“To awaken the People, It is the women who must be awakened, once She is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves.”

- Jawaharlal Nehru

“Wajoode-Zan Se Hai Tasweer-e-Kainat Mein Rang Isi Ke Saaz Se Hai Zindagi Ka Soz-e-Daroon”

(Iqbal)

“All the reasoning of men is not worth one sentiment of women.”

- Voltaire

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Women have been regarded as the nucleus of a nation. Just as the body is made up of million of cells controlled by their nucleus, A nation is made up of million of families depend on the women for their progress and well being. The health and growth of the body depend on the vitality of its cells, so also the health and growth of the nation and women must appreciate their axial position as their obligation towards nation building (Kapoor, 1986).

Surely, the role of women is an important one in nation building, therefore, the need to awaken them has been considered at every span of developmental phase. A major index of modernization of any society is the position of its women vis-a-vis men. The more balanced the opportunity structure for men and women, the larger the role women have in society and consequently the higher their status.

In a developing country, such as that of India, it is essential that both men and women play equal and important role in the development effort. A critical
factor in the improvement of the status of women is education which is
indispensable for playing many of the roles. Education not only equips women
with the knowledge and expertise necessary for playing many modern roles and
thereby enables them to rise in status, it also widens their cognitive map and
enables them to compare their position in society vis-à-vis men.

Women constitute ½ of the human race. But still her position in society is
ambiguous due to the assumption about her sex defined concept of a daughter,
sister, wife, mother…, etc. She has been perpetuating the human role since the
dawn of human beings on the earth. But her heritage and physical outcomes are
counted nowhere in the society, and her 2 facets of role, i.e., in production and
reproduction has been recognized partially. Their activities which contribute
equally as that of men to developmental process are yet to get full socio-
-economic, political and cultural recognition in all dimensions. She has been
discriminated from family to state in every society with a few exceptions which
have led to her subordination level, defined as gender gap between men and
women. The subordination of women can be assessed by the level of their
disproportionate representation in various areas of life, such as education,
employment, politics, health and economy due to which every country’s effort
has been intensified to correct mistakes and remove the barriers, to realise their
potentialities.

1.2 STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

The status of women in India statistically means position in relation to
others. The status of women in any society is an index of the standards of its
social organization (Hari, 1991) and (Harish, K., 1991).

According to United Nations, “The status of women in society can be
determined by her composite status which can be ascertained by the extent of
control that she has over her own life derived from access to knowledge,
economic resources and the degree of autonomy enjoyed in the process of decision making and choice at crucial points in her life”.

For better understanding of the socio-psychological dimensions of women’s education in India, one may look into the background out of which the role, position and education of women have emerged from the past to the present.

In Ancient India, ironically, very little information is available about the civilization in pre-Aryan period. The non-Aryans (around 2500 B.C.) had mixed origin and diverse ethnic composition. The Laws of Karma, reincarnation, animal veneration, female goddess, deity worship and male and female fertility symbols might have been imbibed by the Aryans from them. The Aryans produced Vedic literature. The philosophies of Vedanta and Upanishads are their contribution. The Aryan Society was founded on the institution of family and home. Women were assigned prestigious position in the social order. The Rig-Vedic expression, “The wife is the home” – shows how domestic life was woven around the woman. Pre-Vedic Society was matriarchal but Aryan Society was Patriarchal – but the mother was given high status. There was attached importance to goddess Aditi and many other. The ancient literature records that, there were scores of women eligible to become Rishi’s and composed very effective poetry, e.g., Ghosa (a Poetess) and Lopamundra (a lady Rishi and a poeteess). Indo-Aryans recognized the truth embodied in the dictums – “knowledge is power”. In the Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, the women were admitted into philosophical groups and were allowed to discuss the highest spiritual truths of life. The concept of Ardhanarishwara propagated. It conveyed the message that, separately men and women, are incomplete. Only jointly they are complete. In the Upanishadic period, eminent scholars like Sulabha, Vaidya, Maitrey and Gargi made significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge. According to Manusmriti (200 B.C.), women is a perpetual minor. Manu favoured only the domestic and religious education for women. The epics Ramayana and Mahabharata contain the description of
women who presented ideal conduct. The formost among all the ladies mentioned in epics is Devi Sita. Sita is a paragon of virtue; Draupadi, who was leanred, iron willed and forgiving. Other ladies are Gandhari, Kunti, Kaushalya, Sumitra, Mandodri and Tripata, etc.

Buddha inculcated a reverence for learning. Among his first Upasikas were 2 women. Buddha initially was averse to the admissions of women into his Sangha system, but later on agreed to the formation of the order of the nuns – these nuns were imparted religious and spiritual education. A life of calibacy, austerity and strict discipline was expected of them.

In Jainism, there was given great importance to self-denial, restrains of passion and a life of renunciation. The women were admitted in monasteries. The system of education has depth, was universal in nature and applicable to all alike irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Jainism’s had 2 sects. Digambaras and Shwetambaras. The Digambaras were of the opinion that women were incapable of attaining salvation and so did not admit them into their order. Shwetambaras made no distinction between the sexes.

Sikhism considers women as worthy of respect as man’s helpmate and a partner in his domestic life. It advocated equality. The militant brotherhood of the Sikhs, the Khalsa founded by Guru Gobind Singh (17C) was open to both the sexes and all classes.

Christianity considered women as the harbinger of evil. No doubt Catholics give a high respectful place to virgin Mary but both protestants and Catholics feel that the women brought the evil to earth. The Christian priests’ disregard for women education was rooted in their belief in woman’s inferiority. Later the missionaries started giving education to women but they segregated boys and girls and prescribed different courses.

Islam gives equality to women in relation to men in many respects. It makes a case for the dignity of women. In the holy-Quran, the women are
exhorted to be modest, chaste, lead a life of decorum and decency which was interpreted by the religion leaders in terms of putting the women in Parda. This resulted in losing their right to participate in communal activities. In early Islam, female education was highly restricted. In the medieval period, women education was by and large ignored. It is worth noticing that despite Islam giving equality to sexes, the Islamic clergy interpreted it in terms of equality in their own natural sphere of being men and women. While man needs education, women has to stay at home and involve herself in housekeeping for which the training of the house craft is only needed, which can be provided in the home itself.

At the advent of the British Empire, the status of the Indian woman were very low. The custom of polygamy, Purdah, denial of women’s right over property, child marriage, sati pratha and denial of widows’ remarriages – all these practices in this period resulted in the development of a very weak personality of women. The British influence was in the positive direction. The close contacts with Western cultural tradition, literature and education affected very deeply the minds of the Indian leaders. The reformist movement started in the 19C. The leaders like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Zakir Husain and many other.

To Rajaram Mohan Roy goes the credit of laying the foundation of all the reformist movement, which subsequently became instruments for modernization of the country. He devoted whole of his life for raising the status of women in India. Ishwar Chandra V. legalized the widow remarriage. It was through his efforts that the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was passed. Swami Vivekananda felt that the women’s status must be raised. He founded Arya Samaj in 1875 at Bombay. It started Gurukuls for widows, rescue homes for destitute, etc. Swami Vivekananda recommended that women should be supported and educated as man. He said “motherhood is the beginning, motherhood is the end of Indian womanhood.”
Mahatma Gandhi considered that, if a husband is god, wife is a goddess. Gandhi’s effort led to the elevation of the woman’s status, and involved her in the struggle for social progress and political independence. The women were able to develop their latent powers. Women like Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asifali and Bi Amman participated in the political arena with all their might and potentials.

Indian gained freedom in 1947 and her Constitution was adopted on 26 January 1950. The constitution gave full and equal rights to woman as compared to man. The Indian Constitution laid emphasis on the development of an Egalitarian Society. For the elimination of discriminatory practices, several articles were introduced. Several committees and Commissions setup for elevating the status of women.

During the period of independence, a new chapter was inaugurated by proclaiming equal status of women, laid down under various legislative enactments in India, though various provisions and efforts are made for the upliftment of the status of women, but it is pointless to comment for any change occurred.

The Census of India (2001) reported that, the sex ratio declined to 933 female/1000 males in 2001 against 972 female/1000 male in 1901. Literacy level of women from 8.86% in 1951 to 53.7% in 2001 Census in contrast to male literacy of 75.3% in the country. But the difference is too much to be removed. During 1993-94, only 32% girls reached the end of schooling and the rest were dropped out at primary stage. It was also found that work participation rate (total workers) of female steadily rose from 15.92% in 1971 to 25.6% in 2001.

Let us also see the data of women in different religion in Maharashtra and Mumbai, so as to compare their status.
## MAHARASHTRA

### 1. Population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Urban Male</td>
<td>15605535</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindu Urban Female</td>
<td>13467814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Male</td>
<td>450709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Female</td>
<td>448027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Male</td>
<td>3860444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Female</td>
<td>3328489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio: Hindu</td>
<td>863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio: Christian</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio: Muslim</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### 2. Literates:

<table>
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<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hindu Urban Female</td>
<td>9395029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Male</td>
<td>388119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Female</td>
<td>364353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Male</td>
<td>2785799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Female</td>
<td>2073066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Literates (Female): Hindu</td>
<td>69.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Literates (Female): Christian</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Literates (Female): Muslim</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Total Workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Urban Male</td>
<td>8329234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Urban Female</td>
<td>1857951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Male</td>
<td>233555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Urban Female</td>
<td>103716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Male</td>
<td>1944347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Urban Female</td>
<td>210462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Workers (Female): Hindu</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Workers (Female): Christian</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Workers (Female): Muslim</td>
<td>6.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Population:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 1204146
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 915604
   c. Christian Urban Male - 53565
   d. Christian Urban Female - 52675
   e. Sex Ratio: Hindu - 760
   f. Sex Ratio: Christian - 983

2. Literates:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 1006638
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 663371
   c. Christian Urban Male - 46861
   d. Christian Urban Female - 42959
   e. % of Literates (Female) : Hindu - 72.4
   f. % of Literates (Female) : Christian - 81.5

3. Total Workers:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 725537
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 144140
   c. Christian Urban Male - 28996
   d. Christian Urban Female - 13644
   e. % of Total Workers (Female): Hindu - 15.7
   f. % of Total Workers (Female): Christian - 25.0
MUMBAI (SUBURBAN)

1. Population:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 3301565
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 2651910
   c. Christian Urban Male - 169285
   d. Christian Urban Female - 170881
   e. Sex Ratio: Hindu - 803
   f. Sex Ratio: Christian - 1009

2. Literates:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 2733625
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 1902195
   c. Christian Urban Male - 147051
   d. Christian Urban Female - 140485
   e. % of Literates (Female): Hindu - 71.7
   f. % of Literates (Female): Christian - 82.2

3. Total Workers:
   a. Hindu Urban Male - 1890213
   b. Hindu Urban Female - 371169
   c. Christian Urban Male - 88676
   d. Christian Urban Female - 42617
   e. % of Total Workers (Female): Hindu - 13.9
   f. % of Total Workers (Female): Christian - 24.9
Since, the researcher has conducted her research on the Muslim women of Mumbai. The Census of India 2001 (First Report on Religious minorities – Maharashtra) gives the following details.

| (1) | Total population female urban Muslims in Mumbai | - 3,06,212 |
| (2) | Total population female rural Muslims in Mumbai | - 000 |
| (3) | Total population male urban Muslims in Mumbai | - 4,28,272 |
| (4) | Total population female urban Muslims (in Suburban Mumbai) | - 6,57,617 |
| (5) | Total population male urban Muslims (in Suburban Mumbai) | - 8,31,370 |
| (6) | Literate female urban Muslim population in Mumbai | - 2,02,571 |
| (7) | Literate male urban Muslim population in Mumbai | - 3,14,086 |
| (8) | Literate female urban Muslim population (in Suburban Mumbai) | - 4,11,388 |
| (9) | Literate male urban Muslim population (in Suburban Mumbai) | - 6,05,071 |
| (10) | Total workers female urban Muslims in Mumbai | - 20,218 |
| (11) | Total workers female urban Muslims (in Mumbai Suburban) | - 37,136 |
| (12) | Total worker male urban Muslims in Mumbai | - 2,55,769 |
| (13) | Total workers male urban Muslims (in Mumbai Suburban) | - 4,46,896 |
| (14) | Total cultivators female urban Muslims (in Mumbai Suburban) | - 176 |
| (15) | Total cultivators male urban Muslim in Mumbai | - 236 |
| (16) | Total cultivators female urban Muslims in Mumbai | - 105 |
| (17) | Total cultivators male urban Muslim (in Mumbai Suburban) | - 317 |
| (18) | Total agricultural workers female Muslims (in Mumbai Suburban) | - 77 |
(19) Total agricultural workers male Muslim in Mumbai - 174
(20) Total agricultural workers female Muslims in Mumbai - 44
(21) Total agricultural workers male Muslim (in Mumbai Suburban) - 235
(22) Household industry (in Mumbai Suburban) female Muslim urban - 4,400
(23) Household industry female Muslim urban in Mumbai - 2,156
(24) Other workers female Muslim (in Mumbai Suburban) - 32,483
(25) Other workers in Mumbai female Muslim in urban - 17,913
(26) Non-workers female urban Muslim (in Mumbai Suburban) - 6,20,481
(27) Non-workers female Muslim urban in Mumbai - 2,85,994

According to Census of India 2001, First Report on religion, Maharashtra:

(1) Total Muslim female urban population Mumbai and suburban Mumbai - 9,63,829
(2) Literate Muslim female in Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban - 6,13,959
(3) Total workers female Muslim urban in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 57,354
(4) Total cultivators female urban Muslims in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 281
(5) Total agricultural workers female urban Muslim in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 121
(6) Total household female urban Muslims in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 6,556
(7) Other workers female urban Muslims in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 50,396
(8) Non-workers female urban Muslims in Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 9,06,475
(9) Literacy percentage of female Muslim in urban Mumbai - 66.15%
(10) Literacy percentage of female Muslim in urban Mumbai (Suburban) - 62.55%
(11) Literacy percentage of male Muslim in urban Mumbai - 73.33%
(12) Literacy percentage of male Muslim in urban Mumbai (Suburban) - 72.77%
(13) Literacy percentage of female Muslims in urban Mumbai and Mumbai (Suburban) - 63.7%

Hence, the data is less impressive. According to Times of India (07/09/2007) on page 9, given the following data. Ideal child sex ratio is 1,050 girls/1000 boys. The World’s child sex ratio is 990 girls/1000 boys. Maharashtra child sex ratio is 917 girls/1000 boys. Mumbai child sex ratio is 898 girls/1000 boys. According to 2001 Census (Mumbai), non-slum areas, child sex ratio is 918 girls/1000 boys, in slum areas child sex ratio is 925 girls, in Dahisar (R/North ward) – 825, Marine Lines (C ward) – 861, J.J. Hospital (B ward) – 881 and Kurla – Kalina (L ward) – 887. Regarding health, 50% of women from lower socio-economic group face maternal deaths in India. Nearly 20% of pregnancies and miscarriages and death due to poor nourishment. Out of every 7 persons in India, 3 are women suffering from aids, victims of dowry deaths, wife battering and sexual inequality, etc.

The scenario of women’s status has been depicting imbalanced form of indicators. Therefore to save the nation, it is necessary to improve and uplift the conditions of women. In order to fulfill the aim, it is needed, to make women aware of their legal, political, social and economic rights to act against her inferior status, socially, economically, politically and culturally.

The National Committee ICSSR found that women in unorganized sectors were greater victims of both under employment and unemployment.
“The basic problems that women’s role and opportunities for employment in this sector springs from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities, limited skills and illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status.”

Today 94% of women found in unorganized sector. “Relatively more information is available on agricultural workers, there is practically no reliable information on non-agricultural occupation.”

Demands by women for gender equality with men have been a continual theme in western society for at least the last 200 years. Then, there was an origin of feminism. The change in social values that justifies an attempt to change social relations. The development of egalitarian values and the legitimism of rebellion resulted from the French and western women use American resolutions as the philosophical basis for their own resurrections. Mary wall Stone Craft wrote, “A vindication of the right of women” in 1792 in reaction to the revolutionary French declaration of the right of man.

The other major causes were industrialization, which disrupted the entire social structure of society. Economic necessity brought women of new proletariat into the labor market to work for subsistence wages. But the values of the emerging middle class especially the “cult of lady” and the emphasis on female leisure and consumption as signs of their husband’s success, precluded paid employment for middle class women. It is surprising that feminism has always been largely a middle class movement.

