of families, especially in developing countries and areas of extreme poverty causing various diseases and poor health status to women and girls. Nutritional equality
between boys and girls was recognised as a critical concern at the international conference on nutrition in Rome in 1992. Girls often suffer disproportionately from malnutrition, especially when prevailing customs or beliefs sanction preference for boys, there is the need -

* To eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference.
* To increase public awareness of the value of the girl child and concurrently to strengthen the girl child's self image, self esteem and status.
* To improve the welfare of the girl child, especially in regard to health, nutrition and education.
* Elimination of excess mortality of girls, prevention of infanticides, foeticides, trafficking in girl children, strict enforcement of laws concerning girl child are severely needed.

Violence against women :-

"Without progress in the situation of women, there can be no true social development. Human Rights are not worthy of the name if they exclude the female half of humanity. The struggle for women's equality is part of the struggle for a better world for all human beings, and all societies."¹

One of the first major achievements of the United Nations in the field of Human Rights was the adoption of the universal declaration of Human Rights by the general assembly in 1948. Violence against women is a global problem. It

¹ Bouthros - Bouthros Ghali, United Nations Secretary General.
is all pervasive and yet is often invisible. It is only recently that violence against women has been recognised as a violation of basic human rights for millions of women.

Violence against women is as old as human civilisation. It includes all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and trafficking in women, harmful efforts of traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism. Violence against women is seen to be abetted by ignorance, lack of laws to prohibit violence, inadequate efforts by public authorities to enforce existing laws and absence of educational and other means to address its causes. The statistical graph of violence against women is on an increase day by day.

Environment and women:

"If there must be a war, let the weapons be your healing hands, the hands of the world's women in defence of the environment .......".¹ From the very beginning of human experience women's work has been close to, and dependent upon nature. Women are the very core of environment, which is the sine quanon of existence. Women living in developing countries have experienced as to how alternations in the ecological system for the alleged greater good of development have resulted in environmental crisis. Shortage of water, food, cultivable land are daily realities for many of these women whose traditional tasks are to gather wood and water; and to provide food for their families. Many women in urban settings under ecological stress are struggling to raise families

¹. Mostafa Talba, former Director, UNEP, Nairobi, 1985.
amidst severe poverty, urban pollution, poor sanitation, sub standard housing and lack of potable drinking water.

In 1989, the UN called for a world conference that "would take steps to reverse trends and establish the basis for a sustainable way of life on the planet". Ozone depletion, global warming and other environmental disasters have grown to enormous proportions, resulting in increased poverty of millions of people, the majority of whom are women. Environmental degradation is causing various diseases and respiratory problems to women.

**Women and Decision Making :-**

Women lack decision making at domestic level as well as at national level. Most countries are far from achieving the target of 30% women in decision making levels by 1995 as set by the United Nations Economic and social council.

The participation of women in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha has not increased from 7% and 10% respectively even after 50 years of independence. Not only in political areas, but also in areas of population growth, household credit etc., in bureaucracy, higher achelons at administrative level, women lack decision making and taking power.

According to an UN estimate the rate of population growth in the developing world would fall by approximately 30% if women could choose how many children to have. Total developing world population in the year 2025 would have been about one billion people fewer than currently projected if women could choose.
Women and Employment :-

Women form less than 30% of labor force, their work participation rate is just about 22 percent, primarily because of their burden of household chores (which is not counted as work) and the omission of their contribution to earnings of household even when they work for it. They lead a very miserable life in the absence of an economic value given to their work. The real situation is that they have to spend a lost of time for collection of fuel, fodder, water apart from child care, cooking and cleaning, which leaves them very little time and incentive to work outside the home.

Consequent upon this pre-occupation, women take up low skill or temporary or seasonal jobs which make their work marginal in low wage and low skill jobs. Most of the jobs done by women are classified as low skilled even if skill application is high as there is no method of assessment of their skill level.

