STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Of late in sociolinguistics there has been a spurt in the growth of literature dealing with the connection if any, between the structures vocabularies, and ways of using particular languages and the social roles of the men and women who speak these languages. Do men and women who speak a particular language use it in different ways? If they do, do these differences arise from structures of that language, or do any differences that exist simply reflect the ways in which the sexes choose to deal with each other in that society?

There is no dispute that there are certain well defined differences between the speech of men and women, which are not just confined to one or two languages but one may come across with similar instances here and there throughout the world. Studies by certain scholars have shown that women's language exhibit certain characteristics which have an interplay with the immediate society to which they represent and which reflect their place and position in the society.

According to certain beliefs and myths the normative behaviour of interaction are evolved by men to which women are expected to observe. Silence is one such
device used extensively by men against women and prescribed vociferously by them as part of their moral teaching. It is their duty to keep silent and listen to their fathers, brothers (be they young or old) and husbands. Silent females socially submissive and docile are considered to be the diacritica of ideal one.

1.2 The normative behaviour of the female speech repertoire displays certain linguistic characteristics which have a well-marked communicative competence. What are the linguistic characteristics of males and females speech? Do men and women speak differently? Can the differences be discerned at the different levels of linguistics? Are the differences only with regard to the language per se or one may find such differences with regard to certain aspects of their communicative competence as well? Does the difference in age and socio-economic status of females and males contribute towards the difference? Against the backdrop of certain beliefs and myths, and stereotypes attached with the normative sociolinguistic behaviour of females, to what extent the females abide by these norms? In a highly stratified and segmented society like ours where there is well defined roles played by males and females are there any distinct linguistic roles as well? Has the exposure to the changing social pattern and ongoing societal development
made any impact in the female speech repertoire. Out of different aspects of communicative competence for example, belittlement, condescension, initiating conversation, interruption, overlaps, topic-choice, back-channel noises, minimal responses, hedges and modals etc. there are some which are shared by both females and males, while there are a number of other aspects of communicative competence which remain exclusive to female speech repertoire. What are those aspects of communicative competence which are and which are not shared by both the sexes? The question raised above form the basis of the present study.

1.3 Along the line to answering the questions raised above, the first chapter makes survey of available literature on language and sex. The salient features of studies done by different scholars have been highlighted with a view to finding out the characteristics of females and males speech.

1.4 The chapter two which is methodology, we have talked about the sample used in the present study, the procedure and the tools adopted for the data collection. The sample basically consists of total 100 respondents of which 50 are females and 50 are males which have been drawn from the middle socio-economic status. The age variable ranges from 20-40 years. For pragmatic reasons and more so for the
sake of convenience, we have classified this age group as adulthood. For a better result and understanding the sociolinguistic outcome of this age group has been compared with the age group (14-19 years) used in our earlier study (M.Phil work).

1.5 In the third chapter the data have been analyzed. The analysis has taken place at the following linguistic levels:
   I. Discourse level
   II. Lexico-grammatical level
   III. Lexical level
   IV. Phonological level.

1.6 The results have been discussed on the basis of the data analysed in the concluding chapter.

1.7 Towards the end, Appendix has been provided. In the Appendix the biographical questionnaire is given through which information like the subjects name, father’s name, occupation, education, income etc. were obtained, in order to establish the social class.