CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Having examined the various aspects of violation of women's human rights vis-à-vis a case study of violation of women's human rights in Kamrup district in the preceding chapters, an attempt is made here to sum up the analysis and to see if any conclusion can be drawn as a result of the study.

The main thrust in this study has been to understand the women's human rights question in its historical and theoretical perspective. The analysis of the empirical survey, document the existence of discrimination on the basis of gender which naturally violates human rights of women. The broad parameters of the study include the entire gamut of the human rights discourse as it is enshrined in the various international documents and within the framework of the Indian constitution and other statutes.

Human rights may be stated as the inherent and inalienable rights of every human being without which one cannot live with dignity. The origin and development of human rights can be clearly explored with the help of the theories of different periods. The concept of human rights has been evolved from the concept of natural law. The Greek thinkers developed the idea of natural law, the purpose of which was to enable man to realise good life, that is, 'living according to virtue'. Cicero, who was a Roman lawyer and statesman defined natural law as right reason in agreement with nature from which neither the state nor the people can be exempted. During the Medieval period, the church-fathers tried to establish the superiority of the church by identifying the natural law with the law of god. The theories of the renaissance period denounced the idea of the dominance of the church and encouraged a belief in natural law and universal order.
However, the positivists rejected the idea of human rights based on natural law. The exponents of positivism advocated the theory that the source of human rights is to be found only in legislative enactment of a system of law which has sanctions attached to it. Marx did not recognise human rights to be natural and inalienable. He made a connection between human rights and bourgeois society and opined that with the attainment of communism, the concept of human rights would be unnecessary.

The natural law theory though faced a decline with the emergence of the scientific age, its revival took place in the twentieth century and the indispensability of values and moral order was globally felt.

Starting from the Magna Carta (1215), the other codified forms of human rights like the Petition of Rights (1628), the Bill of Rights (1689), the American Declaration of Human Rights (1776, 1791), the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) etc., also contributed to the development and universalisation of the concept of human rights.

However, human rights have assumed an international dimension through the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 etc., ensure human rights of all human beings of the world. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 is recognised as a historic document articulating a common definition of human dignity and values. The declaration is a yardstick by which to measure the degree of respect for and compliance with international human rights standards everywhere on earth.

The United Nations performs the monitoring role also. The Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the
Committee on the Rights of the Child etc., monitor and handle the cases of individual human rights abuses and violation of rights by member states. Thus, in the present times, human rights are considered so indispensable that even the sovereign states are held responsible and answerable to the international community, regarding violation of human rights in their respective states.

In the national spheres also human rights have been recognised through national constitutions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted during the drafting of the Constitution of India and its influence is clearly visible in Part III (fundamental rights), and Part IV (directive principles of state policy) of the constitution. However, the philosophy of human rights may be traced even in the ancient Indian society. In one of the judgements (Maneka Gandhi vs. Union of India) of the Supreme Court of India it was stated that the fundamental rights represent the basic values cherished by the people of India since Vedic times. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata the Arthashastra and the Buddhist doctrine of non-violence emphasise upon the human rights. During the British rule though the demand for the fundamental rights of the citizens was made, yet no positive response was received from the British. However, with the attainment of independence people's rights have been ensured through various enactments along with the constitution.

In Chapter II an attempt is made to examine the concept of women's human rights and the position of women in society from a historical perspective. Though the term human rights theoretically include all individuals irrespective of religion, race, sex, colour or national boundary, a separate concept of women's human rights emerged as a result of exclusion of women's issues from the human rights issues. At one time, when
the inherent rights of the individuals were termed as 'Rights of Man', many countries considered that those rights were only for males. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt coined the term 'Human Rights' so that it can include both males and females equally. But it also proved to be a change only in the name and not in the actual practice. Even, the United Nations, within which human rights emerged as a movement, set up two commissions — the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women, which developed in isolation from each other. The Human Rights Commission is equipped with more power, staff and budget than the Commission on the Status of Women.