Whenever industry is rationalised and the processes are improved or when technology is changed, women workers are the first to get displaced as they become irrelevant to the production process, unable to handle new technology for want of new skill or want of higher muscle power.

Another critical factor of women's employment is the sensitivity of the employees to the implementation and enforcement of protective and welfare measures for women. Employees are reluctant to provide welfare facilities like maternity benefit, creche, toilet facilities etc. under the maternity benefits Act,
Mines Act, Factories Act etc.

One more problem regarding women's employment is that most women are engaged in the informal sector where they get low wages, wage discriminations, more hours to work, more adverse unhygienic conditions of work, and non implementation of labour laws passed by the government for the welfare of employees.

Recent trends show, in a century punctuated by unprecedented change, revolution and innovation, perhaps the most pervasive and lasting transformation has been emergence of women as a major presence and force in public life the world over. Women are assuming positions of influence in steady accelerating numbers in our communities, schools, work places, governments, media and in virtually every long held bastion of male privilege and power.

This transformation, albeit erratic and uneven, is the result of the complex interaction of human development. The slightly improved status of women could not have occurred on the present scale without the ceaseless work of hundred of millions of women and men to overcome women's second class status, marginalisation and indignity.

Although women have advanced more rapidly in some societies than others, almost everywhere women's concerns are still accorded second priority and women continually face discrimination, both subtle and flagrant. An important step in reversing part in equalities is recognition by policy makers that their divisions affect women and men differently. Introducing gender analysis into policies on
development, the environment, nutrition and health will accentuate the impact of these policies on women. Women must be engaged at all levels in efforts to eradicate poverty, promote peace and achieve sustainable development. Female perspectives are crucial to understanding the full dimensions of human society and facilitating constructive change.

Women no longer want to be ornamental decorations or things of beauty, or mere publicity material to advertise products but a productive human resources and recognised as such with all their entitlements. The 'silence' seems to be breaking, the dumb has opened her mouth to speak for an enlightened, prosperous, peaceful society where all individuals, male and female can live in harmony with equality and justice.

Fortunately, women have started becoming more and more visible to policy makers, planners, administrators, legislators at all national and international levels. Governments have started recognizing and planning interventions to stop this downward trend in women status and to alter this upward so as to make a meaningful and just societal transformation towards development of women in all walks of life.
Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to bring about an analytical research in the field of policies / programmes / legislations enacted and implemented by government of India and to see what impact of these policies has been on the socio-economic status, well-being and empowerment of women.

Following are the other objectives of the research work -

* To review the policies and programmes of the government of India for women's development over the planning period.
* To review the constitutional and legislative safeguards provided by government for upliftment of women.
* To judge the extent of effectiveness of women development policy in India and find out the deficiencies and lacunae by making a critical evaluation of these policies.
* To highlight the multi-faceted problems in the socio-economic field in an effective manner which are ignored or by passed by the policy makers, planners and legislators.
* To suggest remedial measures which would enable women to play their full and proper role as participants in the process of development for their own self development and for building up of the nation.

Hypothesis

* Equality of women is a necessary as well as basic condition for social, economic and political development of the nation, but women have not been
given defacto equality. They are the victims of inequalities and disabilities facing gender discrimination in general and in socio-economic fields in particular.

* Some special temporary measures are necessary to move in direction of the goals set by the constitution and to transform the de jure equality into defacto one. Some policies and programmes have been adopted by the government under the planning period for women development but performance of these programmes has not been satisfactory.

* Law is regarded as a harbinger of social change. There is no doubt that law does serve a useful purpose in promoting social change if law provisions are properly implemented but enforcement of constitutional and legislative provisions relating to women has been ineffective in India. Social attitudes, institutions keep women isolated, unaware or unable to get enforced their legal rights.

**Scope of the study :-**

The scope of the study is wide since it gives a broader perspective of women at national level. The study covers the policies and programmes of government of India for women development and constitutional and legislative Provisions for enforcing socio-economic-legal rights of women. Allthough the study covers the planning period, a detailed study is made since 1970's that is after the declaration of women's development Decade. The study deals with various problems relating to women.
A brief review of programmes, policies and their success / failure in the Five Year Plans is also made. A review of legal provisions of different Acts passed by government of India for the empowerment and enforcement of legal rights of women has been made.