1.3 STATUS OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN ISLAM

The women whom the researcher refer to in the study are those who belong to a class which is living either below subsistence level or are belonging

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1 A synopsis of the report of the National Committee (ICSSR (71-74)) on Status of Women in India, p.64, Allied Publication Pvt. Ltd.
2 Ibid, p.63-64.
between security and subsistence, and the women who belong to a religious
minority and who has a strong faith in Islam, and has their own Personal Laws,
Code of Conduct and who is living in Urban Society, which affects their
behaviour, and their way of life.

The problems of women in general are many and much more so in the
case of Muslim women. Some problems are absolutely common where as some
very specific to every religious group. In a male dominated society, women
have to face numerous problems both specific to their religious groups and
specific to their sex. Let us see the status of women before Islam.

**Status of women during Jahiliya period (before advent of Islam):** The
women did not enjoy any rights and were treated as commodity. They were
enslaved, sold and bought like a commodity. Daughter’s were buried alive.
Polygamy practiced. Many forms of marriage including Mut‘ah, Prevailed.
Period of Iddat was one year. Women confined in one room like untouchables.
They had no right of maintenance/divorce.

The drastic change in the status of women took place when, during
Islamic period, the Holy Quran gave many rights to women. The Quran
considers both the sexes as having originated from one living being and hence
they enjoy the same status as man. The following quotation from Quran and
Ahadiths highlights the most important aspects of feminine virtue and the
standing which a woman should have vis-à-vis her husband and father:

1. 4:1 says – “O mankind, be conscious of your sustainer, who has created
you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate and out of 2
spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”

2. In 4:34, Quran says – “Men are maintainers of women as allah has made
some to excel others and as they spend out of their wealth.”

3. In 33:35, Quran says, “Men and women are equal in the eyes of Allah.”
(4) In 3:195, “Allah guarantees the reward of labour to both men and women.”

(5) In 9:71, that “both men and women, are friends to each other.”

(6) 4:19 – “Treat them with kindness, for even if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing which Allah has meant for your own abundant good.”

(7) 2:228 – “Women shall with justice have right similar to those exercised against them, although men have a degree (of advantage) above women. Allah is mighty and wise.”

(8) 4:7 – “Men and women shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen leave; whether it be little or much, it is legally theirs.”

(9) 30:21 – “And among his signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and he has put love and mercy between your (hearts).”

(10) 40:40 – “Those that do evil shall be rewarded with like evil; but those that have faith and do good works, both men and women, shall enter the garden of paradise and receive blessings without measure.”

(11) 4:124 – “But the believers who do good works, whether men or women, shall enter the gardens of paradise. They shall not suffer the least injustice.”

(12) 16:97 – “We shall reward the steadfast according to their noblest deeds. Be they men or women, those that embrace the faith and do what is right we will surely grant a happy life: we shall reward them according to their noblest action.”
(13) 3:195 – “I will deny no man or woman among you the reward of their labor. You are members, one of another.”

(14) 4:20 – “O believers, it is unlawful for you… to force them to give up a part of what you have given them…”

(15) 58:1 – “God has indeed heard the statement of the woman who pleads with thee concerning her husband, and carries her complaint to god. And god always hears the argument between both sides among you, for God hears and sees all things.”

(16) 4:24 – “Except for these (Prohibited) all others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with gifts from your property, desiring chastity not lust.”

(17) 4:4 – “And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift.”

(18) 2:178 – “If a woman kills a man, and the crime is proved, the women will be required to pay the penalty. And, verily the man will be killed for having killed a woman.”

Besides Quran, words of Prophet Mohammad (u.w.b.p.) stressed the high standard of conduct which a man is meant to maintain in his relations:

(1) Only a man of noble character will honour women and only a man of base intentions will dishonour them.

(2) The best among you is he who is best for his family. For my family, I am the best of all of you.

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3 Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab ad Diyat (Fath al-bari, 12/180).
4 Kanzal-Ummal, 16/371.
5 Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab an Nikah, 1/636.
(3) No believing man should hate a believing woman, for if there is any habit of hers that displeases him, there will be some other habit of hers which pleases him.\(^6\)

(4) The most perfect man of religion is one who excels in character. The best among you is he who gives the best treatment to his women folk.\(^7\)

The following traditions give a clear indication of the position that a woman occupies in Islam:

(1) The best possession in the World is a pious woman.\(^8\)

(2) The best thing one could have in a tongue which expresses remembrance, a heart which gives thanks and a believing woman who helps one to be more steadfast in one’s faith.\(^9\)

(3) Treat women well, for they have been created from a rib. The rib is most curved in its upper part, so that if you try to straighten it out, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain intact. Therefore, follow my advice on giving women fair treatment.\(^10\)

(4) Women are the other half of men.\(^11\)

(5) Fear god in respect of women.\(^12\)

(6) Heaven lies beneath the feet of mother.\(^13\)

\(^6\) Muslim, Sahih Kitab ar-Rada, 2/1091.
\(^7\) At – Tirmidhi, Sahih, Abwab ar-Rada, 2/1091.
\(^8\) An-Nasa’I, Sunan, Kitab-an-Nikah, 6/69.
\(^9\) At – Tirmidhi, Sahih, Abwab at-Tafsir, 11/238.
\(^10\) Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab an-Nikah (Fath al-Bari, 9/206-207).
\(^11\) Abu-Dawd, Sunan, Kitab at-Tahara, 1/61.
\(^12\) Ibn. Majah, Sunan, Kitab al-Manasik, 2/1025.
\(^13\) Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, Al-jami’ as-Saghir fi Ahadith al-Bashir an-Nadhir, 1/536.
(7) One who brings up 3 daughters, teaches them good manners and morals, arrange their marriages and treats them with fairness, deserves to be ushered into paradise.\textsuperscript{14}

(8) If a man to whom a girl is born neither buries her alive, humiliates her, nor gives his sons preference over her, he will be allowed to enter heaven by God, as a reward.\textsuperscript{15}

(9) Shall I not tell you what the best object of your charity is? It is your own daughter, who has returned to you as a widow, or a divorcee and who has no one for her except you.\textsuperscript{16}

(10) When a man is tested through his daughters by God, and he treats them well, his actions will guard him from welfare.\textsuperscript{17}

(11) Prophet once observed “Those men are cursed who try to resemble women, and those women are cursed who try to resemble men.\textsuperscript{18}

(12) Beware, your women have rights over you and you have rights over your women.\textsuperscript{19}

(13) A man came to prophet and asked “O messenger of God, who rightfully deserves the best treatment from me?”
‘Your mother’ replied the prophet.
Who is next?
‘Your mother – said’ the prophet.
Who comes next?

\textsuperscript{14} Abu dawd, Sunan, Kitab al-adab, 4/338.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 4/337.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab al-adab, 2/1209-10.
\textsuperscript{17} At-Tirmidhi, Sahih, Abawab al-Birwas – Silah, 8/105.
\textsuperscript{18} Al-Bakhari, Sahih, Kitab al-Lihas (Fath al-Bari, 10/273).
\textsuperscript{19} Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab an–Nikah, 1/593.
‘Your mother’ – replied the prophet.  
Who is after that?  
‘Your father’, replied the prophet.  

(14) The prophet once said that the acquisition of knowledge is the duty of all Muslims.  

There are also many important facts of Islam to be remembered:  

(1) The Quran appreciates the ruler, queen of Sheeba, for her wit and wisdom.  

(2) The prophet said “The best women out of all of them was Mary, the daughter of Imran, and the best woman out of all my own people was Khadija bint Khuwaylid.”  

(3) Prophet said to Aisha – “I have been intoxicated with her (Khadija’s) love.”  

In Islamic history, there were many examples of women who have helped their husbands when faced with critical situations:  

(1) Khadija, Prophets’ 1st wife, who successfully brought the prophet back to a state of normalcy after his experience in the cave of Hira.  

(2) Umm Salamah, Gave advise to go outside, and without a word to anyone slaughter your animal and shave your head. The prophet did exactly as she had suggested.  

20 Al Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab al-Adab (Fath al Bari), 10/329-330.  
21 Ibn Majah, Sunan, Al Muqaddimah, 17, 1/81.  
22 Al Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab ahadith al – Anbiya (Fath al-Bari), 7/104-105.  
23 Muslim, Sahih, Kitab Fad’ail as – Sahabah, 4/188.
(3) It is said that Imam Ibn Jauzi, the famous religious scholar, received his primary education from his aunt.

(4) Ibn Abi Asiba’s sister and daughter were experts in medicine – the lady doctors of their times.

(5) Aishah, handed down to posterity a substantial proportion of what comprises the vast whole of Islamic knowledge.

(6) Umm, Atiyah, a Medinan woman had been present on seven expeditions.

(7) Umm Ad-Dahdah worked on the date orchard (according to Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, 4/308).

(8) Hajar, Abrahim’s wife ran back and forth between Safa and Marwah, near Kabah, to quench the thirst of her crying infant, called rite of sāi. This running, enjoined upon every Pilgrim. Perhaps there could be no better demonstration of a woman’s greatness than God’s command to men, literally to follow her foot steps.

According to the Researcher, it is definitely not the religion, really responsible for her lower status. Islam empowers women – it gives her right of divorce, right to retaliate, legal rights, and share in property, economic right, supreme position to mother and daughters, testimony of women, right of gaining knowledge (Surae Iqra) right of expression, right to work outdoors, right of maintenance, etc. Thus Islam gives a very high status to women.

**Muslim Girl’s Education in Colonial and Medieval India**

If we look at the medieval period, we find several traces of girls education having been emphasized by Muslims during that period. Though this was confined to the ruling class, yet there were many instances of initiatives taken by rulers for the education of common Muslim girls, which shows that these rulers
were interested in empowering women in their social, religious and cultural spheres of life through means of education.

Julaluddin, the Sultan of Hinwar in 15\textsuperscript{th} century, was considered the pioneer of women’s education. There were 13 girls schools in his capital.

Gayasuddin Khilji, of Malwa (1463-1500), who had many tutors in his harem and had founded a Madarasa at Sarangpur to teach arts and crafts to girls. According to Tarikh-e-Farishtra, in this Madarasa arrangements were made to teach music, dancing, sewing, velvet making, shoe making, carpentry, goldsmith’s craft, quiver making, and even wrestling and military arts to girls.

Akbar also established a girl’s school in Fatehpur Sikri. From the account given by Jafer Sharif in his Qanoon-i-Islam, there were many girls schools in those days even for the middle class people. Most of them were private schools, set up in the houses of rich people where elderly ladies used to teach Quran and literary works like Gulistan and Bustan and other books on moral science.

Before the advent of Islam in India, education was monopolized by upper castes, who did not encourage women’s education. The advent of Muslim rule opened the doors for an egalitarian education.

Lodhi era was remarkable from the point of view of spreading education among the common people in both Hindus and Muslims, but the contribution of Lodhi was particularly significant for the emphasis that he laid on women’s education.

\textbf{Colonial Era:} In this era, the conditions of Indian Muslims had become more precarious after the failure of the 1\textsuperscript{st} War of Independence in 1857. This had caused, besides other things a serious set back to the education of Muslim girls also. Majority of Muslim girls were taught the rudiments of religion and to
read the Holy Quran. Muslims were not interested in modern secondary education.

However, by the turn of the 19 century, Muslims had come to terms with modern education and they had picked up in modern education at least at school stage. Muslim girls had also followed suit and had gained their entry into the modern education institutions.

A breakthrough in Muslim girls education came in the early 20 century, particularly in the province of U.P. due to the efforts of the All India Muslim Educational Conference, which was spearheading a campaign for modern education among Indian Muslims and was relentlessly contacting and motivating Muslims in almost all parts of the country to join modern education. It encouraged women’s education by opening the first girl’s primary school in Aligarh in 1906, which was later raised to the status of a degree college.

The 19 century, Poet Altaf Husain Hali and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and others through their poems and writings had started lamenting the state of ignorance of Muslim women and arranging the male folk to take initiatives for their enlightenment of empowerment through education. Maulvi Nazir Ahmad wrote Mirat-ul-Urus (the bride’s mirror) in 1869 emphasizing the necessity of educating the Muslim women for better management of domestic affairs. Hali, had opened a girl’s school in his town of Panipat. He wrote Majalis-un-Nisa (Assemblies of women) stressing the need to impart at home a basic vernacular education. His poem “Chup Ki Dad” lamented the ignorance of women. His views that, they were the true strength of the family and the community. In 1884, in the debating society of the Aligarh Union, a resolution favouring female education was passed. In 1890s, the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore had set up an example for Muslims by running 15 girls primary schools and by planning to start a teacher’s training school. It was only at the strong initiatives of Shaikh Abdullah, during 1902-1906 and strong support of a large number of elite
Muslims, most prominent among them was Begum of Bhopal, that the 1st Girls School was established in Aligarh. In 1914, to boost the female education activities an All India Muslims Ladies Conference was launched under the Presidentship of Begum of Bhopal. In 1927 another All India Women’s Conference was launched in Poona by Hindu Women. Both the Conferences worked together and as a result girls schools were opened in Lahore, Midnapore, Calcutta, Lakhnow, etc.

The partition of India in 1947 had caused a major set back to Muslims education in India. But with the passage of time and Muslims adjustment with the issues, the agonies of partition had gradually subsided and the Muslims, having come to terms with the changed circumstances and slowly and steadily Muslim attitudes had also changed and it brought a slow change in the educational status of Muslim women.

1.4 MUSLIM FEMINISM

The word feminist was invented by Charles Fourier in 19 century. It was used for asking franchise and was later on extended to describe a particular strand in the women’s movement that stressed the uniqueness and difference for women rather than seeking equality, even to the extent of claiming superiority of men over women. Judith Astrella writes: “Feminism is a proposal for social transformation as well as a movement that strives to end the oppression of women.” According to Kamala Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan: “Earlier, the struggle was for the democratic rights of women. Feminist fought for social reform, for a legally equal position in society.” In the seminar on feminist ideologies held in Bengkok (1979) (quoted in Jayawardena, 1982), feminism was defined in terms of two long term goals: (i) right of women to freedom of choice and power to control their own lives in and outside home and have control over their bodies, and (ii) creation of more just social and economic order nationally and internationally.
Feminism in the 3rd World Societies has been responsive to economic and social issues. Present day feminism is a struggle for the achievement of women’s equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control their lives and bodies inside and outside the home.

The beginning of the feminist movement among the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent access to education and the campaign against Pardah were the main points. Earlier 19th Century, the status of women was an issue of concern to male upper caste and class Hindu wormers. Following 1930-32, when women made a tremendous impressions through their involvement in National Agitational Politics.

In India, two movements in Northern India represented and liberalizing influence through a re-interpretation of the Quran – The Aligarh movement and the Ahmadiya movement. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is a pioneer of Aligarh movement. His views was, that women’s education was to emphasize moral and spiritual values. Ahmadiyah movement was concerned with the social teaching of Islam in terms of modern progress.

Another more spirited advocate of women’s right was Sayyid Mumtaz Ali, writer of Huquq-un-Niswan. The All India Muslim Ladies Association, an off-shoot of the Mohammedan Educational Conference (1914-20) passed resolutions centering around the promotion of women’s education, relaxing Purdah rule and abolishing polygamy. In early 20th Century schools for Muslims girl with some western content opened in a number of cities. The writing of Rokeya Sakhawat Husain (1880-1932), depicted the Pardah practices in Avarodhbashini. Begum Hamid Ali, Mrs. Tayabji in Bombay, Lady Shafi and Lady Abdul Qadar invited invitation. Iqbalunnisa Hussain wrote against Pardah. By the 1930, Pardah was a subject of intense discussion in almost all the Ladies Association.
The first Muslim women to came out of Pardah was Begum Hasrat Mohani, who opened a Swadeshi Store in Aligarh. Women like Saadat Bin Kichlu from Lahore, Begum Abdul Majid Khwaja from Aligarh, Bibi Shafatunnisa from Ludhiana, directly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. The other women who joined the National Movement, were Amina Tayabji, daughter Rehena, Begum Sakina Lukmani, Amina Qureshi, Bibi Amtus-Salam from Punjab, Fatima Ismail from Bombay, Zatun Kapasi and Heera A. Ahmad. In the 19th Century Muslim women patriots like Azizan Begum from Kanpur, Begum Hazrat Mahal (wife of Wajid Ali Shah), Biamman (mother of Mohammad Ali), Akbari Begum (mother of Asif Ali), Nishatun – Nisa Begum (wife of Hasarat Mohani), Amjadi Begum (wife of Mohammad Ali Johar), Begum Khursheed Khwaja, Amina Tayabji, Rhena Tayabji, Mrs. Sakina Luqmani, Amina Qureshi, Fatima Tayabali, Zakia Begum, Baji Rashid Latif, Saadat Bano, Amtus-Salam, Fatima Begum, Lady Hasan Imam, Mehmooda Sami, Safiya Abdul Wajid, Begum Majida Bano, Hajera Begum, Zahira Begum, Sultana Begum and many others. There were journals and magazines like Tahzibun Niswan (edited by Mohammad Begum), Khatun (Wahida Jahan Begum) and Ismat, which were meant only for the Muslim women of India.