Further, though the instruments of the United Nations define human rights in gender-neutral language yet no elaboration of the rights has been made from the point of view of women. Most of the definitions of human rights tend to protect the rights in the public sphere. Virtually, a majority of women remain untouched by such definitions, as women have to face the violation of their rights mostly in the private sphere. The inbuilt dichotomy between the private and the public domain prevents women from realising their rights. Relegated to the private domain, women find that they are outside the purview of the rights. It is considered by most of the states that the government should not trample on the sanctity of the family by interfering in matters of domestic violence. The existence of the distinction between public and private spheres which deprive women of the enjoyment of their human rights, resulted in the demand for the recognition of 'Women Rights as Human Rights', and ultimately the Vienna Conference in 1993 and the Beijing Conference in 1995 made declarations that women's rights are inalienable and integral part of human rights.
Subordination of women in society is not a new phenomenon. August Bebel hence remarked, 'from the beginning, oppression has been the common lot of women'. In the patriarchal society, subordination of women may be identified with various forms, such as, discrimination, disregard, insult, control, oppression and violence. The inferiority, which women had to face in every stage of their lives, compelled them to have recourse to the liberation movements. The women's movements for right to suffrage, property rights, employment etc. prove that women had to struggle hard to get their rights from which they have been deprived of for a long time.

The United Nations, from its inception has adopted various measures for the promotion of human rights of women. The most important among these, is the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). It is a standard setting instrument for the actualisation of the human rights of women. It imposes positive economic, social and cultural duties on state parties which is essential for the elimination of historical discrimination against women.

Though much have been said and done regarding human rights of women, till now, there are many countries in the world, including India, which undermine women's human rights, for the preservation of age old custom, culture and religious norms. Most of these countries have ratified the Convention, but they have reserved certain provisions which they cannot implement for customary or religious inferences. Thus, though formally, in theory, all human rights are applicable to women, in practice, till now, in the name of religion and culture, women are deprived of their basic human rights.

The position of women in India from a historical perspective has also been focused in this chapter. Since the Vedic period women's rights situation has passed
through several stages. It seems that in the ancient times women were held in high esteem and they enjoyed relatively high position than the women of subsequent periods. They had considerable freedom in the matters of education, marriage, worship and also in family affairs. Alongwith the boys, girls also got the privilege of education and they could take part in the sacrificial and other religious activities. Girls were married at a mature age and widow remarriage was also prevalent. These things indicate that the atmosphere was congenial enough for the women in society.

Gradually, the general position of women began to decline. In the epic period, restrictions were imposed on the activities of women and they were deprived of some of the rights so far they enjoyed, viz., rights to education, worship and widow remarriage. The Smritis, specially the Manu Smriti prescribed a limit to women's activities within the four walls of home, beyond which they could not proceed. Dependence of women upon men and subordination of women to men due to their inherent incapacity and deficiencies was well established. Such a situation naturally relegated women to an inferior position. The position of women further deteriorated during the Mohammedan period, as certain evil practices like child marriage and purdah crept into Indian society and women had to pass through the period deprived of their basic human rights.

The situation however, was changed to a certain extent with the advent of British rule. Some social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, alongwith the British administrators tried to eradicate the evil practices like sati, child marriage, female infanticide etc., and laws were enacted in that regard. Measures were adopted for the upliftment of female education also. The efforts adopted to check the evil practices,
however could not at once put an end to them, but it made people alert about the prevalence of discriminatory practices regarding women and roused their conscience.

The freedom struggle marked the beginning of a new era in the women's human rights scenario in India. Mahatma Gandhi called upon women to participate in the freedom struggle and he received positive response from the women of India. It awakened Indian women's interest to a new field to which they did not have any access. So far, the social condition of India provided little opportunity to women to take part in the political activities. The freedom struggle paved the way for women's active participation in the political arena. Many female participants of the nationalist movement, like Margaret Cousins and Kamladevi Chattopadhyay were the founders of some women's organisations, e.g., All India Women's Conference (1927). Due to the pressure of this organisation, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 etc., were enacted. Since then, Women's movement continues till now for the all round welfare of women.

The constitution of independent India confers rights to its citizens irrespective of any consideration of sex. Several laws were also enacted to safeguard the rights of women. An analysis of women's condition in the post independence period however, proves that in spite of the constitutional guarantee for equal status and opportunity, disparity on the basis of sex continues. Violation of women's human rights with changing dimensions and magnitude still persists. Even now, parents do not perceive male and female children as equals. The prevalence of unequal sex ratio, low literacy rate of females, deprivation of females from inheritance right etc., are the result of continuance of the age old attitude towards women as an inferior being. In the decision making process
also the participation of women remains to be quite insignificant. Since the first election of 1952, only in the election of 1999, the highest 8.7% seats of Lok Sabha have been occupied by female representatives, otherwise it is even less than this percentage. The number of female contestants is also not satisfactory as they do not get proper response from the political parties. The prevailing situations have conditioned the women in general to remain dormant, inactive and uninterested in political affairs.