In the light of these programmes, policies and legislative provisions, present socio-economic status of women has been highlighted inferring that despite of framing various policies for women development and inserting various Acts relating to women's empowerment in the Big Law books, the lot of an average Indian women has not improved a lot; various problems regarding implementation of these provisions have been dealt with in the study.

**Methodology and Data Source :-**

An appropriate and relevant research methodology plays an important role in the research. Without an appropriate methodology, the researcher is not able to test the hypothesis and the right conclusion cannot be drawn. Methodology relates to the tools, techniques, sources of data and the method of research approach used in the study.

Women development policy includes all those women-specific and women-related policies, plans, programmes and laws made by the government for women development and empowerment. The present study is an attempt to evaluate the government policy towards women development. The study highlights the meaning of development, the relationship between women and development, the need for women development and the problems that women face in the process.
of development.

The period taken under study is the post-independence period, mainly the planning period. The study makes a brief review of the major steps taken by the government and its agencies for economic empowerment, social upliftment and overall development of women under different plans from First Five Year Plan to Eighth Five Year Plan. Strategy adopted by the government for women development in Ninth Plan has also been mentioned.

It has been attempted to examine:

* The policies and programmes for social and economic development (including education, vocational training, health service, welfare and development programmes) which seek to change and improve the opportunities and conditions of women.
* The reforms in social legislation aimed at removing the disabilities of women.
* The labour laws which try to ensure better living opportunities and humane conditions of work.

The department of women and child development has been a nodal agency for women development. Therefore, various Anti-poverty programmes run/governed by the department as well as by other government agencies for providing employment, training to women and asset creation programmes for self employment of women have been discussed in the study. The study makes a sketch of institutional setup created by the government, for women development and discusses its functioning.
From time to time, the government has made policies and appointed committees to assess the status, conditions, position and problems that women face in society. Therefore, the reports of such committees, their recommendations have been discussed such as Towards Equality The Report of the Committee on status of women (1974), Shram Shakti - The Report of the National Commission on self employed women and women in the Informal sector, National Perspective Plan for women (1988-2000), National Policy for Empowerment of Women (1996) etc.

In essence, the study reviews the various policies, programmes and welfare measures taken by the government to ameliorate the conditions of women.

Law is regarded as the harbinger of positive social change. Legal rights are a precondition for raising the socio-economic status of women. The struggle for legal equality has been one of the major concerns of women's movement all over the world. Whether in the internal situation of her position in the paternal or matrimonial home or in the external situation of acquiring education skills, employment or property rights etc. all these involve law. The government has enshrined the norms of equality in the constitution and used laws as an important agent for social change and formal equality. Therefore, the study reviews the various constitutional and legislative provisions for amelioration of women's conditions. They include -

* Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
* Special Marriage Act, 1954.
Widow Remarriage Act, 1854.

Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

Hindu Adoption Act and Maintenance Act, 1956.

The Dowry Prohibition Act.

The Factories Act, 1948.

Mines Act, 1952.

Employees State Insurance Act, 1948.


Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1983 regarding Rape.


The Indecent Represent of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.


The constitutional and legal edifice thus seems to promote the principle of equality and justice and legal rights of women.

To assess the effectiveness of policies, plans, programmes and laws made by the government for women development, some indicators of development
have been taken in the study. These indicators indicate the socio-economic status which women enjoy in Indian society. If socio-economic status of women has improved in the society, it means women development has taken place. If the women suffer from inferior socio-economic status, oppression, subordination and exploitation it means their development has been hindered and actions taken by the government under different plans and programmes to ameliorate their conditions have been ineffective.