1.5 MUSLIM SECTS

Although, the Quran was against discord and emphasizes that believers should not allow themselves to be divided into fractions, no one leader emerged after the 4th Caliph to hold Islam together. The learned doctors of Islam, as regards the legality of deciding religious questions by Qias, divided into two camps: (i) The people of Qias and (ii) people of tradition. There were four theological schools, to one of which every Muslim must belong. The founders of these four schools are the so called four great imams. There are: (1) The Imam Abu Hanifa (d.150/767), after whom the Hanafi Madhhab was named. (2) The Imam Mohammad bin Idris Ash Shafi, after whom the Shafai Madhhab was named. (3) The Imam Malik Ibn Anas, after whom the Maliki Madhhab was
named. (4) The Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbali, after whom the Hanbali Madhhab was named. Together these 4 schools comprise the Sunni understanding of the Shariah.

After the death of Mohammad, one party (Shia means party) contended that the succession should remain with the closest relative of the prophet. They favoured Ali. The sh‘ites are well spread through the Islamic World and are most numerous in Iraq, Iran and Indian subcontinent. Shī‘ites are divided into 5 different sects: (1) Kaisaniya, (2) Zaidiya, (3) Imamiya, (4) Ghulat, and (5) Ismailiya. Imamiya were divided into (a) Wuqifa and (b) Nawusiya, (c) Aftaliya, (d) Shunaitiya, (e) Ismailiyaal Waqifa, (f) Musawiya, (g) Twelvers / Ithana Ashariya / Khojas, and (h) Mufdaliya.

Therefore, 3 major sects of Shias were: (1) Zaydis, (2) Twelvers, and (3) Seveners.

**Isamis**: They believe that prophet will be followed by seven Imams. Ismaili teaching are, a creative synthesis of Islam and Greek philosophy. Islam remained the mainspring of its chief doctrines.

All the 3 Bohra sects (1) Daudi, (2) Sulaimani, and (3) Aliyas. Subscribe to the same fundamental doctrines of the Ismaili Shia faith.

Both the Khoja and Bohras are Ismaili Shias. The word *Khoja* is derived from the word Khwaja (means Sir). They have settled in majority in Iran and few in India. There are also Ithana Ashari Khojas, Ismaili Khojas and Sunni Khoja. Khojas believe in twelve imams. The remaining 2 more sects of Islam are: (1) Kharijites and Sufism.

### 1.6 CONCEPT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The phenomenon of women’s inequality is universal, its magnitude and severity vary from country to country, from community to community.
This inequality manifests itself in several forms and is generally measured in terms of the status that women enjoy in society vis-à-vis men. The Population Crisis Committee (U.S.A.) using different indicators of gender inequality examined the status of women in 99 countries. It found that in none of these countries there was gender equality. The country coming closer to equality was Sweden with a score of 87 points out of 100, India holds 77th place in country ranking with a score of 45.5. The countries standing the lowest on the scale are Bangladesh. It is in this context that the concept of empowerment of women assumes great significance. On the issue of women empowerment, one should be very clear about one thing; what is that women need? – Equality or equity of impact? The following example found in a training manual is worth quoting here. “A fox and a stork may be given equal opportunities to eat from a dish. Who gets most depend on whether the dish is wide and shallow to suit the fox or deep and narrow to suit the Stork. For equitable impact each would have to eat a share of the food from its own dish. In development, do we need equality or equity of impact? (Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1991, 2 halves make a whole – Balancing gender relations in development (Match International Centre, Ottawa, August, pp.14).

The recent awareness and concerns existed for the status of women in different states have focussed the interest on the development and abilities of women, embodied in the term ‘Empowerment’; which has been used for few decades more often than terms like ‘women’s upliftment’, development or ‘awareness raising’, etc. The conceptualization of the term empowerment and its processes has been a thought provoking issue for various researchers and feminists. Although no fixed or authoritative definition has been implied to describe it.

Some of the key constituents of the concept of empowerment have been identified by Srilata Batliwala (1993) are as follows:
(1) The most conspicuous feature of the term ‘Empowerment’ is the word power, contained in it, showing about power and change in its balance.

(2) Power itself can be defined as control over resources falling into 5 broad categories: (i) Physical resources, (ii) Human resources; (iii) Intellectual resources; (iv) Financial resources and (v) Self (that unique combination of intelligence, creativity, self esteem and confidence).

The extent of power is dependent on the access and control of resources provided to an individual/groups that increasing decision making power to benefit themselves and this process of gaining control over the self as well as the resources determining power may be termed as “Empowerment”.

(3) Empowerment is a process to redistribute the power aiming to change the nature, direction and dis-empower systemic forces, who have traditionally enjoyed the power shared unequally oppress and marginalize women as well as transforming the structures, systems and institutions, who support this inequality – such as family, caste, religion, etc. Empowerment is not a product but a way to promote equality.

(4) The process of empowerment is all embracing because it must address all structures of power. This suggests that the process of empowerment begins in the mind, from women’s consciousness, from her very belief about herself and her rights, capacities and potential; from her self image and awareness of how gender as well as other socio-economical and political forces are acting on her, from breaking free the sense of inferiority which has been imprinted since earliest childhood; from recognizing her strengths, her knowledge, intelligence and skills above all, from believing in her innate right to equality and realizing that it is she, along with her sisters, who must assert her right, for one who holds power will give it a way willingly.
(5) Power and equality have been demanded by the powerless and unequal, for it is they who have something to gain, but justice does not necessarily begin spontaneously, or arise automatically from the very conditions of subjugations. If this were the case, women would have revolted long ago and there would have been a society in which at least gender would not be a source of discrimination. Thus women’s empowerment is an “externally induced process”, due to ideology of gender inequality which is inculcated in men and women both from birth, religion and cultural taboos, patriarchal systems and social hierarchical system. Therefore, if any change is to be made in the mindset, it has to be initiated by some individual, group or process which believes this order to be unnatural and unjust and who have themselves broken free of this conditioning.

The term empowerment is defined by many researchers and educationists as:

(1) It is “A process to change the distribution of power both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society” (Nelly Stromquist).

(2) “A process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to control over such means and resources” (Lucy Lazo).

(3) “The ability to direct and control one’s own life” (Paz).

(4) It is “A process that people undergo which eventually leads to change”.

(5) “Empowerment is a way of addressing the problems of rights that remain uninforced” (Beteille Andre, 1999).

(6) “It is an aid to help women to achieve equality with men or, at least, to reduce gender gap considerably” (P.K. Nayar).
(7) “Empowerment defines as both a goal and a preferred route for accomplishing strategic objective” (Viswanathan, N., 1997).

(8) “It means helping women to enjoy their constitutional rights to equality” (P.K.B. Nayar).

(9) Power, the basic ingredient in the concept of empowerment may be defined as “Capacity of a person or group of persons to influence the behaviour of others even against there will” (P.K.B. Nayar).

(10) “Empowerment is a multidimensional process which should enable individuals or a group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life” (Arun Kumar, 2002).

(11) It refers to “a process by which those who has been denied the ability to make choices acquire, acquires such an ability – it entails a process of change” (Naila Kabir, 2000).

(12) “Women’s control over key aspects of their lives” (Kishor, 1997).

(13) “The process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining great control over the sources of power, may be termed as empowerment” (Batliwala).

(14) “Empowerment in its simplest form means, the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance” (Chandra, 1997).

(15) “Empowerment is an active multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all sphere of life. Power is not a commodity, be transacted, nor can be given away as aims.” (Pillai, 1995).
(16) “Empowerment represent a mean of accomplishing country development tasks and can be conceptualized as involving 2 key elements, giving community members the authority to make decisions and choices to facilitate development” (Zippy, 1995).

(17) “Empowerment is the process through which individual gain efficacy, defined as degree to which an individual perceives that he/she controls his/her environment” (Bandura, 1986).

(18) “Empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged section in a given context” (Sharma, 1992).

(19) “Women must make several choices in order to assess the usefulness and meaningfulness” (Hall).

Therefore, empowerment is a process that changes and improves her social self image. It enables women to challenge and change hierarchical gender relations. Women’s empowerment is not one way. It is a multidimensional and integrative process, an ongoing journey. Therefore, the concept and language of empowerment which acquired prominence in the closing years of the UN’s Third Development decade represent powers and abilities of people – an ability to handle their responsibilities, an ability to envision a better future, and an ability to work to overcome the obstacles that confronted them. Often the gaining of power by the vulnerable is called empowerment.

In Spanish, power has 2 meanings, “one of strength / worth / authority, and the other of skills / capacities”. Both the meaning are universally applicable and both lead to the acquisition of a force (Power) exercised by individual
Empowerment is a force of reform developed primarily in business management to devolve more power down the management hierarchy.\textsuperscript{24}

Therefore, empowerment is about people taking over their own lives, gaining the ability to do things, to set their own agenda, to change events, in a way previously lacking. It consist of greater access of people to knowledge, information, and resources, greater autonomy in decision making, greater ability to plan their lives, have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free them from shackles imposed on them by customs, belief or practice. Argues Pillai – “Power has to be acquired and it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved.”\textsuperscript{25}

Thus according to Siddiquee M. Akhtar – “True empowerment is the self empowerment and self empowerment is not a result or end product but it is a process and also an important goal to be achieved by an individual / group.”\textsuperscript{26}

In short, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater decision making power and control and to transformative action.

1.7 LEVELS OF EMPOWERMENT

Women in developing countries are a major resources in agriculture, food productions and rural development, as evidenced by their numerical proportion, their share of labor in agriculture and food production. Despite their crucial role in agriculture, economic production and management of natural resources in an unorganized sector, their potential for accelerating rural development has not often been well appreciated.


\textsuperscript{26} Akhtar, Siddiquee, M. (2004). Empowerment of Muslims through Education. Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, pp.3-4.
The process of empowerment begins in the mind with a new consciousness which questions existing power relations and roles. Historically, it has been proved that change in one individual does not necessarily leads to a change for all others in the same situation. For instance, there has always been outstanding women who have been risen above the constraints of their times, e.g., Raziya Sultana, Rani Laxmi Bai, Savitribai Phule. But, they have not able to bring about lasting change for all women. It is also evident that when one or two women try to break free of traditions, society isolates and expels them, but if whole group of women begin to demand change, it is much more difficult for the society to reject them altogether. Showing the power of group is always greater than the power of an individual.

The process of empowerment encompasses, facilitating women to find time and space to re-examine their lives critically and collectively by looking at old problems in new ways, analyzing their environment and situation, recognizing their strengths, altering their self image, accessing new kinds of information and knowledge, acquiring new skills and initiating actions aimed at gaining greater control over resources of various kinds. This is a SPIRAL not a cyclic relationship – leading to more change and empowerment through attainment of high level of consciousness. Armed with growing collective strength, women begin to assert their rights to control resources including their own bodies to participate equally in decision making, with the family, community and society. Control over resources leads to women’s ability to make choice and discover new possibilities. Men will also be liberated through the process of women empowerment as they will be freed from the roles of oppressor and exploiter to become better human beings.

Clearly, change agents are virtually essential to empowerment. The sole agent (the researcher shares the same opinion) is EDUCATION, which aims at empowerment as a weapon for greater potency by actually seeking to liberate women from the small isolated world in which they are trapped (Batliwala, 1993).
According to Rahman (1990), three levels of empowerment are:

1. **Organisation** of the under privileged people in structures under their own control or linking with other organizations of similarly situated people.

2. **Social awareness** of the disadvantaged, in terms of understanding derived from collective self inquiry and reflection of the social environment of their lives and the working of its processes.

3. **Self reliance**: People’s power comes ultimately from self-reliance. Self-reliance is not self sufficiency, but a combination of material and mental strength which one can deal with others as an equal and assert one’s self determination. Self reliance provides not only material strength but also mental strength from solidarity, sharing and caring for each other, and from thinking and acting together to move forward and to resist domination.

Empowerment works at 3 levels: (i) Immediate level, (ii) Intermediate level, and (iii) Deeper level.

1. **Immediate level**: It can reflect change at the level of individuals and groups, in their sense of self hood and identity in how they perceive their interest and in their capacity to act. It is a change at the individual resources, agency and achievements.

2. **Intermediate level**: It can reflect change in the rules and relationships, which prevails in the personal, social, economical and political sphere of life.

3. **Deeper level**: It can occur at the deeper hidden structures which shapes the distribution of resources and power in a society and reproduce it overtime.
Therefore, for any change to translate into meaningful and sustainable processes of empowerment, it must ultimately encompasses both individual and structural level.

Individual empowerment occurs through the process of personal development. This entails both the growth of skills and abilities, as well as a more positive self-definition. At the psychological level, people who become more empowered, feel better about themselves, there is an increased sense of personal dignity, self respect and self esteem. There clearly is a positive interactive effect between the development of self-confidence and the strengthening of personal ability. To attain social equality, power relation between “haves”, “have-a-little” and “have-nots” must be transformed.

This requires a change in structural problems, then solution logically should be collective rather than individual in nature. Therefore, groups as well as individual must be empowered in order to change the social structure. The empowerment process is a continuing development involving major changes whereby an individual/group is able to strengthen and exercise the ability to act so as to gain mastery over life.

The capacity for successful action refers to the ability to make and carry out decision in purposeful way in accord with individual or collective interests. At the individual level, the ability to act on behalf of one self is a function of factors such as critical consciousness, sense of entitlement, knowledge, resources, opportunities, skills and self-respect. Collectively, a group’s efficacy is a product of such variables as its size, the quality of its leadership, resources, allies, opportunities, and strategies. At both the levels, self-perceptions and the impressions of others are important determinants of the capacity to act effectively. Time is another important element; both historical experience and potential prospects for power shape current ability to act.
Thus, the process of empowerment produces a greater capacity to act effectively in order to gain more control over life. And the capacity, the product of being empowered, makes possible the process of achieving individual and collective goals.

This product dimension of the empowerment process cannot be evaluated accurately through the use of perception scales either at the individual or collective levels. For the most important product is power itself, not simply the perception thereof. A conception of empowerment which is devoid of elements of real power is hollow and potentially illusory.

The core of women’s empowerment framework is its argument that women’s development can be viewed in terms of 5 levels of equality, of which empowerment is essential element at each level. The levels, according to Longwe (1990) are: (i) welfare, (ii) access, (iii) conscientisation, (iv) participation and (v) control.

(1) **Welfare**: The first level, addresses only the basic needs of women, without recognizing to solve the underlying structural causes, which necessitate provision of welfare services. Women are merely passive beneficiaries of welfare benefits. It addresses only the basic needs of women.

(2) **Access**: The 2nd level, is essential for women to make meaningful progress. This involves equality of access to resources such as educational opportunities, land and credit, etc. The path of empowerment is initiated when women recognize their lack of access to resources as a barrier to their growth and overall well being, and take actions to address this.

(3) **Conscientisation**: It is a crucial point in the empowerment framework. For women to take actions to close gender gaps, there must be recognition
that their problem stem from inherent structural and institutional discriminations.

(4) **Participation**: It is a point where women are taking decisions along side men equally. For this mobilization is necessary. By organizing themselves and working collectively, women will be empowered, aim increased representation, which will lead to increased empowerment and ultimately greater control.

(5) **Control**: Is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. The balance of power is equal, at this stage, women make decisions over their lives and play an active role in the development process. Further, the contribution of women are fully recognized, rewarded and respected.

Therefore, the tenets of empowerment are:

(1) **Collectivization**: Bringing a group of women together at a base to become an integral part of an economic activity is an important part of the strategy towards empowerment. The coming together of poor women provides them an identity which is different from their other identities and helps highlights their worker role. It also provides a sense of mutuality. The collectivization also brings in the possibility of pooling and sharing resources, skills, time frames, space and other facilities. Pooling is an important way of strengthening the capacities of women to work together and to develop a sense of strength.

(2) **Capacity building**: Once they form a group, the next step is to enhance their capacity to work as a group and play different roles. Capacity building in the areas of planning, executing, monitoring all aspects of the economic activities is equally desired in this context. This will include capacity to use legal framework to their advantage and the capacity to build as well as sustain a culture of economic activity compatible with the realities of the women involved and to the nature of their activity.
(3) **Ownership and control**: It means that women begin to consider the group and the group activities as their own. Their responsibility of more and more function in the entire process of economic activity help them to gain control over their ventures. So managing different accounts, handling cash, being signatory to Bank accounts, etc. are helpful in building this control.