Social, economic and political deprivation as mentioned above make women an easy target for violence. The unabated crimes and aspersions committed upon women reflect their position in society.

The position of women in society and the attitude of people towards them is to a great extent determined by the religious norms which are discriminatory in character. To improve the situation certain steps have been taken after independence. The modern enacted laws are based on equality of sexes and Art 15(3) of the Constitution of India even provides for positive discrimination towards women and children. But such provisions also have not proved to be fruitful, rather the situation has become worse. Chapter III focuses on the role of religion, custom and law as determinants of women's human rights. An analysis of the religious norms of some of the major religions reveals that almost all the scriptures and the texts on religion are the mouthpieces of patriarchy and contain discriminatory provisions which derogate the status of women. All the religions prescribe separate rights and duties for males and females. Preference for male progeny, dependence of females upon males, subordinate position of females in family and society, segregation and confinement of women within household activities, deprivation of women from inheritance and priesthood etc., are the direct result of the
religious norms. The analysis clearly depicts that in no religion whether it is Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism or Buddhism, women get equal treatment with their male counterparts. The religions try to justify that women are inferior to men for their inherent deficiencies.

It is noteworthy that the lives of various tribes are led by customary practices rather than by the religious norms or statutes. There is no doubt that in tribal society also, complete equality between males and females does not persist e.g., they do not enjoy right to inheritance. Yet, it must also be admitted that females of various tribes enjoy more rights and freedom in comparison to the females of other communities. The tribal girls are married at a mature age and widow remarriage is also prevalent. So far, the evils of the dowry system and purdah system has not plagued the tribal society and virtually, tribal women enjoy a relatively high position in society.

Law, as an important source of social change, can play a significant role, for the eradication of social evils. However, in spite of the existence of the constitutional and statutory laws, lives of people are mainly led by the personal laws which are considered to be of divine revelation. It is worth-mentioning that though the laws made by human beings are based more or less on the equality of sexes, the personal laws, based on religious norms are full of discriminatory practices regarding women. Yet, the laws made by Almighty get preference over the man-made laws and people are not ready to give up the prevailing practices derogatory towards women.

However, it must also be admitted that the existing laws are also not free from deficiencies and hence, they have not been able to curb the rate of crime against women. The inherent deficiencies in the laws and lack of proper enforcement, deprive women of
proper enjoyment of their rights. Proclaimed equality has become a misnomer, in the presence of the harsh reality. The investigation reveals that in many occasions, the persons concerned with law making and adjudicating are influenced by the value system of society, and that is why, in spite of the existence of so many laws, gender based discrimination continues. An analysis of some of the existing laws reveals that they are not free from deficiencies and some necessary laws. Such as law against domestic violence have not been enacted so far. In certain cases it has been observed that Judges also are not free from gender bias in pronouncing their judgements. Hence, it is evident that the religious norms have deprived women of their due rights to a great extent, but at the same time law also has not been able to safeguard the rights of women, as expected.

Being the core chapters of the study, chapters IV and V deal with the position of women in Assam and the empirical survey conducted in Kamrup district respectively. As Kamrup is an integral part of Assam, an analysis of the position of women in greater Assamese society will certainly help to understand the prevailing women's human rights scenario in Kamrup district. An attempt has been made in Chapter IV to examine the position of women in Assam, from a historical perspective and the reference of Kamrup has also been taken into account.

It is worth mentioning that, in the ancient times, the whole of Assam was known as Kamarupa and it was replaced by the name of Assam only after the arrival of the Ahoms during the thirteenth century. Kamarupa was a place of Shakti worship and it was essentially involved with the name of mother Goddess Kamakhya. Women of Kamarupa occupied a respectable position in society as they were considered to be the living image
of Goddess Kamakhya. At that time, the evil practices like Sati, Purdah and dowry were completely absent.