In the context of women, status implies what is her role and position in a particular sub-system? What are their rights and privileges? Their access to power, authority and decision making and their present position in comparison to their position in last few decades. Status is realized through roles. This brings into focus the rights and opportunities provided to women by the state and socio-cultural institutions to perform these roles.

Important Status (Development) indicators used in the study are -

* Male - Female Sex ratio.
* Life expectancy at birth.
* Mean Age at Marriage.
* Reproductive Health.
* Male - Female disparities in literacy rate.
* Enrollment rates of boys and girls.
* Drop - out rates.
* Work Participation Rates.
* Difference in wage rates.
* Unemployment rates of Males and Females.
* Women's Political awareness and political participation.
* The control over their reproductive behaviour.
* Registered crimes against women such as bride burning, eve-teasing, molestation and rapes etc.

The trends in the data regarding literacy rates, education, mean age at marriage, life expectancy indicate an improvement and may create a confusion that the status of an average Indian women is high but the reality is that the women whose status has improved constitute a microscopic minority. Moreover, the rates of improvement have been very uneven between regions, communities and various sections of population.

An examination of these indicators reveals that an average Indian women still face discrimination, subordination and exploitation in every walk of life. Their position is still marginal in Indian economy and society and measures taken by the government under various policies and plans have been ineffective in improving the lot of aggrieved women.

A critical evaluation of effectiveness of women development policy in India analyses the major drawbacks of government plans and programmes. It makes an analysis of how and why the government has been unsuccessful in ameliorating the conditions of majority of women. The evidences given in the critical analysis have been backed by the data collected by various government
agencies. An examination of the reports of various committees relating to women such as Towards Equality (1974) Shram Shakti (1988), National Perspective Plan for women (1988-2000) and National Policy for Empowerment of women (1996) also admits that policies and programmes for women development still suffer from various constraints. More recently the Ninth Plan document also highlights the basic constraints that women face in improving their prospects for development.

The critical evaluation of legislative measures brings to fore how and why the plethora of legislative measures, though promulgated with the view to ameliorate, enhance and protect women's interest in different areas, have not been successful in conferring on women their due rights. Various social, economic, cultural and political factors which act as obstacles in the way of enforcement of these legal rights have been analysed in the study. The study finds a wide gap between the stated social objectives and achievements, between the legal framework and empirical realities, between symbolism and reality.

Personal observation and discussions with a large number of person from various sections of society have been made. They include housewives, agricultural labourers, industrial workers, construction workers, clerks, entrepreneurs, lecturers, doctors, lawyers, nurses etc. The example of such women with whom discussion was made have been given in the study wherever necessary. The discussion with different categories of women has helped to strengthen the study and make it more qualitative and impressive.
**Data Source**

The present study is primarily macro in approach and is descriptive and analytical, mainly relies on official data available in Government of India, Annual Reports, Department of Women and Child Development, various Five Year Plan documents by planning commission, Registrar general of India, Census Reports, different series, economic survey, various issues, central statistical organisation, women and men in India Annual Report, Election Commission of India Reports, Reports of working groups on status of women, Shram Shakti - Report of National Commission on self employed women and women in the informal sector, Towards Equity - Report of the Committee on status of women, National Perspective Plan for women, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs and Delhi Police Records.


To study the constitutional provisons and legal safeguards relating to women, various criminal and civil law manuals, Journals, All India Reports (AIR), published books of various law agencies have been consulted. The task is not so stupendous in so far as the collection of material is concerned as the secondary
source material on various aspects of constitutional and legal status of women is aplenty. However, it has not been an easy exercise to attempt at a concise, yet comprehensive and systematic work on various legal and constitutional provisions, programmes, policies for women in the context of her socio-economic transformation and sort out by critical analysis the deficiencies in the enforcement system that result in her inferior status.