A sense of belonging and owning good and bad consequences of their own activity, is the first step in the direction. It implies that women being to consider the group and the group activity as their own. Taking responsibility of all the functions helps them gain control over their ventures. So managing different components, apart from operational aspects of activity are helpful in building this control.

(4) **Mediation**: Another aspect is to strengthen their capacities to mediate with the external word (with the markets, with financial institutions, with competitors, with suppliers, experts, etc.)

1.8 **DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT**

“Women make up 50% of the world population, comprise 33% of the official labor force, perform nearly 66.6% of all working hours, receive 10% of the world’s income and own less than 1% of world’s property” (The Voice of the Working Women, UNO, 1982).

Nothing else could justify the need for empowerment than the above simple truth. Women throughout the world are discriminated and exploited. From womb to tomb, women are subject to cruelty. In such a context, rights for women could be envisioned as the “collective” rights of a women to be seen and accepted as a person with the capacity to decide or act on her own behalf and to have equal access to resources and equitable social, economic and political support to develop her full potential (APF, 1993).
Empowerment also refers to the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.

Changes in the ability to exercise choices can be thought of in terms of changes in 3 inter-related dimensions which make up choices (Naila Kabir, 2003) are listed and discussed below: (1) Resources, (2) Agency, and (3) Achievement:

(1) Resources, which form the conditions under which choices are made.
(2) Agency which is at the heart of the process by which choices are made.
(3) Achievements, which are the outcome of choices.

These dimensions are interdependent because changes in each contribute to and benefit from, change in the other. Thus, the achievements of a particular moment are translated into enhanced resources or agencies:

(1) **Resources**: Can be material, social or human. They refer to conventional economic resources such as land, equipment, finance, working capital, etc., but also to the various human and social resources, which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice. Human resources are embodied in the individual and encompasses his/her knowledge, skills creativity, imagination, etc. Social resources are made up of claims, obligations and expectations which inhere in the relationship, networks and connections, which prevails in different spheres of life and which enable the people to improve their situation and life chances beyond what would be possible through their individual efforts alone.

But access to resources will be determined by the rules/norms and practices which prevail in different institutional domain (e.g., familial norms, patron client relationship, informal wage agreement, formal contractual transactions, public sector entitlements). These rules, norms
and practice give some actors authority over others in determining the principles of distribution and exchange within that sphere. Consequently, the distribution of allocative resources tends to be embedded within the distribution of “authoritative resources” (Gidden, 1979), the ability to define priorities and enforce claims (e.g., head of family, elites in community, etc.), are all endowed with decision making authority because of their position in these institutions.

Empowerment entails a change in terms on which resources are acquired as much as an increase in access to resources.

(2) **Agency**: It is an ability to define one’s goals and act upon them. Agency is more than observable action. It also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose which individual bring to their activity, their sense of agency, or the “power within”. It encompasses individual decision making as well as a much wider range of purposive actions, including manipulation, subversion resistance, protests, reflections and analysis. Agency also encompasses collective, as well as individual reflection and action.

Agency in the positive sense, of the ‘power to’ refers to people’s capacity to define their own life – choices and to pursue their own goals, even in the face of opposition from others.

Agency in the negative sense of “power over”, the capacity of an actor to over-ride the agency of others, for instance through the use of violence, coercion and threat.

(3) **Achievements**: Resources and agencies together constitute, what Sen (1990) refers to as capabilities, the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of “being and doing”. Sen uses the idea of ‘functioning’ to refer to all the possible ways of “being
and doing” which are valued by people in a given context and of functioning achievements’ to refer to the particular ways of being and doing which are realized by different individuals.

Clearly, where the failure to achieve valued ways of being and doing can be traced to incompetence, laziness, etc. It reflects asymmetries and this taken as manifestation of dis-empowerment.

Empowerment is a very broad term, encompassing all dimensions of empowerment. Such as, educational, social, economic, political, familial and legal empowerment. A HOLISTIC perspective is must.

(A) **Political Empowerment**

> “Real Change in India will come when Women to affect the political deliberations of the nation”
>  
> - Gandhiji

Political empowerment entails the ability to analyze situations politically, and also, mobilization for social change. According to Friedman (1992), Collective Action has been identified as an important prerequisite for any meaningful political and social change. Through engaging in collective action, women would be able to raise cultural awareness among men and other women and, therefore influence change at the social level. Political empowerment necessarily demands extending action and change to a macro level.

The concept of empowerment of women is indicative of a shift in perspective emphasis from welfare development to one of development of authoritative decision making skills.

**Gender equality – Political and Social** – is enshrined in the fundamental rights of the constitution together with equality of opportunities to employment and appointment to office. Political equality includes not only the equal right to
franchise but also the more important right to gain access to the formal institutionalised centres of power.

The current scenario shows 37.1% women voters turns out in Lok Sabha elections in 1952, whereas in 1984, 68.17% (Anandhar, 1993). In 1996 (Maharashtra) - 2.56% Muslim women members in Lok Sabha, only one Muslim woman (from Rajasthan) in Lok Sabha and in Rajya Sabha, only one Muslim women (from Maharashtra) - 5.26% Muslim women representation. The percentage of women Parliamentarian has at no time exceeded ten in Lok Sabha, till 1998, no women Governor, a women Chief Minister in Uttar Pradesh (Mayawati) and Delhi Sheela Dikshit, a women President (2007) Mrs. Pratibha Patil. Absolutely no Muslim women appointed in higher posts, only Najma Heptullah, who was a Deputy Speaker in Rajya Sabha is still politically active, Shabana Azmi (Member of Parliament) is also another Muslim women politically active.

There are hurdles in the way of political participation. Many political women have discovered a wide gulf between the self with whom she was familiar and other people’s cutout image of a candidacy (Mandal, Ruth B., 1981). BJP’s Uma Bharathi spelt out in an interview that people did not like aggression in a woman and accused her of being short tempered (Saturday Times, 3.12.1994). Ambika Soni and Pritam Arora, who are in politics for nearly 25 years, still face the glass ceiling at different levels (Saturday Times, 3.12.1994).

In 1967, the UN’s general assembly adopted the declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women. It followed up the declaration with repeated requests to remember states to submit reports on the status of women in their countries. In responses, the government of India constituted the Committee on the Status of Women (CSWI) in 1971.
The release in May 1975, just prior to the emergency of the committees report “Towards Equality” created an effect similar to that experienced in the U.S. In 1961 with the creation of the President’s Commission on the status of women. It created a “climate of expectations” in India. ‘Towards equality’ sparked immediate demands for government action. The data is compiled on women’s inferior position in religious and family life in health care and in law, and with regard to economic, educational and political opportunity served as a jolt to the consciousness of many Indians. ‘Towards equality’ constituted an important ideological first step in mobilizing educated activists.

Religion in India is pertinent not only to the cultural valuation of women, but to their legal position. In India, religion is also a law. Modern India, letting Hindu law govern the Hindu community and Muslim laws govern the Muslim community. The state also recognizes Christian, Parsi and Jewish law. ‘Towards equality’ charges that women law have had only limited impact on the political process. However, despite the achievements of an elite few, women as a whole have been under represented throughout India in both appointed and elected positions. They have minimal power within the parties, and they participate in elections as candidates and as voters with very less frequency than men.

‘Towards equality’ marks a recognition that women’s status cannot be improved through government action alone. The report calls for changes in consciousness and in social structure beyond the reach of government.

The Mathura rape case in 1979, mobilized Bombay people, emerged a group and created forum against rape and later name changed to forum against the oppression of women (FAOW).

The gender relations of dominance and subordination is a political relation that derives material sustenance from conditions and structures of production and that derives its legitimacy from a tradition and culture that
uphold subordination. Still gender relations are only one of several forces that have shaped the context of women’s lives.

Women’s life experiences and their ensuring political engagement must also be understood within the context of a colonial past and a present as a developing nation; a sharply stratified society with ongoing caste and class conflicts. Paternalistic religious cultural traditions imposed on the elite class within the heartland but leaving much greater freedom in peripheral territories and among the productive masses, with their mother – cult practices; and the interconnections and conflicts that exist among all these forces.

Therefore, gender empowerment strategies under the circumstances; require a dual pronged effort viz., (i) structural systemic change and (ii) basic attitudinal and value change. Therefore what is needed are: (i) greater affirmative action from the Panchayat level, to the state and national level; (ii) political conscious raising and supportive action by women’s organization at the voter level to enhance self potency and political efficacy and (iii) An integrationist approach of both areas.

(B) Cultural Empowerment

“Give me good mothers, I will give you a good nation.”

- Napolean

“The Eternal feminine draws us upward.”

- Goethe

The status of the women of any nation portrays the progress of that particular nation. Though the Indian women has come a long way in her cultural level from the Vedic period (and in the case of Muslim women for Jahiliya period and Prophet Mohammad time) up to the present status of achieving economic independence in this 21st Century, yet due to many social, religious, cultural and political demands on her, she is still bound by shackles of certain
traditions and rituals, which distort her image up to the expectation of all around her. In this connection except for a certain difference in the degree of expectations from the women, the urban woman is not very different from her rural counterpart. From Vedic age uptill now, the ideal women is portrayed as home loving, caring, concerned for the welfare of the husband and children, maternal, supportive, should not have desire of her own, an even sacrificing figure and would accept her role as daughter, wife, mother, without a whisper, but at the same time very patient and this kind of image has been implanted in the minds of society by Vedas, religious leaders and media, etc.

Due to patriarchal society and the religious rituals which instill the fear of punishment in case she breaks any kind of tradition. She ceased to exist as a self thinking person. The “Shakti” in her portrayed realistically in the sculptures of the temples and the statutes in the churches, but in reality she is a prisoner of her traditional role in society.

Religious sanctions imposed by the society never changed much from Vedic age till today. They are like occupied country-social attitude remain static and chained to barbaric cruel customs which ensures that women are bound in bondage and the only solution offered by society is suicide. Social reformers have tried very hard to freed women from that bondages.

History has placed the women in lower level due to social, economic and political situations. Religious sanctity deprived women of all her rights as a citizen.

The only outlet she had, to come out of her dark room was to watch these religious discourse, only the images of Sathi Savithri, Sita, Mira, etc. have been portrayed by songs, street plays, dramas and religious books by various religious leaders, that the women at that age identified herself only with such puranic/bookish characters as models. She has been developing an image of self sacrificing person devoid of any individuality and her role as a slave / servant
obeying only the order of her master has been established by Manu-Smriti and many other religious books and where a women’s dependence on man financially and emotionally have been very clearly embedded in her mind, that she never even accepted her own self identity.

Later during the British period, the freedom movement brought the woman from urban and rural areas like Bi Amman, Savitribai Phile and Sarojini Naidu, together in response to Gandhiji’s call for freedom and Khilafat movement, with babies in their arms irrespective of caste and creed, the women came out of their 4 walls, to fight against British. The spirit of solidarity died a natural death after independence and the women went back to their homes.

The feeling of empowerment for women started with the literacy movement and thereby to reconstruct the whole society became the need of the hour. Though the government started many welfare programmes for the women, due to implementation loop holes, they did not produce the desired effect.

In the late 21st Century (last few years), many women organization came up, tried to create an awareness in women. In Mumbai too, the N.G.Os/trusts like AICMEU, Khaireummat Trusts, Awaze-Niswan, MESCO and Huqooqe-Niswan, etc. regarding their status and many qualified trained young men and women who are research oriented (like WRAG and CSSS) came to the rescue of urban woman to empower them with knowledge about social evils and the various strategies (Laws) to solve them. Freedom to these ladies does not mean breaking away from home and tradition. It means searching for one’s own identity and making the people around her accept her as a human.

But in the case of Islam, it is different one can cite the examples of Bibi Aisha, Bibi Khadija, Zainab and many other Muslim women of high character. Islam places women on equal footing with men in the eyes of almighty. Quran is filled with injunction aimed at bettering the lot of women. However, the codification of Muslim law (into Shariat) has not been so kind to women.
Muslim law allows women some important rights. Marriage is not religiously obligatory (it is Sunnat). It is a contract, thus divorce allowed, there is no ban on widow’s / divorcee’s remarriage. Islam advocates equality. It provides a complete code of conduct and social norms which allows woman to act according to her own will. In the words of Prophet Mohammad – “Beware your women have rights over you and you have rights over your women.”

According to Abu Hurrayah, a man once asked to Prophet Mohammad, “who rightfully deserves the best treatment - he said 1st your mother, next your mother and then next, your mother.”

The Shariat and holy Quran is followed by all the Muslims. The life of Prophet Mohammad S.A.S. (u.w.b.p.) is an example for all the Muslims in this world. Women throughout the history of Islam have played significant roles and by their feats have demonstrated not only the vast area which Islam affords them for the performance of noble and heroic deeds, but also the exaltedness of the position accorded to women in Islamic Society – (i) Aisha, the daughter of Abubakar and wife of Prophet Mohammad, stands out as women of notable intelligence, whose intellectual gifts were fittingly utilized in the service of Islam. It is said that no less than one quarter of the Shariah injunction have been derived from her narration. Companions of the Prophet Mohammad found themselves in disagreement over any religious matter, they would come to her to seek her assistance. It was owing to the distinctive character of Islam that she was able to render such important social and political services. The holy books (Ahadiths) of Islam are full of stories of great Muslim women.

In spite of high position of woman accorded by Islam to women, women are not given their proper place by Muslims. The women folk are kept at home illiterate and dependent. Ignorance of the teaching of Islam kept Muslim women backward and illiterate. They made their own rules and laws, which was

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27 Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab – an Nikah, 1/593.
28 Al Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab al adab (Fath-al-Bari), 10/329-330.
sanctioned by the other ignorant men. The first commandment, the Quran gave to its followers was *Iqra* means Read. This shows that in the first phase of Islam, greater emphasis was placed on the acquisition of knowledge than on the purification of a mosque. Muslims have disregarded this commandment. They forgot the commandments of holy Quran and saying of Prophet Mohammad, and hence facing all the miseries and problems.

In a society were majority of the women are illiterate, the only way of empowering them is to make them aware of their social, religious, political and economic rights.

(C) **Legal or Religious Empowerment**

*“Can man be free if woman is a slave?”*  
- Shelly

The laws which determine the identity on status of women in society lie mainly with the sphere of Personal Laws, i.e., the law governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession and adoption.

Law is generally territorial in nature for example, the Indian Penal Code will apply when a crime is committed in India. But in India even today, we have Personal Laws, i.e., applicability of certain laws based on the profession of a particular religion. Originally both Hindu and Muslim personal law were comprehensive systems dealing with all branches like criminal law, legal procedures and evidences. With the British colonizing India, these provision of laws were superceded and territorial law framed but personal laws still operated in a narrow field, in the laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, adoption, maintenance and succession.
Women in Pre-Islamic Era

It is said that a civilization may be measured by the status and position held by its women. In order to assess the effect of Islam on status of women, it is necessary to study the condition of woman in pre-Islamic era, so that the trends of reform may be traced. The Islamic legal system has its origin in Arabia and has developed by Arab jurists. The word ‘women’ sum up a history of long subordination and dependence. The condition of women among the Arabs before the advent of Islam was extremely degraded. The birth of daughter was regarded as a calamity and they used to bury them. They were possession of man that could be sold, bought and inherited. They were entirely excluded from inheritance. There was Nikah – am (this marriage is sanctioned by Islam – where a man asks another man for the hand of the daughter and then marries her by giving her dower). There was Nikahe-Istebza, where a husband ask his wife to go to a famous person for sexual intercourse till she conceives and then returns back to him. Another, there was Nikah-ul-Jama where a number of men, less than ten used to visit a woman, if she conceives, she entitled to call him and he accept child’s paternity. There was also Nikah-e-Baghaya, where a number of men used to visit a woman and if she conceives, all men assembled and physiognomists would decide to whom the child belong. Beside these, mentioned above, there were various kind of marriages like: (a) Nikah-ul-Kadam, (b) Nikah-ul-Badal, (c) Nikah-bil-um, (d) Nikah-Bainal-Ukhtain, (e) Kas rate – Izdewai, (f) Muta, (g) Marriage with orphan girls, (h) Marriage by capture, and (i) Marriage by purchase.

Then there was dower given to women, the father and guardian of the girl used to consider the amount of dower as their right. It was possible for a woman to buy her freedom from her husband by resigning her dower to him. Prior of Islam, divorce was easy and of frequent occurrences. The power of husband was unlimited and absolute. It was a matter of few words. According to Tafseer-e-Ahmadi, an Arab could pronounce Talaq 10 times and contract fresh alliance of marriage with his wife every time. No rule of humanity existed. Thus in pre-
Islamic undesirable customs prevalent which had tended to degrade the morality of the Arabs and conditions of women as well.