During medieval period, some of the women proved their expertise in administrative activities, but the condition of the common lot of women was far from satisfactory. In this period, the subordinate position of women in society was well established with the prevalence of child marriage and purdah and women were confined to household chores only. With the advent of the Vaishnava movement in Assam, in the fifteenth century, the position of women further deteriorated. The Vaishnavas underestimated women's character and ability and considered them as liars, sinners and unchaste and thus women lost their respectable position in society.

Till the nineteenth century, Assamese girls did not get any opportunity of formal education. Assam was brought under the British rule in 1826. Alongwith the British, the Missionaries also came to Assam with a view to preaching Christianity. They however, took up some welfare activities and set up the first school of girls in 1840. To attract students, they even introduced training of sewing, knitting, weaving and household works, in the schools. In spite of all these efforts people were not convinced regarding the importance of education for girls and till 1874-75 only 4.33 percent girls received primary education.

The freedom movement however paved the way for Assamese females to get acquainted with the outside world. Gandhiji's visit to Assam in 1921 encouraged the females to come out for the cause of the nation. Active participation of females in the freedom movement helped them to get involved with the activities other than the household chores. Women of Assam played very significant role during the freedom
movement. They had to bear the torture of police and were also imprisoned. Some of them like Kanaklata and Bhogeswari Phukanani even sacrificed their lives for the nation. Women even took up issues like purdah system and were very vocal against it. Chandra Prova Saikiani, the torch-bearer of women's rights in Assam, vehemently opposed the practice of purdah system and in 1926, established the Asom Mahila Samity for the overall welfare of women.

In the post-independence period also emancipation of women from the age-old discriminatory practices has not become possible. In all the areas, social, economic and political – lack of proper opportunity compels women to lag behind their male counterparts. Unequal sex-ratio, low female literacy rate, low participation of women in economic activities are the facts which reflect the position of women in society. In the political field also in the last thirteen elections, since 1952 to 1999 not more than two female members represented Assam in the Lok Sabha at a time. Similarly, since 1952, so far only fifty females have become the members of the Assam Legislative Assembly (consisting of 126 seats). Till now politics is considered to be a ground to be dominated by males. Though the constitutional provisions empower women with political rights, women are yet to overcome the socio-economic hindrances which come in the way of proper enjoyment of their rights.

In Assam, an upward trend of crime against women has also become a matter of serious concern. Crimes in the nature of kidnapping, rape, molestation, domestic violence, dowry death etc., are continuing in an unabated manner. Moreover, Assam as an insurgency prone area, has so far experienced many army operations. During search operations, army commits inhuman torture upon the innocent people. Women have to
face the atrocities like rape, molestation etc. The protectors, thus on many occasions appear as the perpetrators of peoples' rights. The review of the overall situations pertaining to women makes it clear that women have to face violation of their rights in all walks of life.

An empirical study, conducted in Kamrup district and its findings have been elaborately discussed in the fifth chapter. The cases collected from the Assam Human Rights Commission and Assam State Commission for Women have been classified in four categories, i.e., domestic violence, dowry, rape and kidnapping and missing. An in-depth study of the cases makes it clear that home is the most vulnerable place where gross violation of women's human rights takes place. An analysis of the cases shows that the root causes behind the crimes committed against women are - the drunkenness of the husband, extra-marital relations of the husband, prevalence of patriarchal values, materialistic attitude of people, derogation of moral values, trafficking of girls etc. The reported cases also reveal that police is not sympathetic enough to consider the cases of women. On many occasions, police is reluctant to register the cases and in stead of arresting the accused persons, they try to safeguard them. The existing legal provisions, concerning the aforementioned crimes have also been discussed.

The field survey conducted in some selected areas of Kamrup district reveals the position of women in society and the women's human rights scenario in the study area. Regarding the position of women in society, 77.2% respondents opine that in the society women are considered to be inferior to men and 79% feel that women do not enjoy equal rights with men. However, with this situation people are so accustomed that they do not feel the urge to change it. 65.6% respondents opine that a woman should not have a
different opinion from that of her husband's. Similarly, in the decision making process, in 81% cases, the husband takes the major decisions of the family. The wife does not have to play any role in this regard. Further, people do not perceive that boys and girls are equals. Hence, the discriminatory roles set for male and female children is strictly followed. The investigation reveals that 83.3% families do not train their male and female children in the same way. Though people are well aware of the fact that women are deprived of their due rights, yet they are not ready to do away with the deeply ingrained culture relating to the discriminatory practices against women.