Limitations of the Study :-

Limitations of the study are that the study is based primarily on secondary data collected from various government sources. Because of vastness of area of the study under research it was not possible to collect primary data from each and every state of India comprising women with different socio-economic-cultural conditions i.e. literates - illiterates, employed-unemployed, high caste - low caste, old - young rich - poor and so on. Because the results of a particular area or strata may not be applicable to whole female population of India. The small sample may not be the true representation of the whole population. Therefore, secondary data from various government publications, books, journals regarding women issues have been used. Moreover, legal provisions relating to Hindu women only have been discussed due to limitation of vastness of the topic. The results of the study are applicable to an average Indian women. Moreover, the term development denotes many dimensions but for the sake of simplicity of analysis, only socio-economic development of women has been discussed.
Review of literature :-

"Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a stand still. They are engines of change, windows on the world, light houses erected in a sea of time" - Barbara Tuchman.

In the recent years significant contributions have been made by academicians and scholars from various disciplines in India and abroad towards the role and status of women mainly in context of economic development and social change. This is mainly the outcome of the declaration of decade for women by the United Nations. A large number of studies and research have been conducted on women related issues. Reports, books, research papers have been published dealing with various aspects of the lives of women practically all over the world.

Ester Boserup's Pioneering work, Women's Role in Economic Development, (1970) was only the beginning of the burgeoning literature on women's participation in the economic development. She opined that when development excluded women from participation. It denied its benefits to women and it functioned for less effectively.


Noden Heyzer in Missing Women, (1988) strongly deals with the impact of development policies on women and it also advocates that the data base used for planning must be differentiated on the basis of gender along with other variables.

Joyclin Massiah in his book on Women in Developing Economies (ed) (1983), analyses the changing perceptions of policy matters in planning for women since the era of Community Development and green revolution. The gradual change in the approach from welfare to empowerment is traced systematically.

Chaudhary S.N., Pratima, Pratima chaudhary's (ed) National Development and Women (1992) deals with the issues of gender disparity in national development process of India. Ashok Mitra, in his "The Status of Women: Literacy and Employment (1979), highlights that the central fact of female literacy and growing female unemployment clearly bring out broad policy considerations at both national and state levels. Roopvohra and Arun Sen, in Status, Education and Problems of Indian Women (1986), deals with the overall status of women and reviews the educational problems of working women in India.

O.C. Sharma, Crimes Against Women (ed) (1994) highlights the
problems relating to enforcement of legal rights for women. It deals with the crimes against women and analyses that the police is not protecting women in the way they should. Roma Mukherjee in *Legal Status and Remedies for Women in India* (1997) introduces various legislations relating to women particularly laws relating to matrimonial matters. It provides suggestions for better enforcement of women rights. Sachhidananda Sinha in *Women's Rights: Myth and Reality* (1984) deals with various laws relating to women. It traces the attitude of women towards legal rights. G.B. Reddy in *Women and the Law* (1997) gives a wide account of various Acts pertaining to matrimonial matters, social legislations, labour laws etc. It gives suggestions for enforcement of these rights. *Crimes Against Women and Protective Laws* (1995) by Shobha Sexena, discusses in detail the nature and extent of crimes both at domestic as well as societal level. It shows that the graph of these crimes is increasing day by day.


Sarala Goplan in *Women and Employment in India* (1995) deals about the sectors of employment in India. It highlights the impact of structural
adjustment programmes on women employment.

Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill, *Women's Education in Developing Countries* looks into the female deprivation in education both as a cause and consequence of a vicious circle. B.D. Bhatt, S.K. Sharma, *Women's Education and Social Development* highlights the importance of female education in the social development of a country. Kate young (ed), *Women and Economic Development* (1988) identifies the practical and strategic needs of women. It also highlights the problems that concern women and their incorporation in development through the case study of Equador. Premlata Pujari and Vijaya Kumari Kausik, *Women Power in India* (vol.2) (1994) deals with the integration of women in development as well as their position and role in different sectors of economy. A book by Women's Feature Service entitled *Power to Change* (1992) deals with sustainable life styles or the search for them and has a strong theme. The various issues relating to sustainable development for women are dealt with in this book.