**Women’s Position in Islam**

The Prophet Mohammad (m.p.u.h.) introduced a considerable change in the existing position in Islam. The reform is based on improvement. Sir Ronald Wilson nicely depicted the reforms introduced by Islam – “According to the special needs of his time and country, the Prophet was a very earnest champion of women’s rights, the form which his advocacy took, resulted in stamping out female infanticide, laying down definite restrictions to the earlier Arabs license about marriage, and enabling free-born women to pursue under more tolerable conditions…”

All Nikahs, except Nikah-e-Am was forbidden by Prophet. Islam gives all the right to women to which an independent human being is entitled. The rights given to all human beings (women too) are listed below:

1. **Right to Live**: The Quran says “when the female (infant) buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed”. (Al Quran LXXXI: 8-9).

2. **Right of Being Brought Up**: The Quran says – “And he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing” (Al Quran II: 233).

3. **Right to Education**: Abu Saeéd Khudri R.A. reports the Prophet to have said – “The person who brought up three daughters, embellished them with education and training, married them off and remained benevolently inclined to them even after their marriage, paradise is ensured for him.”

4. **Right to Marriage**: Abu Hurriah R.A. reports the Prophet to have said – The widow/divorcee shall not be given in marriage without asking for her opinion (about the match), and a virgin without her consent.

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29 Abu da’ood, Kitab-ul Adab, Babfi-fazle-min Ale – yatama.
(5) **Right to Dower:** Islam has ordained man that a woman must be paid her dower, without which Nikah is not valid. Abdullah bin Umar said – that Prophet has prohibited Shighar (cross marriage). Quran says – “And give them their dower as an obligation” (AL Quran IV: 4). The Islamic Shariat has prescribed no limits on it.

(6) **Right of Maintenance:** Before marriage a daughter is father’s responsibility and after marriage her husband’s responsibility. According to Shariah, the maintenance is compulsorily the husband’s responsibility.

(7) **Right to Undertake Business:** Islam has granted women freedom of economic pursuits in the form of business, profession and work. For this purpose, she can come out of her house too if necessary.

(8) **Right to Property:** Just as a man has a right to own and use his wealth, women too has right to own and use her lawful earnings. Quran says – “The men is allotted what they earn and to women what they earn” (Al Quran – IV: 32).

(9) **Right to Honour and Dignity:** Prophet has mentioned “it is Qazaf Chaste innocent believing but indiscreet woman.” The Quran says – “And those who launch a charge against chaste woman and produce not four witnesses – flog them with 80 stripes and reject their evidences even after…..” (Al-Quran XXIV: 4-5).

(10) **Right to Criticism and Reckoning:** “The believing men and women are of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil.” (Al-Quran – IX: 71)

(11) **Right of Inheritance:** Quran ensured that women could get their share of inheritance not only as daughter but also as mother and wife. Quran says

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30 Mishkat-Bab-ul-Kabair, Wa’alamat-un-Nrfaq, Bahawala Bukhari and Muslim.
“From what is left by parents and those nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large – a determinate share ([61] – Al-Quaran – IV:7). Not only daughters, but real and step brothers and sisters will also get the share in property, under Muslim law 4 classes of heirs: (i) Sharers, (ii) Residuaries, (iii) Distant kindred and (iv) Unrelated successors. A Muslim cannot bequeath his property by means of a will in excess of 1/3.

(12) 

Birth Control: Quran says – “Do not kill your children for fear of want; we shall provide sustenance for them and for you” (17:31). Therefore Islam Prohibits infanticide.

Besides all the rights, Muslim women also governed by the Indian succession acts. She enjoys double benefit. Inspite of protective legislation, women do face discrimination. A sense of respect for law should be created in the minds of all the individuals. Majority of Muslims women are ignorant of their constitutional rights and privileges.

Legislation in itself has only a limited impact and cannot be treated in isolation. A change in social attitude is a must. Legal equality without social and economic equality is meaningless and women have been socially, physically and economically exploited in the name of tradition or religion or by social sanctions. Women have been defined by the sex and until this social attitude changes, there will be no change in the status of women.

(D) Economic Empowerment

“Women reduces us all to the common denominator”.

- G.B. Shaw

Economic empowerment involves the ability of women to engage in income generating activities which will give them an independent income.
Economic independence requires that women be provided opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills which will give them access to well paid and high – profile jobs. This means opening up educational opportunity not merely access to stereotyped gender – oriented education, but access to the frontier areas of knowledge. This would ensure that women are not relegated to low status, low paid jobs which perpetuate income disparities instead.

Women entering into the business field is not something uncommon today (including Muslim women). But scenario was very different in the past, 3/5th of Indian’s total workers are employed in agricultural (the Economic Times, 17.06.2002) and most female workers are involved in agriculture (Census, 2001). Studies on agriculture have largely scale feminization in agriculture during recent years (Banarjee, 1997, Visaria, 1995). The data of Muslim Women workers is now available. In India nearly 35% of the poor are below poverty line of which nearly 70% are women and the poor in the rural areas in 1993-94 Constitutes 37. 27% of the rural population (Aggarwal, 2000) and rural agrarian women constitute nearly more than 3/4th of the rural poor.

However till 1971, there was no attention paid on to provide a comprehensive evaluation of a changing status of women in the country over a decade ago, a Committee was appointed by Government of India to enquire into the Status of Women. The Committee found that women in unorganized sectors are greater victims of both unemployment and under-employment. “The basic problem that affect women’s roles and opportunities for employment in this sector springs from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities, limited skills and illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status.”31 Today 94% women found in unorganized sector. “Relatively more information available on agricultural workers, there is practically no reliable information on non-agricultural occupation.”32

32 Ibid, p.63-64.
Maharashtra ranks the 4th in the HDI (Human Development Index). FEAR for Maharashtra is 35.97%, that is higher than the national average. “Out of total urban female work force 1% is in the highly skilled jobs, 9.2% is in the household industry, 45.3% is self employed, 33.3% is in the regular employment, and 21.4% in casual labor. VRS has rendered blue collar women ‘No collar women.’

Occupational diversification in the economy of Maharashtra (specially metropolitan/Mega city like Mumbai, Bangalore and Madras) has opened the avenues of job – opportunities in the Information Technology, Software Industry, Call Centres and other tertiary sector occupation. According to Census of India 2001, Mumbai has a juvenile sex ratio as 913, the work participation rate of women (main workers as 12.53), work participation rate of women in main and marginal workers as 16.48 and the female literacy rates as 80.39.

Mumbai has the work participation rates of urban Muslim women as main workers are the lowest, but the literacy percentage are quite high 66.15% as compared to other cities.

Economic Survey of Maharashtra (2003), has made an apt remark, “It is suspected that in a society with a strong preference for male child, growing access to sex test has perhaps added sex selective abortions. Neglect of female child resulting in higher mortality among girls aged 0-6 years be another cause of decline in the child – sex ratio in the state.” Maharashtra has been diagnosed as suffering from DEMARU – daughter eliminating son (male) aspiring rage of ultrasound (Bose, 2001). A report compiled by Action Aid and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) called disappearing daughters said that, the Indian parents have killed more than 1 crore female foetuses in the last 20 years (Hindustan Times, 22/6/2008, p.1).

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Work participation of women in Maharashtra has increased from 33.1% in 1991 to 32.6% in 2001 as per the Census of India. 90% of the total working workers in Maharashtra are in informal sector (dependent sector), 32% of women in Maharashtra are illiterate (2001 Census).

Declining sex ratio i.e., number of women per 1000 male in Greater Mumbai, there are 774 women per 1000 male. The neglect of girl child and use of sex determination test for killing of female foetuses are obvious reasons behind the declining number of women in state (Madhiwala, 2002). Studies by FRCH and CEHAT have also revealed serious nature of gynecological morbidity among urban and rural women in Maharashtra.

Budget estimates for welfare schemes for women for 2001-02 and 2003-04 were 6.81 crores and 33.27 crores respectively. Actual expenditure was less than 1/5th of the estimated expenditure during women empowerment year 2001.

Government of Maharashtra has taken lead in formulation of several policies affecting economic life of women during the decade of 1992-02 - The Maharashtra State Policy for Women (02), Maharashtra State Women’s Commissions, the policy for women’s component plan and national policy for empowerment of women (01).

Government of Maharashtra has taken affirmative action to promote women’s economic empowerment. Maharashtra Arthik Vikas Mahanigam (MAVIM) has played a proactive and supportive role for women, specific economic ventures with perspective of efficient allocation of resources. Women entrepreneurs have benefitted the most from micro-credit schemes and self help groups.

Gender economics, gender planning in programmes implementation and engendering budget are become increasingly popular in the official policy making exercise to ensure better results in terms of gender empowerment
measure for Maharashtra, during the 10th Five Year Plan period (2002-07), that includes indicator such as Employment, Education, Health Per Capita Quality of Life Index (PQLI) and Political Empowerment.

It can be concluded that role continuity in the maternal role obligations remains intact with slight role adjustment. Despite the economic empowerment, hierarchical role structures within the family remain unchallenged and the idealized mother role has not undergone any change. Thus women are forced into mothering by ideology and cultural pressure of sex role stereotyping. The supposed economic empowerment has seldom allow women to redefine their own roles as cultural ethos restrain their bargaining power for role change.

(E) Educational and Social Empowerment

“Agar Koi Qaum Sirf Mardon Ko Talim Deti Hai to Woh Apne Aadhe Hisse Ko Kamzor Karti Hai”

- Mustafa Kamal Pasha (Turkey)

Education is one of the basic needs of men and women. It has 2 actions: (i) to preserve the cultural traditions and values of the past and (ii) to create new values and new goals – so that process of social change becomes smooth and orderly.

In India, the main obstacle for empowerment is the low level of literacy and education (not poverty), particularly dismal level of female literacy and education. It is paradoxical that even after 60 years of independence, according to 2001 Census literary figures, there are social groups among whom female literacy rate is negligible. So “illiteracy and lack of basic education are the stumbling block in the process of empowerment and these should receive first priority in any strategy of empowerment.”34

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Education is one substantial means of generating desired confidence and countering difference and becoming fully literate would automatically result in a self sustaining momentum towards empowerment. Therefore, education must empower people to make judgement and to work for change. Thus for empowering the people, the entire society has to be enlightened as argued by the Ramamurthy Committee, with equal opportunity given to all its sections in this regard. Dewey and his contemporaries rightly emphasize that “for education both interest and content are essential but neither is a sufficient conditions for educative experiences,” and for effective empowerment through education. The Delor’s Committee report argues that – “In 21st Century, the sets of skills once learnt will become obsolete in the frequently changing work situation and so the adult worker will have to continuously relearn the new sets of skills in order to remain acceptable in the employment market and thus will have to acquire attitude to continuously relearn and refresh his skills throughout his life.”

Economists consider education as an important source of improving and increasing productions in the society and of augmenting economic development at the national and individual level. Education affects economic development in 2 ways: Directly and Indirectly.

Directly, it affects the economic development by influencing the productivity of workers, their employment or employability, compositions, division and mobility of labour force.

Indirectly, it impacts economic development by improving savings and thrifts, limiting family size and formation of right attitudes and skill by removing obstacles to social change and progress by way of broadening the out look of the people.

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The work done by Goel found that, “Productivity of primary education passed workers was better than that of illiterate workers by 17%. The productivity of middle school passed workers was higher than primary passed workers by 14%.”\(^{37}\)

Thus economists view education as a process of enhancing one’s vocational efficiency – as also specifically pleaded by Mudliar Education Commission. The strong evidence that, “Investment in education contributes to reduction of poverty and improvement in income distribution in addition to social demographic and political development.”\(^{38}\) “This is true in the case of India too.”\(^{39}\)

Justifying that education is the fundamental source of development, D.S. Kothari in the report of Indian Education Commission (64-66), had heavily argued for large scale multilevel intervention of the Government of India and had recommended sustained investments in education for achieving the goals of national development. The report began by declaring that, “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms.” The Commission suggested that education as main instrument of social change and if this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution, there is one and only one instrument and that is education. But Amartya Sen argues that, education of different types and level cannot bring development in the society – development that leads to the kinds of freedom has to be coupled with creation of many other social and political conditions in order to be meaningful for all and these conditions include, (a) Political freedom, (b) Economic facilities, (c) Social opportunities, (d) Transparency guarantees, and (e) Protective security.

Sociologists believe that education is a process of socialization of the new generation in the ways of life of the society of which it is going to become a new member, its needs to learn various aspects of its life, in order to become its successful member. “Their aim of education is to raise people’s cultural level – preparing “cultured man” and enhancing their consciousness and concern and to create, the conditions for greater mass participation in democratic processes.”

Brookover gives 3 basic premises to explain the concept of education: (i) Human behaviour is essentially social and education…. as how to believe in a social situation, (ii) Education is concerned with teaching the members how they are expected to behave in a variety of selected social situation and (iii) It is education through which societies are perpetuated.

Psychologists view education as that process which facilitates in the mental and emotional development of the child at different stages of his biological growth and assist in developing his potential abilities. They consider education as a process of growth. Froebel, in his ‘Education of Man’, linked education to the biological unfolding of inner potentialities of child. The concept of education, has also been explained by educationists and educational thinkers in their own ways. Gandhi said, “By education I mean, drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and soul.”

Islamic educational thinkers like Ibn – Miskawaih, Al Gahzali, Ibn Khaldun, etc. also expressed the similar views on education. Ibn Miskawaih emphasized training of the child in moral, spiritual and intellectual aspects of his personality and stressed on need to develop him in to a responsible sober man of high character and a content member of the society. Al Ghazali emphasized character building of child. Ibn Khaldun highlighted the sociological dimensions of education.

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The report of the UNESCO International Commission on Education highlighted the aim of all round development of the individual to be attained through every educational system.

Religious authorities says that, aim of education should be to inculcate moral and spiritual values in the children. Islam considers acquisition of education as a medium of attaining success in this and in the hereafter world. Shah Waliullah says that, “aim of education should be nurturing of righteous society.” 42 Asghar ali Engineer points out that in no way Quran has put any restriction on freedom of thought, and religious knowledge also includes scientific and secular knowledge. Quran in 21:30 emphasizes empirical process of acquiring knowledge. Islam emphasizes use of rationality and inductive deductive process of learning. Al Qardhavi rightly observes that, “ever since Muslims have lost interest in modern science, their interest in religious studies dwindled.” 43 He concludes that for the last many centuries no other communities in the world ignored education as much as it has been ignored by Muslims.” 44

Education is that life long continuous process through which all those abilities of the individual are developed which help in controlling his environment and in realizing all his potentialities.

It is worth noting in the case of Muslims that despite Muslims being a significant minority group of the country and consequently having a definitive role to play in the socio-economic and political life of the Indian society, No serious thought seems to have ever been given to maintain a regular record of their access to and attainment at different level of education in different parts of the country, particular in those state where they happen to occupy a sizeable

42 Ahmad, Manzoor. (1990). Islamic Education. Qazi Publisher, New Delhi, pp.15-20.
44 Ibid, p.15.
proportion of their population and are in a position to considerably affect the
dynamics of development of that state and consequently the country. Till 1931
community based data was available, but 1941 Census, data not published,
having been declared as “classified information”, this information was not
made available even to researchers. Without such information, it becomes
almost impossible to know the exact status of Muslims (and specifically Muslim
women) at a given point of time.

The survey conducted by high power panel of Government of India on the
status of education among minorities for SCs and STs headed by Dr. Gopal
Singh, admits that Indian Muslims are educationally backward. Despite his
efforts, the literature on Muslim education and their educational problems in
contemporary India is extremely limited. Sherwani only reports the status of
educational performance of Muslims and response to some NGO to improve
upon Muslim student’s performance in school located in U.P only.

Imtiaz Ahmad, found astounding difference in educational attainment of
Muslims were noted between the states and even between districts within states
covered by the survey.

on page 48, gives the data of percentage of Muslims enrolment in schools in
1871-72 of Mumbai as 8.4% to total students of 15.4%, enrolment in arts and
other professional colleges in Mumbai was 60 as compared to Hindu 1058 in
1986-87. Muslim enrolment in colleges were 7%. As per the literacy rate of
females in 2001 Census was 53.7 in India as compared to male literacy rate of
75.3%. The urban literacy rate of female Muslims in 1990 in India was 40.5%
as compared to Hindu female 57.8%, as per the data given in Sarvek Sharana in
September 1990, cited in Mushirul Hasan, legacy of divided nation, in 1997, as
quoted in frontline; October 12-15, 1991. The urban literacy rate in India, shows
the Muslim female as 62.2 as compared to Hindu female 73.4 (as per NSS, 55th
round 2000, NSSO, Govt. of India, 01, pp.24-25). The discontinuation rate and
non-attendance percentage in age group 6-14 among Muslim females were 7.7 and 7.3 respectively, which was very high (as quoted by Abu Saleh Shariff, India, Human Development Report, Oxford University Press, 1999).