The findings point out that the society is passing through a complex transitional period. Development in education has taught people to become reasonable and that is why people do not hesitate to admit that the prevailing discriminatory practices intervene the development of women. At the same time, it has become difficult for them to create a congenial atmosphere, as they do not want to part with the age-old social norms, e.g.,. 91.7% respondents opine that economic dependence is one of the major impediments for which women do not enjoy their rights properly. However, only 57.2% respondents want that women should enjoy the right to inheritance. Therefore, it is evident that the existing legislation have little effect upon people.

In such a situation, the role of enforcement mechanisms may prove to be very significant. Proper implementation and adjudication of the existing laws will make them more effective and fruitful. Chapter VI deals with the importance and functioning of the enforcement mechanisms, such as - Assam Human Rights Commission, Assam State Commission for Women, Family Court, Police etc. The efficient working of these mechanisms will certainly help to curb the gross violation of women's human rights.
However, some of these agencies, like courts and police share a great portion of blame for the inefficient implementation of the protective laws. Thus in certain circumstances, the protectors of law become the perpetrators and in stead of safeguarding the rights of people, they contribute to the further violation of human rights. Therefore, proper working of these agencies is of utmost importance for the protection of human rights of people.

The investigation reveals that though Assam Human Rights Commission and Assam State Commission for women are not armed with necessary powers, yet they may relieve the victims of human rights abuse by offering necessary help. Assam Human Rights Commission can recommend the government to take action against the public servants who violate the human rights of people. Therefore, the existence of the human rights commissions may deter the public servants from arbitrary activities. The efficient working of the enforcement mechanisms is essential, otherwise the existence of laws will be futile.

After the examination of the overall situation of the women's human rights, one can conclude with proved conviction that widespread violation of women's human rights has become a matter of serious concern. The social condition is not conducive for the protection of women's human rights and that the protective laws make little meaning in the lives of majority of women. It is a fact that even the state in India has not attempted effectively to outlaw the subordination of women to men or to change the relation of dependence within the family. Thus, society and state also contribute to continue the subordinate position of women and deprive them of their basic human rights. Family, as a major agent of socialisation process is also responsible to a great extent for the present
condition of women. Lack of legal awareness, loopholes and deficiencies in the laws worsen the situation. However, expectations may be made that legal awareness among people, necessary modifications in the laws, integrity on the part of the law makers, the law enforcers and the adjudicators will make the situation better.

**Recommendations and suggestions**

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations may be suggested.

1. In the present circumstances, the most important thing is to bring about attitudinal change in the treatment of women. The traditional and stereotyped image of women as inferior to men should be uprooted and needs to be replaced by the image of self-reliant and self-propelled women.

2. The standard of upbringing of male and female children is still discriminatory. The male child is consciously taught, to be brave and aggressive, while the girl child is conditioned to be submissive and docile. The system of socialisation conditions men and women to accept male domination as natural. The traditional role of a woman as housewife is institutionalised. The gender-bias is so ingrained in the social fabric that women think themselves as inferior to men and even the mothers discriminate in the upbringing of their male and female children.

Therefore, the value system, which project women as inferior to men needs to be changed. A conscious effort to recognise women's ability and eligibility will help to improve the situation.

3. Indian women are never considered as self-sufficient human beings, in their own rights. Indian tradition trains women to seek fulfillment in self-denial. Till now most
of the women feel that they have no identity outside marriage. Therefore, the independent identity of a woman should be recognised.

4. Increase of self-respect and self-reliance among women will help them to enjoy rights properly.

5. The family, society and media socialise children in sexist views. As a result of the sexist upbringing, people easily accept the subordinate position of women in family and society. The beliefs passed through socialisation process are so deep rooted that even the educated people do not easily ignore such notions. Therefore, it is necessary to change the socialisation process. A conscious effort by the family, school and media can bring forth attitudinal change through change in the socialisation process.