Krishan Ahuja in *Women in Sustainable Development* (1995) attempts to establish educational and research linkages between women, development and environment and highlights the role and importance of women in the development process for sustainable development. Nirmal K. Gupta and Jitender K. Sudan in *Women at Work in Developing Economies* (1990) highlights the fact that new technologies are largely responsible for the deteriorating status of women in developing economies.

Mohini Giri in *Emancipation and Empowerment of women* (1998)
highlights the obstacles in women development, drawbacks of governments policy for women development and suggests the strategy for emancipation and empowerment of women. The work by Morty Chen (ed), on "Indian Women" (1986) makes an attempt to study women in different sectors of the economy in rural areas. Anand Arora, *The women Elite in India* (1990), deals with the problems of women working in high jobs and the challenges they face in male oriented jobs.

**Chapter Scheme :**

This study compares of six chapters -

Chapter I entitled *Introduction* tries to highlight the definition of development and role and importance of integrating women into the development process. Various problems relating to women have been discussed in this chapter. Though women have been discriminated, marginalised and deprived of many rights and facilities, they continue to contribute enormously to the economic development of a country under various capacities. This chapter highlights the meaning of development need for women development and effect of development on women. This chapter also includes objectives of the study, scope of the study, review of literature, Methodology, Resources of data, limitations and chapter scheme of the study.

Chapter II entitled *Women Development in India - Policies and Programmes During Planning Period*, deals with the various development programmes implemented for the women's development from First Five Year
Plan period to eight five year plan period. Further, programmes under the ninth plan period have also been mentioned. Women constitute nearly 50% of total population in India and form a great untapped reservoir of human energy. In order to involve women into the mainstream of development, the government of India has implemented a number of welfare programmes under various Five Year Plans. But the allocation for women's welfare programmes is highly insufficient and biased, when compared to total outlay, though quantum wise it has increased from Rs. 4 crores during the First Plan to Rs. 200 crores in the Eight Plan. Though financial allocation is a necessary condition but it is not the sufficient one to enhance the women's development. Besides, some of the commissions, policies of the government of India dealing with women's development and empowerment are death with.

Chapter III entitled Women and Legislation deals with a brief account of various constitutional and legislative social and economic legislations and various labour laws for safeguarding the interest of poor, innocent women. Despite the increasing number of protective laws, the crimes against women have continued their upward trend pushing more and more women into the list of victims of rape, cruelty, bride burning, prostitution and so on. The need of the hour is not more legislations but the proper enforcement of existing legislation.

Chapter IV entitled Socio-Economic Status of Women, portrays the present socio-economic status of women. If women development takes place, status of women improves. Therefore, some indicators of development have been
taken in this chapter. The data relating to these indicators presented in this chapter regarding sex-ratio, Maternal mortality, mean age at marriage, Male-Female disparities in literacy rates, dropout rates, adverse work participation rates for women, registered crimes against women such as rape, bride burning, eve teasing depict the low socio-economic status of women inspite of constitutional and legal safeguards provided to women.

Chapter V entitled **Effectiveness of Women Development Policy - A Critical Evaluation** critically examines the policy adopted by the government for the development of women. This chapter has been divided in two parts. Part I make an evaluation of state's programmes and policies through planning period. It highlights that state's patriarchal attitude has remained biased against women. They have been treated as weaker section, a housewife, a mother and they have been lowest claim on public resources. Part II critically evaluates the legislative provisions relating to women. It highlights that inspite of various constitutional and legislative provisions women empowerment has not been realised because of various problems relating to enforcement of these laws, there are various loopholes in the laws so these laws are violated frequently, moreover, socio-cultural factors also act as obstacles in the way of enforcement of these laws.

Chapter VI entitled **Research Findings and Policy Recommendations** is biased on the observations of the research work. It highlights weaknesses of government, programmes and policies and lack of awareness, loose provisions and ineffective enforcement of legislations relating to women. Some valuable
and well thought out suggestions to enhance women's role and participation in the process of development have been made in this chapter.