The all India completion rate of elementary education in urban areas among Muslim female was 14% (as per given by NSS, 55th round, 2000, Govt. of India, 2001). “It is clearly observed that for many Muslim children (around 28%) for various reasons, the process of empowerment through education does not take a start as they ever remain out of school and for many more (around 60%), this process does take a start but it is never takes them off the ground, and it rather throws them back to the state of powerlessness and un-freedom of sorts due to their early discontinuation of education, even before completing elementary school.”

Many more facts, which capture attention are, the distribution of employed person by status of employment of Muslim urban female are as follows: Self employed – 67.0, salary employed – 17.5, casual labourers – 15.5 as compared to Hindu urban female: self employed – 43.4, salary employed – 33.8, casual labourers – 22.8 (as per the NSS, 55th Round, 1999-00, Govt. of India, 01). The lowest per capita expenditure is less than Rs.425 and highest 1120. Therefore the largest proportion of Muslims are in the lower expenditure bracket. M.A. Siddiquee points out that large majority of employed Muslims remain extremely low income earners irrespective of their educational status and keeps them poor.

As far as women’s education are concerned, period before Islam (in 7th Century) was disgusting and frustrating, the last revelation in holy Quran (33:45), Allah commanded: “Men and women equal in the sight of Allah”, and

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4:34 and 33:35 related to social, economic and religious status of women, “The Quran has been fair to women’s status.”

Islam not only introduced the principle of women’s dignity and rightful place in the societies, but also provided her with two basic tools to restore her honour and help her acquire a place of respect and pride in society:

(1) Her economic rights,
(2) Her right to be educated and participation in the intellectual pursuits.

Quran says, “They are losers who besottedly slain their children by keeping them in ignorance”. Naseem Ahmad asserts that the, “Quran encourages women to speak their minds and not be silent for. How can a woman learn and grow intellectually if she is not allowed to speak and communicate with other.”

He further argues that Islam grant women the right to hold a job and to involve actively in trade and commerce. He gave examples of many eminent Muslim women like,

(1) Asma – the daughter of Caliph Abubakar, she used to help her husband in the fields.
(2) Nusaiba, the wife of Zaid Ibn Asim, who took part in battle of Ohud.
(3) Al Shafa was superintendent of Market in Medina (appointed thrice).

In the modern times (as per NSS, 2000), the situation in cities are surely better (specifically city like Mumbai, which is a metropolitan mega city)) than the rural areas at all levels of education, because they have an easy access to education and all the resources, and they are better prepared academically at all

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the levels leading to development. In such scenario, some of the empowerment mechanism identify by K. Shanti are as follows:48

- Literacy and higher education.
- Better health care for herself and for children.
- Higher age of marriage.
- Greater work participation in modernized sector.
- Necessary financial and service support for self employment.
- Opportunities for higher position of power.
- Complete knowledge of her rights and above all.
- Sell reliance, self respect, and dignity of being a women.

And in order to achieve these, the GOI had taken steps for upliftment of woman and to empower them. Various committees have been appointed, schemes were adopted, acts formulated, programmes developed and various commissions appointed to safeguard the interests of women.

(F) Cognitive Empowerment

“Man has his will, but woman has her way”

- O.W. Homes

Stromquist has identified cognitive empowerment, psychological empowerment, economic empowerment and political empowerment as the dimensions of empowerment.

The cognitive empowerment involves an understanding of the subordinate conditions and their causes and the ability to critically review one’s experiences in order to notice or identify the patterns of behaviour which lead to dependence and hence reinforce subordination.

Cognitive empowerment therefore calls for knowledge and understanding of self, as well as need to make choices which may go against cultural and social expectations.

(G) Psychological Empowerment

“The great ambition of women is to inspire love”
- French

Psychological empowerment concerned with women’s feeling and the belief that they can change their situations themselves.

Women are normally socialized to be submissive, to serve and let the men in their lives make all the decision affecting them. It involves the reversal of patriarchal schemes of things. It entails competence in making decisions at the personal and social levels, in order to improve one’s situations. It is therefore, represent development of self confidence and self esteem.

In a study conducted by Narsimham, the psychological empowerment was addressed first. The psychological strategy suggests that, we should empower the people first with awareness and confidence. The transformation in their psyche will prime a move towards a life with greater dignity and self assurance, which in turn will pave the way for claiming their legal, social, economic and other entitlements.

Empowerment can thus take place even without concomitant economic increments. Therefore creating a social environment that gives woman self esteem and self confidence.

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The women should be provided opportunities and supporting them to move to non-traditional roles, so that decisions are taken about their own lives, their families, and community.

1.9 MEASURING EMPOWERMENT

Measuring these 3 dimensions are not an easy task. Resources are at once remove from choice becomes a measure of potential rather than actualized choice. How change in women’s resources will translate into changes in the choices they are able to make will depend in part on other aspects of the conditions in which they are making choices e.g., women access to land, at the systemic level, this is an assumption that women are likely to exercise a greater degree of autonomy in those regions where they enjoy rights to land (Dyson, Moore, 1983) (Boserup, 1970). But among Hindus joint family property is generally held in coparcenary system by men to the total exclusion of women (Mukopadhyay, 1998).

(1) Among Muslims, women have always enjoyed the right to inherit as an individual, absolute but unequal rights to property: men tend to inherit twice the share of women. Hindu laws reformed from time to time, but Muslim law left untouched. Inspite previledges to Muslim women, Muslim and Hindu woman tend to be treated as effectively propertyless. Muslim women generally preferred to waive their rights to parental property in favour of their brothers, with the result, they are treated as propertyless. But in Islam, brother have a moral duty under Islam to look after their sisters. The land right gives them a source to bargain. In Jat Kinship system, no question of woman owning a land. Therefore the resources dimension has to be defined in ways which spell out their potential for human agency and valued achievements more clearly than simple access indicators generally do if it is to be useful as a measure of empowerment.
(2) **Measuring Agency:** There are variety of ways of measuring women agencies, woman mobility in the public domain in region where female seclusion is the norms or where the women takes decisions. Examples of decisions which typically appear in measurement efforts in Muslim countries are given below:

(a) Egypt: Household budget, food, visits, children’s health and education, use of family planning methods (Kishor, 1997).

(b) Pakistan: Food, number of children, schooling and marriage of children, women’s work outside home, household expenses (Sathar and Kazi, 1997).

(c) India: Household goods, food, purchase of jewellery, child’s health, disciplining child, children’s education and type of school (Jeejobhoy, 1997).

(3) **Measuring Achievement:** The national Egyptian data has been used by Kishor (1997), to explore the effects of direct and indirect measures of empowerment on 2 valued functioning achievements: (a) Infant Survival Rate, and (b) Immunization.

She conceptualizes women’s empowerment in terms of control – defined as “The ability to access information, take decisions and act in their own interest, or the interests of those who depend on them”. She relied on 3 categories of composite indicators to measure empowerment: (1) Direct evidence of empowerment, (2) Sources of empowerment, and (3) The setting for empowerment.

(1) **Direct Evidence of Empowerment:**

(a) Devaluation of women:
   - Reports of domestic violence, dowry, etc.

(b) Women’s emancipation:
   - Belief in daughter’s education, freedom of movement, etc.
(c) Reported sharing of roles and D.M.
   - Egalitarian gender roles and egalitarian D.M.

(d) Equality in marriage:
   - Fairer grounds reported for justified divorce by husband, equality of grounds reported for divorce by husband/wife.

(e) Financial autonomy:
   - Currently control her earnings
   - Her earning as share household income

(2) Sources of Empowerment:

(a) Participation in modern sector:
   - Index of assets owned, female education

(b) Lifetime exposure to employment:
   - Worked before marriage, controlled earnings before marriage.
   - Working after marriage.

(3) Setting for Empowerment:

(a) Family structure amenable to empowerment:
   - Does not, now previously live with in-laws.

(b) Marital advantage:
   - Small age difference between spouse
   - Chose husband

(c) Traditional marriage:
   - Large educational difference with husband
   - Did not choose husband

A study by Becker (1997) on Zimbabwe to explore the implication of women’s empowerment on different self of functioning achievements: The use of contraception and take up of parental health care. He found that contraceptive use appeared to be positively related to the household wealth, wife’s employment and husband’s education.
Empowerment is measured by the index of women’s role in decision making in 3 areas: (a) The purchase of household items, (b) The decision to work outside, and (c) Number of children.

Derez and Sen (1995) in India found that female literacy reduced under-5 child mortality while both female labor force participation as well as female literacy reduced excess female mortality in the under-5 age group. They interpreted that women’s access to education and employment enhance their abilities to exercise agency.

The Jejeebhoy study (1997) compared Tamil Nadu with U.P. Her study explores the effect of a range of variables on women’s autonomy: (a) Number of children, (b) Number of sons, (c) Co-residence with mother in law, and (d) Waged employment.

Measures of women’s autonomy included their role in D.M., mobility, incidence of domestic violence, access to economic resources and control over economic resources.

To conclude, it is not possible to establish the meaning of indicator, whatever dimensions of empowerment. It is intended to measure, without reference to other dimensions of empowerment. The 3 dimensions are indivisible in determining the meaning of an indicator and hence its validity as a measure of empowerment.

1.10 MODELS/THEORIES OF EMPOWERMENT

(1) **Theories of empowerment at the personal level**: Which focus primarily on ways in which individual can develop feeling of personal powers and self-efficacy. Developing a sense of personal power can be effective in both enhancing mental health and enabling individuals to work towards broader social change.
(2) **Theories of empowerment at interpersonal level:** It stresses the development of specific skills. Skill development can involve such things as training in problem solving or assertiveness. The purpose is to increase both interpersonal influence and political power.

(3) **Theories of empowerment at the political level:** It emphasizes the goal of both social action and social change. This theory differs from traditional models, in that the development of individual is equally as important as the development of group action in affecting social action and social change.

A very interesting diagrammatic representation suggested by Usha Sharma, in her book “Women Empowerment through Information Technology” of the Information and Communication Technology’s Model of Women’s Empowerment is given:

![FIGURE 1.1 ICT MODEL OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT](image)
1.11 APPROACHES TO EMPOWERMENT

Three experimental approach have been undertaken in South Asia.

(1) **Integrated development approach**: It views women’s development as key to the advancement of family and community. It provides a package of interventions to alleviate poverty, meet basic survival needs, reduce gender discriminations and help women to gain self-esteem (RDRS in Rajasthan).

(2) **The economic empowerment approach**: It attributes women’s subordination to lack of economic power. It focusses on improving women’s control over material resources and strengthening women’s economic security (Sewa in India). They provide income generation or skill training.

(3) **The consciousness raising approach**: It asserts that women’s empowerment requires awareness of the complex factors causing women’s subordination. This approach organizes women into collectives that tackles the sources of subordination (Astha and WOP in India).

1.12 INDICATORS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The draft country paper – India for the 4th World on Women, Beijing (1995), proposed these indicators of women’s empowerment:

(A) **Qualitative indicators**:
- Increase in self-esteem – individual and collective confidence.
- Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness levels on issues affecting the community at large, and women in particular, e.g., women’s health, reproductive rights, legal rights, literacy, etc.
- Increase or decrease in personal leisure time and time for child care.
(4) Increase or decrease in work load.
(5) Changes in the role and responsibilities in the family and community.
(6) Visible decrease in domestic violence.
(7) Increase in bargaining power
(8) Increase in access to information and knowledge
(9) Formation of cohesive and articulate women’s groups/collectives at the village level, district level, state level, etc.
(10) Positive change in attitudes among the community members towards discrimination against women.
(11) Recognition of women’s economic contribution within family and outside family.
(12) Women’s decision making over the kind of work she is doing; Is her income and expenditure in her control?

(B) Quantitative indicators
Demographic trends: (1) Mortality rate, (2) Fertility rate, (3) Sex ratio, (4) Life expectancy at birth, (5) Average age of marriage, (6) Number of women participation in different development plans, (7) Greater control over community resources/government schemes, (8) Change in literacy level, and (9) Participation levels of women in political process.

1.13 GENDER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE (GEM)
According to HRD Report (1974), examines whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision making. The GEM concentrates on participation – economic, political and professional. It differs from GDI, which is concerned primarily with basic capabilities and living standards. GEM concentrates on three broad classes of variables:
(1) For power over economic resources based on earned income, the variables is per capita income in PPP dollars (unadjusted).

(2) For access to professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making, the variables is the share of jobs classified as professional and technical and administrative and managerial.

(3) For access to political opportunities and participation in political decision making, the variable is the share of parliamentary seats.

In the GEM, income is evaluated not for its contribution to basic human development – such as longer life, literacy, etc. But as a source of economic power that frees the income earner to choose from a wider set of possibilities and exercise a broad range of options.

The GEM is not meant to be a prescriptive index, with the intent of setting universal norms.

The GEM is estimated for 116 countries, Sweden and Norway rank at the top. Turkey has a low (0.234) GEM. Several countries in East and South-East has low GEM values (India too). Some developing countries like China, Cuba have higher GEM than Japan or France.

Much progress remains to be made in gender equality in almost every country, and in equality of choice in economic and political participation. Industrial countries are not necessarily taking the lead. The areas showing the least progress are parliamentary representation and percentage share of administrators and managers.

Therefore, in most of the countries, industrial or developing, women are not allowed into the corridors of economic and political power. In exercising power or decision making authority, women are a distinct minority through out the World.
1.14 EMPOWERING WOMEN

India has an early and rich tradition of education of women (nearly 5000 years old). The high point of female education and status in this subcontinent was the Vedic period. In this period education was prescribed for all children first under the elders and later Guru from 8 to 24. While modern education of men began with East India company act of 1813, female education suffered from official neglect on account of strict policy of social and religious neutrality and norms of strict privacy and segregation of women. Education of girls developed, in 19C till independence, through private efforts (Christian missionaries and Madarasas) and the efforts of reformers like Rajaram Mohan Roy (who was champion of modern education and equal rights of women), Ishwar Chand Vidya Sagar (dedicated himself for emancipation of women), Ranade (worked for women’s education) and Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule (1st school in Maharashtra for girls from lower castes were opened by them), Kandukari Veerasalingam (girl’s education in Andhra), Annie Besant (set up the central Hindu College), Badraddin Tayyabji, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Zakir Hussain, etc., all worked for the emancipation of women. The participation of women in the freedom movement accentuated the need to keep them in the fore in all walks of life and special attention paid to their education. The Constitution of India (1952) provides framework for socio-legal action for removal of disparities (a) by writing in the equality clauses prohibiting discrimination on the basis of Region, Race, Caste, Sex, or Place of birth, and (b) empowering state to make special provisions for women, children and disadvantaged section of population. The Government of India appointed Committees/Commissions, Schemes adopted, Constitutional privileges provided, Legislative provision enacted and special programmes and schemes developed to empower women all over the country. Muslim women is double privileged as they enjoy all these privileges given by constitution and also by Shariat and Muslim Personal Law.
(A) **Committees and Commissions**

(1) **University Education Commission (1948-49):** Under the Chairmanship of Dr. Radha Krishnan, the Commission observed that newer and more educational opportunities should be planned for women. Standards of courtesy and social responsibilities should be emphasized on the part of men in mixed colleges. Women teachers should be paid same salary as male teachers for equal work. Separate schools for girls and boys should be established, while college education may be co-education.

(2) **Secondary Education Commission (1952-53):** The Commission felt that there should be equal education for men and women and education needs to be closely connected with the home and community. It favoured coeducation at primary and university stages. In co-educational schools, there should be facilities for special co-curricular activities suited to girls.

(3) **National Committee on Women’s Education (1958-59):** Under the Chairmanship of Smt. Hansa Mehta, the Committee regarded women’s education as a major and a special issue. It recommended that every state should be required to prepare comprehensive development plans for the education of girls and women in its area. At primary level concessions in kind should be given to all girls of parents below a certain income level. Free and subsidised transport to girls to make school within easy reach. Provisions of scholarship were made available to encourage the girls to take up courses in commerce, engineering, medicine, etc., at the university stage. Committee also noted the services of voluntary organizations in women’s education, use of educative propaganda and strong enforcement of the compulsory education law.

(4) **Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1961):** The Committee suggested some mild reforms like disabusing public mind of all traditional concepts of the inferiority of women, relating education to individual capacities and interest, adding relevant topics about woman
in text books. It also stated that women teachers should be appointed in boy’s school and men teachers in girl’s schools. Moreover, the possibility of employment for women in as many vocations as possible, should be explored.