6. Support from the family is indispensable for a married woman who is tortured at her matrimonial home. Generally parents think that once the girl is got married their responsibility upon her is over. For the fear of social humiliation, even if inhuman torture is meted out to a girl, the parents in stead of rescuing her, try to patch up the issue, and the result of majority of such cases is nothing but the murder of the girl. Therefore, the support from the family at the time of distress will obviously help the girl to take a right decision and to come out of the trauma.

7. It has been observed that economic dependence is one of the greatest handicap of women. Economic independence of women naturally will make them self-confident. Economic dependence compels women to bear the atrocities committed upon them in their matrimonial homes as they do not have any other means to fulfil even their basic necessities. Therefore, the parents should assist their daughters along with their sons to earn livelihood and become self-dependent.
8. Education exposes people to new thoughts and ideas and provides necessary skills. The aim of education is to ensure full development of individual personality of every human being. Hence, priority should be given to women's education. Education will certainly help women to know about their ability and rights and will enable them to fight against the injustices inflicted upon them. Education should develop consciousness among women for their rights and help them to assert themselves.

9. Proper education should be imparted to the students in the schools. The teachers should promote positive values and desirable attitude among the students. The teachers may shoulder the great responsibility of removing sex-bias from the minds of the students.

10. Human rights education should be imparted to the students of schools and colleges. It will enable them to understand the worth and dignity of each and every individual. Human rights education urges people "to respect and ensure that others respect, one's own human rights and those of other people, and to be prepared, when necessary, to find the courage to defend them in all circumstances."

11. The evil practices prevailing in society, such as dowry, vulgar display of women's pictures in magazines, posters, advertisements etc., which undermine the dignity of a woman should be rejected. The advertisements which project women as dependent and inferior should be banned.

12. It is necessary to change the gender defined roles of males and females. The areas of home-making should be projected as joint responsibility of all the members of the family. Though the culture of working woman has been well established, most of the people are not prepared to provide her with the concessions which are essential for her to
work successfully. Therefore, equal opportunity should be provided to women, by taking equal responsibility in the household work.

13. The right to equality, guaranteed by the constitution of India makes no meaning for many women due to the existence of different personal laws which are full of discriminatory provisions relating to women. Unless and until the discriminatory provisions of the personal laws are done away with, the right to equality is nothing but a misnomer for most of the women. Therefore, no religious or customary practice should prevail at the expense of women's human rights.

14. The outlook of society regarding a raped woman should be changed. In rape cases rather than the culprit, the victim has to face social humiliation. In such cases the culprit spends a normal life and the life of the victim becomes miserable due to mental trauma and social stigma. Such situations should be reversed.

15. It is necessary to increase legal awareness among people. The existence of laws make no meaning if people are not aware of the legal provisions. Legal awareness will help people not only to seek legal redress but will deter some persons from committing crime.

16. Gross violation of women's human rights proves it beyond doubt that the protective laws passed in favour of women have not been able to serve the purpose. Emphasis should be laid on the proper enforcement of the laws so that they become more effective.

17. The existing legal provisions are not enough to safeguard the rights of women. Therefore, enactment of some new laws are also required to check the ongoing violations of women's human rights.
18. The existing laws are also not free from deficiencies and there is need of some modifications. The government should make necessary amendments in these laws so that their existence become fruitful.

19. Training courses on human rights, for the administrative officers in general and police and jail authorities in particular should be arranged. The role of police is very significant to ensure human rights. Better training, better education, right attitude and motivation will help the police to act as protectors. Adequate representation of women in the enforcement mechanisms will help to improve the existing situation.

20. Works of women should be recognised and their contribution should be valued. Due to under-valuation and invisibility to women's work, they are deprived of a dignified and respectable life.

21. Empowerment of women will certainly help to improve the present situation. Women should be enabled to understand their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Participation of women at all levels of decision making will help them. Empowerment will enable women to understand the reasons behind the prevailing inequalities and search for their redressal.

In the conclusion, it may be said that, in view of the prevailing condition of women, the protective laws prove to be nothing but a few drops in the ocean. However, it may be expected that, protective laws and enforcement agencies alongwith the sympathetic attitude of people towards women's issues and women's problems will help to curb the crime against women. It is beyond doubt that the road ahead is long and arduous but deliberate and planned effort, on the part of family, society, various
institutions and the state will certainly improve the situation and ensure human rights of women by accelerating the process of social change.