(5) Committee to look into the Causes for Lack of Public Support for Girl’s Education and Enlist Public Cooperation (1963): Committee paid special attention on girl’s education in rural areas. School improvement conferences should be arranged widely throughout the state. Women should be widely recruited in / near villages. Local bodies should be made responsible for the provision of school infrastructure.

(6) Education Commission (1964-66): This commission realized the importance of the role of women outside the home. It recommended that the measures suggested by NCOWE (1958-59) should be accelerated. It stated that provisions should be made for separate schools for girls, hostels and scholarships, part time vocational courses, education through correspondence courses, employment of women teachers in all sectors of educations, etc. It also recommended the setting up of research units in one/2 universities to deal specifically with women’s education.

(7) Committee on Status of Women (1971-74): This Committee has appointed to examine the constitutional, legal and administrative provisions that have a bearing on social status of women, their education and employment and to assess the impact of these provisions during the 2 decades on the status of women in the country, particularly in the rural sector and to suggest more effective programmes. It recommended co-education at primary and secondary level, common courses for both sexes till 10th, more relevant courses at University level and free and compulsory education upto 10th. It also stated that more employment opportunities, particularly part time should be developed. Mobile schools for nomadic tribes, migrant laborers and construction workers be
established, admission procedure should be made more flexible to help girls complete schooling and at least 50% of the teachers in girl’s schools should be women.

(8) **National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992):** According to NPE, education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The national system of education decided to play an important, possibly interventionist role in the empowerment of women, contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and text books, promote women’s studies as part of various courses. For the achievements of these parameters following measures have been taken:

(i) By 1995, every educational institution should take up active programme to tackle women’s predicament.

(ii) Women teachers and women instructors in adult/non-formal education programmes should receive special orientation to enable them to play an active role towards women’s equality.

(iii) Women’s participation in vocational, technical and professional education should be emphasized.

(iv) Social programmes should be developed by research institutions, voluntary institutions and professional groups of artists to promote self image and general awareness of women.

(v) Women’s education cell should be set with adequate supporting staff, at the state level.

All these measures aimed at enabling women to make informed choices, and ensuring equal participation in the development process and enhancing access to legal literacy.

(9) **National Perspective Plan for Women’s Education (1988-2000 AD):** It focussed on rural and disadvantaged women. It has the objective for women’s education so that women may also participate in the areas of
social, cultural, economic, political and educational fields. Some of the main recommendations are:

(i) Media and various forms of communications have to be geared to generate awareness regarding the necessity of educating girls.

(ii) There should be reservation of 50% posts for women teachers in elementary schools, especially in rural areas.

(iii) Wherever necessary, schools meant for girls may be set up.

(iv) The Savitribai Phule Foster Parents Scheme of Maharashtra could be adopted in other states.

(v) Special efforts to be made to bring tribal girls in to school system.

(vi) Atleast 30% seats should be reserved for girls in apprenticeship training courses on a non-transferable basis.

(vii) Special scholarship for girls opting for science courses at higher education level.

(viii) Entrepreneurship development programmes should be organized separately for education of women in the age group 19-30 years.

(ix) Adult education programmes will be revised to provide continuous information flows.

Despite the universal and far reaching benefits of female education, female literacy rate are still low and the school dropout rates are high. The scenario is much better in urban than the rural areas. But still the enrolment ratio is low and drop out ratio high as compared to other religious groups. There are sex differentials in education at all levels and so are the resulting differentials in employment.

The major policy shifts were\(^{50}\) from macro, aggregated centralized planning to disaggregated decentralized micro planning with people’s participation:

• From welfare to development and finally the empowerment of women
• From separate curriculum to undifferentiated curricula
• From treating child as a gender neutral category to gender inclusive gender just approaches, seeing children as male and female
• From women’s concerns to issues of girl child, from SAARC year of girl child to SAARC decade of the girl child (1991-2000)
• From man power / human capital to human resource development, to human development and human rights

(B) **Schemes and Development Programmes**

(1) **IRDP (1980):** Integrated Rural Developmental Programmes laid the multipurpose thrust on rural development planning. It included a number of programmes like Employment Guarantee Schemes (EGS), Food for Work Programme (FFWP), Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Development Agency (MFALDA), Minimum Need Programmes (MNP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), etc. The IRDP aims at bringing about improvement in the economic and social life of the rural poor including women.

(2) **DWACRA (1982):** Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas aims at providing income generating skills and activities to poor women. NGOs in all the districts of the country, were involved in implementing DWACRA programmes.

(3) **TRYSEM (1979):** The Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment, with the objective of providing training to youth (boys and girls), from the family below poverty line. Percentage of women total trained youths in Maharashtra was 24.06 during 1998-99 (in number) *(Source: Annual Report 1998-99, Govt. of India, Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment).*
(4) **Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) (1989)**: With the aim to generate gainful employment for men and women in rural areas.

(5) **Indira Awaas Yojana (IAJ) (1985-86)**: Aims were to provide houses to SCs and STs bonded labourers and other people living below poverty line.

(6) **NREP/RLEG (1988-89)**: Aim at providing farmers from SCs and STs, open irrigation well free of cost. The women beneficiaries were 252 in Maharashtra (under million wells schemes during 1998-99) (Source: Same stated above in (3)).

(7) **STEP (1987)**: Seeks to provide new upgraded skills to poor and asset less women in the traditional sectors of agriculture, sericulture, handicrafts, poultry, etc. including Maharashtra.

(8) **RMK (1993)**: Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, a national credit fund, to extend credit facilities to poor and needy women in the informal sectors through the intervention of women self help groups.

(9) **Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY) (1997)**: The objective was to change the community’s attitude towards girl child. The child born on or after 15th August, 1997 in rural and urban areas were given a grant of Rs.500/- scholarships.

(10) **Rural Women’s Development and Employment Project (RWDEP) (1998)**: Aim was to create an environment for women empowerment in six states: Bihar, Harayana, Karnatak, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

(11) **CEDAW (1993)**: Convention to the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

(12) **Short Stay Home for Women and Girls (1969)**
(13) Hostels for Working Women (1972-73)

(14) NORAD (1982)


(16) Rozgar Yojana for Women (1989)


(18) Reservation of Women in Local Self-Government (1992) for rural and urban both.

(19) Training Package for Women’s Development (1992)

(20) NCW (1992)

(21) RWDE Project

(22) Indira Mahila Yojana

(23) VY (Vatsalya Yojana)

(24) MMSC (Mid-day Meal Scheme for Children)

(25) DPSK (Dattak Putri Shiksha Karyakram)

(26) UNDP (Urban National Diet Programme)

(27) AY (Ayushmati Yojna) for Rural Women

(28) JYPE (Jabali Yojana for Prostitution Elimination) – only in M.P.

(29) KY (Kalpavriksha Yojna)
(30) Social Security Pension Scheme

(31) NMFP

(32) WAC

(33) SC (Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women (1997)

(34) NAGS

(35) A Task Force on Women and Children: are constituted by Government (August 2000). It addresses the developmental issues relating to women. It recommended the setting up of an inter-ministerial standing committee to review and monitor gender mainstreaming in government.

(36) Swavalamban: Employment linked training programmes provided to women in traditional and non-traditional trades.

(37) Family Counselling Centres (1984): For providing preventive and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and family maladjustments.

(38) Swadhar: For the rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and girls trapped in commercial sex.

(39) Swarana Jayanti Shahri Rojgar Yojna (SJSRY)

(40) Stree Shakti Puraskars (SSP) (1999)

(41) National Policy for Employment of Women (2001): The development of women and child development in MHRD has prepared a NPE for women. The objective were to create environment, equal access, strengthen legal system, changing attitudes, building partnership with society and women’s organizations.
(42) **Individual Aid under Self Employment Scheme for Women.** The objectives are to provide vocational training, to raise the status of women.

(43) **SEPUP (Self-employment Programmes for Urban Poor):** Run by GOI and RBI. Objectives are to provide self employment to urban poor.

(44) **Gainful Employment in Small Trade:** Provides small loans to underemployed.

(45) **DRIS (Differential Rate of Interest Scheme):** RBI directives to all banks to provide financial assistance to weaker sections at lower rate of interest.

(46) **Bank’s Help to Self Helping Women:** The central government requested the nationalized banks to encourage greater participation of women. Therefore, (a) Dena Bank started Streemda - low interest rate to women, (b) SBI has Stree Shakti Packages and (c) Bank of India has Priyadarshini Yojana.

(C) **Constitutional Previledges**

(1) **Article 14** (equality before law for women): The state shall not deny to any person equality before law or equal protection of the laws, within the territory of India. Article 14 empowers the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.

(2) **Article 15(i):** Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, sex, role or place of birth. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, role, sex or place of birth or any of them.

(3) **Article 15(ii):** Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children.
(4) **Article 16(i):** There shall be equality of opportunities for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

(5) **Article 16(ii):** No citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, decent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the state.

(6) **Article 39(a):** The state to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

(7) **Article 39(d):** The state to direct its policy towards securing equal pay for both men and women.

(8) **Article 39(A):** To promote justice, on the basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or schemes or any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

(9) **Article 42:** The state shall make provisions for securing just and human conditions of work and for maternity relief.

(10) **Article 46:** The state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of people, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

(11) **Article 51(A)(e):** To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people for India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

(12) **Article 243D(3):** Not less than 1/3 (including the seats reserved for women, SC, ST) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election
in every panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat.

(13) **Article 243D(4):** Not less than 1/3 of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the panchayats at each level to be reserved for women.

(14) **Article 243T(3):** Not less than 1/3 reserve for women of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation of different constituencies in municipality.

(15) **Article 243T(4):** Reservation of offices of chairpersons in municipalities for the SC, ST and women in such manner as the legislature of a state may by law provide.

Beside these constitutional provisions there are also legislative provisions, to support the constitutional directive, provides ‘crimes against women’ under 2 categories: (a) The crime identified under Indian Penal Code, and (b) Code of Criminal Procedure (73).

(A) **Crimes under IPC:**

1. Rape (Section 376)
2. Kidnapping and abduction (Section 363-373)
3. Homicide for dowry, dowry deaths or their attempts (Section 302/304B)
4. Cohabitation caused by man deceitfully inducing a belief of lawful marriage (Section 493).
5. Marrying again during life time of husband/wife (Section 494).
6. Enticing with criminal intent a married women (Section 498)
(7) Torture, both mental and physical by husband or relatives of husband (Section 498A)
(8) Molestation (Section 354)
(9) Sexual harassment (Section 509)
(10) Importation of girls (upto 21 years)

(B) **Code of Criminal Procedure (73)**

(1) Whenever it is necessary to cause a female to be searched, the search shall be made by another female with strict regard to decency (Section 51(2)).

(2) Unlawful detention of women/female child (age of 18 years), for any unlawful purpose, a District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, magistrate may make an order to restoration of women to her liberty (provided complaint made) (Section 98).

(3) Provision for maintenance of wives, children and parents (Section 125-128).

(4) If a women sentenced to death is found to be pregnant, the High Court shall order the execution of the sentence to be postponed.

(D) (I) **ACTS**

(1) **The Employees State Insurance Act (48):** An insured women shall be entitled to periodical payments in case of miscarriage / sickness / confinement arising out of pregnancy, premature birth of a child or miscarriage.

(2) **Plantation on Labour Act, 51:** Creches shall have to be arranged for children of working women. In every plantation where in 50 or more women workers (including women employed by any contract or) are, suitable rooms for the use of children shall be provided.
(3) **Mines Act 52**: Prohibition of employing women below ground and maternity leave for any number of days not exceeding 12 weeks.

(4) **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Acts 56**: Specific provision relating to maintenance of wife and maintenance of widowed daughter in law (Section 18 & 19). Stipulations regarding amount of maintenance (Section 23).

(5) **Indian Succession Act 25 and Hindu Succession Act 56**: Rights have been conferred upon women in general and Hindu women in particular, regarding inheritance of the property on the death of husband and parents.

(6) **Laws of Marriage and Divorce**:

(i) The Special Marriage Act, 54

(ii) The Hindu Marriage Act 55

(iii) Indian Divorce Act 1869

(iv) Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872.

(v) Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 39

(vi) Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 36

(vii) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 56 (2 major amendment in 1978 and 1986) – inhibit or to abolish commercial vice, namely, traffic in woman for men and children for purpose of prostitutions as an organized means of living.

(viii) The Maternity Benefit Act, 61

(ix) Dowry Prohibition Act, 61: Prohibition of giving or taking dowry at any time and provide for punishment for committing offence under this act

(x) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 71

(xi) Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, 78

(xii) Equal Remuneration Act, 78: to men and women for similar nature of work.

(xiii) Family Courts Act, 84
(xiv) The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 86.

(xv) The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 87

(xvi) National Commission for Women Act, 90

(xvii) Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 94 – prohibition of the misuse of prenatal diagnostic technique for determining sex, foetus, leading to female foetus.


(II) **Rights and Responsibilities of Muslim Woman:**

FOMWAN (2000), the federation of Muslim Women’s Association in Nigeria, under the Shariah outlined the following general rights:

1. Right to life
2. Right to worship and spiritual development
3. Right to education
4. Right to self-respect and kind treatment
5. Right to choose a husband
6. Right to make stipulation in her marriage contract
7. Right to seek divorce
8. Right to retain her identity
9. Right to consultation
10. Right of expression
11. Protection against physical abuse
12. Protection against slander
13. Protection against fair treatment
14. Protection in polygamy
15. Right to personal dignity
16. Right to self determination
Economic Rights:

(1) Right to a dower
(2) Right to maintenance and protection in matrimony
(3) Right to own/dispose off property
(4) Right to employment
(5) Right to inheritance
(6) Right to will out property
(7) Right to engage in economic activity

Political Rights:

(1) Right to a political view
(2) Right to elect a leader
(3) Right to contribute to state discourse

Other Special Rights:

(1) Right to shelter as a divorcee
(2) Divorcee’s maintenance right
(3) Right of support during maternity
(4) Widow’s maintenance right
(5) Widow’s right to remarry
(6) Political right of Muslim women refugees
(7) Refugee’s right to remarry

(E) Five Year Plans

Along with the constitutional guarantees, the Government made provisions in the various five years plans for the upliftment of women:

(1) 1st Five Year Plan: The Central Social Welfare Board was set up (1953) as a symbol of Government’s welfare approach to women’s problem.
(2) **2nd Five Year Plan** was linked to the approach to intensive agriculture, recognized the need for organizing women as workers. They should be protected against injurious work, should receive maternity benefits and crèches for their children should be arranged.

(3) **3rd & 4th Five Year Plan** laid emphasis on female literacy.

(4) **5th Five Year Plan** which coincided with the United Nations – sponsored International Women’s decade, emphasized the need to train women in need of income and protection.

(5) **6th Five Year Plan** had a chapter on women. It recognized women’s lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their development. This plan provided for joint pattas (titles) to men and women. Variety of programmes were taken up, like IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Schemes, Science and Technology for Women Scheme and MCH programmes.

(6) **7th Five Year Plan**: This plan sought to generate awareness among women about their rights and privileges. The joint patta scheme, initiated by 6th plan was expanded in the 7th plan by including support through credit (or small scale capital), marketing, training in skills/management and technology. An integrated multidisciplinary approach will be adopted concerning employment, education, health, nutrition, application of science and technology, etc.

(7) **8th Five Year Plan**: Acknowledged the fact that for the economic development of women, the first step is the recognition of the dignity of women’s work and a proper understanding of its dimensions and contribution in the Indian contexts. Therefore, bringing women into mainstream of national development, as a contributors and partakers along men.
(8) **9th Five Year Plan (1997-02)**: Adopted the strategy of women’s component plan, under which not less than 30% of funds are embarked in all the women related sector for women specific programmes.

(9) **10th Five Year Plan (2002-07)** has undertaken to further strengthen the process of women’s component plan. The efforts made through the 5 year plans did bear fruit. The female expectation of life, which at birth was 44.7 in 1961 rose to 52.9 in 1981.

(F) **NGOs/Trusts in Mumbai**

(1) **Swadhar**: Situated at Aarey Road, Goregaon and run by Keshav Gore Samrati Trust. The objectives were, to improve the status of women (all castes women). The legal aid is provided to women in distress. They also help in providing loans from Apana Sahakar Bank, etc.

(2) **Small Industries Service Institute**: Situated at Sakinaka, Andheri (East). The objective is to promote small scale industries. The training duration is 2-3 months.

(3) **Mahila Arthic Vikas Mandal Ltd. (MAVIM)**: Situated at Madam Cama Road. Their objectives is the economic development of women in Maharashtra.

(4) **Creative Handicrafts**: Situated at Andheri (East), run by Jeevan Nirwaha Niketan. The objectives are to help slum women and to provide training to women for different work like toy making, etc.

(5) **All India Council of Muslim Economic Upliftment Ltd. (AICMEU)**: Situated at Vazir Building (M-3), managed by public spirited and socially aware people (a registered Muslim organization). They provide loan to Muslims (men and women both) upto Rs.10,000 which is interest free.
(6) **Cooperative Voluntary Organization**: Run by Annapurna Mahila Mandal, situated at Rammurthi Marg (M-28). It employs 50,000 illiterate and below poverty line women (all religion). It also imparts training in catering, tailoring and many other work.

(7) **Women’s Research and Action Group (WRAG)**: Situated at Santacruz (East). They work with individual Muslim women in the community particularly those from marginalized sections of society. They try to bring an improvement in the socio-economic status and legal status within the family and society. It also works at policy level interventions aimed at creating a climate, that is conducive for promotion of women’s human rights and dignity. Besides research and publications on issues related to women’s right, they also undertake a community outreach programme, which undertakes activities like, (i) community empowerment through solidarity building (ii) rights awareness workshops (iii) training of potential trainers from communities (iv) training programmes on gender, sexual and reproductive health (v) capacity building activities (vi) facilitating community participation in the campaign for reform of Muslim personal law.

(8) **Khaire-Ummat Trust**: Situated at Imambada (M-8). Provides educational scholarship to deserving students (male and female Muslims).

(9) **Tanzeeme-Walidain**: It is a sub-committee of the Khaire-Ummat Trust. It organizes meetings, seminars, programmes and conferences, wherein experts from different fields are invited to educate Muslim parents, on various issues related to their own development and that of their children. The focus is to create awareness among the parents specially on problem related to adolescent, developing self confidence and other personality related issues. They undertake several programmes like (i) Basic education scheme, (ii) Jalsa-e-Walidaen (parents), (iii) Jalsa-e-
Asateza (Teacher), (iv) Scholarship schemes for students (both male and female outside Mumbai), and (v) Employment consultancy.

(10) Modern Educational, Social and Cultural Organizations (MESCO): Situated at Marine Lines, working for the upliftment of deprived persons through various schemes. Social, economical and educational deprivation amongst unfortunate people (from all religion) are being educated through charitable efforts. The objectives are:

(i) To promote education amongst weaker section of society, especially women.

(ii) To work for the social upliftment of the backward sections of society. They provide aid at both school and college level.

(iii) Educational adoption schemes

(iv) High cost educational loans scheme (HCELS): Provides finances to financially weak students (both men and women) but academically bright. The student have to replay loan as per norms of 2 years holiday period after completion of studies.

(v) The sponsors can donate sewing machine (cash to be given), which are given to widows and orphans and destitute women.

(11) Awaze-Niswan - situated at JJ Hospital (M-3), promotes the rights of Muslim women. Their aims is to provide women with a sense of control over their lives. This is a collective of women who have successfully survived violence in their personal lives. The trust provides counseling to help women deal with scars of abuse and support them in their struggle of independence. They work with women who have suffered domestic violence, sexual abuse within and outside family, divorce, child custody, battles and dowry
murders. They respond with shelter, emotional support counselling, mediation with family, neighbourhood support and access to legal recourse (police and courts). It also promotes education towards empowering woman to develop confidence, challenge traditional roles and avail employment opportunities. It also awards scholarships for higher education. Their non-formal education programme includes legal literacy and provides practical knowledge for accessing banks, police station. It also conducts awareness campaigns to generate discussion in the community around women’s issues. They organize a convention of various national and international groups to discuss the Muslim personal law and its implication on women. Along with women’s group from Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, etc. They have also attempted to bring about international pressures on the state complicity in this violence through the international initiative for justice.

(12) **Huqooqe Niswan Sangthan**: Situated at Bandra Naupada. The objectives are:

(i) To bring about a change in Muslim personal law and to implement it.
(ii) To work for the Muslim women’s marital and family rights
(iii) To help women to get their rights
(iv) To make them aware of their rights and bring about an awakening in them.

(13) **Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS)**: Situated at Santacruz (East). The organization working for peace and communal harmony and interfaith understanding under the chairmanship of Dr. Asgherali Engineer. It has helped bridge the gap between communities and in providing national integration, social cohesion and peace. It organizes workshops, seminars, training, etc. all over India on the issue on minority and human rights, women’s rights, peace and conflict resolution, etc. It
engages also in interfaith dialogues to build bridges between different communities. The centre has 51 books which has been written/edited by A.A. Engineer. It publishes journals (secular perspective).

(14) **Prerna:** It started working in red-light area of Mumbai with a view to end 2

nd generation trafficking of children of red-light areas based woman victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking (VOCSET) to protect and establish the rights and identity of the women victims of CSE&T. The funding agencies are CRY, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.

1.15 **NEED OF THE STUDY**

The women have always been demanding gender equality with men. It has been a continual theme in Western Literature. Then there was an origin of feminism, the concern exemplifies one of the 2 precipitant of feminist sentiments in the western world. The change in social values resulted in change in social relation. The other causes were industrialization, which changed the entire economic system of society.

It was not until the middle of 1960 that feminism began to revere in USA, NOW was framed, for protesting the failure of the equal employment opportunities commission to enforce ‘sex’ provision of federal legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment.

The shifting of the work setting from home to the factory after industrial revolution has changed the concept of work drastically. Earlier the whole family worked as one production unit and pursued a craft which has socially ranked and integrated with the social structure. The basis for identification was family occupation and not individual position in the skill hierarchy of the organization. The removal of work setting from home had an adverse effect on the position of women. Firstly ‘work’ had come to be identified as something which is
pursued outside the home, secondly, work had come to be identified with specific of the economic system.

The scenario in India was not so different, the status and role of women vary from group to group. In rural areas, women must hire out themselves for wages. In Hindu castes, women ideologically subordinated to men (Manusmriti). According to Brahman ideals, women are expected to be an obedient wife, a dutiful daughter in law and a devoted mother. Lower castes that acquired power and wealth sought to emulate the higher castes, which meant again a loss of freedom to women.

The universal declaration of human rights was adopted by the general assembly on December 10, 1948, as a common standard of achievement of all people of all nations. The 30 articles setting forth basis, a right to freedom to which all men and women are entitled without discrimination. In 1952, the general assembly adopted the convention on the political rights of women, gives women an entitlement of voting in all election as equal terms with men. The focus of attention has been made in UNO regarding human rights protected by the various top leaders of the world.

The concept of women empowerment emerged, simultaneously with the concept of human rights. USA was the first country to take leadership in bringing up women empowerment in every aspect of their social, economical and professional life. Canada and may other European countries followed it.

Libya, Turkey, Iran, Palestine considered women empowerment in Muslims an important aspect in the development of their nation, due to their economic and social conditions. The Saudi-Arabia and Pakistan (and India too), were stepping slowly in their regard to provide women empowerment to their females in their countries.

India is a fast developing country in the list of nuclear science technology as well as in the field of production and education. Women are encouraged at
social, political and governmental level to come forth, to shoulder the responsibilities along with male at all levels. Special facilities and reservations are given for their empowerment in every walks of life.

The right to development is a Universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. All human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. UND, HRD repeatedly pointed out that people are the real wealth of a nation (people includes women). Much have been done by ICSSR, CSWI, Policies framed, plans formulated. Gender equity and women’s development were being given newer dimensions in the international scenario. Being a signatoree to the non-aligned summit, India had to commit to these issues.

In view of the above, it is therefore, important that more research studies need to be conducted on empowerment among women. This research is also important because in a modernizing society (in a Mega city like Mumbai, which is secular multilingual, multi-religious, complex and progressive) women are counted upon to partake in the development programme along with them. Thus a horizontal set of power on the basis of gender incision makes it very difficult for any nation to utilize and invest its man power to a full extent.

Muslim women in India are lagging behind to take advantages and facilities of reservations given to their because of their own social, cultural and religious constraints.

A notable change have been observed in Muslim girls in this decade due to increasing awareness and fast communicative devices. The effect of women empowerment is mostly seen in the metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, etc.

No doubt, the increasing awareness and education changed the scenario of the Muslim community in Mumbai city among Muslim women. This observable change encouraged the researcher to study various factors in their environment
which influences their life and which help the Muslim women to come up and lead happy and modern life and to enjoy their freedom at fullest.

1.16 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A critical investigation into the educational and socio-economical factors strengthening the women empowerment in Muslim women of Mumbai.”

1.17 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

(1) Critical:
(i) The concise oxford dictionary defines the word critical as censorious, fault finding, skillful at, or, engaged in criticism.
(ii) Compact oxford dictionary, thesaurus and word power guide, edited by Catherine Seane and others published by Oxford University Press in 2005, defines censorious, criticizes, deprecatory depreciatory, derogatory, disapproving, fault finding, hyper critical, judgmental, informal nit picking, analytical, discerning, discriminating, intelligent, judicious, perceptive, probing, sharp, basic, crucial, dangerous, decisive, important, key, momentous, pivotal, vital. It is also defined in the same book as expressing disapproving comments, expressing or involving an assessment of a literary or artistic work, having a decisive importance.

(2) Investigation: The concise Oxford dictionary defines investigation as to examine, inquire into, study carefully, make official enquiry into, to make search or systematic enquiry.
Compact Oxford Dictionary - Thesaurus and word power guide in thesaurus defines it as enquiry, examination, inquiry,
inquisition, inspection, informal, postmortem, informal probe, quest, research, review, scrutiny, search, study, survey. The dictionary defines as to carry out a systematic inquiry into so as to establish the truth, to carry out research into (a subject).

(3) **Educational** (Adjective is education): The concise Oxford dictionary defines education as systematic instruction.

**Dictionary of education** by C.V. good, defines education as,

(i) The aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive values in the society in which he lives.

(ii) The social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and non-controlled environment (especially that of school), so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development.

(iii) Ordinarily, a general term for the so called “technical or more specifically classified professionals of teachers and directly relating to educational, psychological, philosophical, administration, supervision”, etc., broadly the total pattern of preparation, formal and informal, that results in the professional growth of teachers.

**The compact Oxford dictionary** thesaurus and word power guide defines education (whose derivative is educational) as the process of teaching or learning, theory and practice of teaching, training in a particular subject. In thesaurus it is defined as coaching, curriculum, enlightenment, guidance, indoctrination, instruction, schooling syllabus, teaching, training, tuition.

(4) **Socio-Economical**: The concise Oxford dictionary defines, it as relating to social status and economic position. A dictionary of the
social sciences of Hugo F. reading defines it as possessing a social or economic character or both, involving both social, and economic factor.

The compact Oxford dictionary thesaurus and word power guide defines it as relating to the interaction of social and economic factors.

(5) **Factors**: The concise Oxford dictionary defines it as circumstance, factor influence, contributing to a result.

Dictionary of education by C.V. Good defined it as (in psychology) one of the forces/conditions that acting together or separator, produce a given result.

The compact Oxford dictionary thesaurus and word power guide defines it as anything contributing to a result.

In thesaurus, it is given as aspects, causes, circumstances, component, consideration, constituent contingency, detail, determinant, element, fact, influence, ingredient, item, parameter, part, particular.

A dictionary of the social sciences by Hugo F. Reading defines it as anything contributing to result, component of a situation any one of the elements accounting for and variation in a set of interrelated variables.

(6) **Strengthen**: The concise Oxford dictionary defines it as make or become stronger.

The compact Oxford dictionary defined the same way. In thesaurus, it is given as bolster, boost, brace, buildup, buttress, encourage fortify, harden, hearten, increase, make stronger, popup,
reinforce, stiffen, support, tone up, toughen, backup, consolidate, corroborate, enhance, justify, substantiate.

(7) **Women**: The concise Oxford dictionary defines it as an adult human female above 18 years of age.

The compact Oxford dictionary T & WP defines as an adult human female.

(8) **Empowerment**: The concise Oxford dictionary defines empower as authorize, license, give power to, make able.

The compact Oxford dictionary T & WP define empower (noun-empowerment) as given authority or power to, given strength and confidence.

Complete A-Z, Sociology handbook defines empowerment as “a term originally associated with the new right, but now widely used. It concerns the dispersion of power to individuals, so that they begin to take responsibility for their own decision and their own lives. It began as an attempt to roll back the power of the state by taking areas of decision making traditionally associated with Government and given them to groups or individuals. Elements of empowering political programmes were the sale of council houses, the formation of housing associations, the introduction of local management, management of schools, etc. There is a much wider use of the term in, for example education, where students are empowered through taking responsibilities for charting and planning their own routes through courses, by the “individual action planning” process.

The dictionary of Critical Social Sciences by T.R. Young and others defines it as, this is an affirmative philosophy of social
living that is extremely person centered. Acts of empowerment entails the validation of individuals, despite their frailties, shortcomings, vulnerabilities. The oppressed and marginalized groups (e.g., the homeless, the welfare dependent, the mentally ill, survivors of abuse, AIDS victims) to retain their dignity. Empowerment movements maintain that all people have a right to actively and meaningfully contribute to setting the social, economical and political agenda in their own communities and in society regardless of their income or social standing.

(9) **Muslim**: The compact Oxford dictionary thesaurus and W.P.G. defines as followers of Islam. Adjective: relating to Muslim or Islam.

### 1.18 OPERATIONALISED DEFINITIONS

1. **Critical**: According to researcher it means being analytical and judgmental in finding out the extent to which socio-economical and educational factors strengthens, the women empowerment in the Muslim women of Mumbai.

2. **Investigation**: According to researcher, it means a systematic enquiry into the factors under study, strengthening women empowerment in the Muslim women of Mumbai.

3. **Educational factors**: According to researcher, it means the facts/elements of education (like levels of education, streams of education, parent’s and husband’s education and professional training, etc.)

4. **Socio-Economical factors**: According to researcher, it means fact/elements of both social and economical, interacting together e.g., age of respondent, earning status, marital status, type of family, self income, family income, sects, migration, etc.
(5) **Strengthen**: According to researcher, it means making it more strong.

(6) **Women empowerment**: According to researcher it means, a process by which, a human female above 18 years develops an ability to direct and control her life. It also means the women are given an authority or power or freedom to take decisions on their own. Empowerment also implies the improvement of the status of women in the family and community.

(7) **Muslim women**: A human female above 18 years who follows Islam.

1.19 **AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is, to investigate critically, to what extent the educational and socio-economical factors strengthens women empowerment in Muslim women of Mumbai.

1.20 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

(1) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different ages groups.

(2) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of education.

(3) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with and without professional course.

(4) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different streams of education.

(5A) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate husband.

(5B) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate father.
(5C) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate mother.

(6) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from nuclear and joint families.

(7) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different sects.

(8) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) between migrated and domiciled Muslim women of Mumbai.

(9) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different marital status.

(10) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) between earning and non-earning Muslim women of Mumbai.

(11) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of self-income.

(12) To compare the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of family income.

(13) To estimate the significance of relationship between the dimensions of empowerment and demographic factors.

Note: (total) here means all the 6 dimensions of empowerment taken together.

1.21 HYPOTHESES

(1) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different age groups.

(2) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of education.

(3) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with and without professional course.

(4) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different streams of education.
(5A) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate husband.

(5B) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate father.

(5C) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with literate and illiterate mother.

(6) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from nuclear and joint families.

(7) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai from different sects.

(8) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) between migrated and domiciled Muslim women of Mumbai.

(9) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different marital status.

(10) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) between earning and non-earning Muslim women of Mumbai.

(11) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of self-income.

(12) There is a S.D. in the levels of empowerment (total) among Muslim women of Mumbai with different levels of family income.

(13) There is a significant relationship between the dimensions of empowerment and demographic factors.

Note: (total) here means all the 6 dimensions of empowerment taken together.

1.22 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Empowerment of a person implies the improvement of the status of such a person in the family, in the community and in the society as a whole. This can be achieved, through education, employment and political participation. This definition of empowerment is equally applicable to urban women who constitute
a large majority of the total population of Maharashtra state. Education is one of the finest means of reducing inequality in every society. A person’s knowledge skills, values and attitudes are developed through education. These variables help one to lead a desired quality of life. Education for all is vital in every walk of life. The women-men disparity index shows that literacy in women, in urban areas (specially Mumbai) is not so low as compared to other cities of Maharashtra. Like education, the other important source of empowerment is employment. The women of Mumbai is lucky in this respect, as they have an access to education and employment. But they live hard life. They have little time for leisure. They have little control over the income they earn. The rural urban disparity index in India, Census 2001 is 73.97%.

Women’s span of activities expanded due to change in family structure, urbanization, high standard of living, expensive education, industrialization, attitudinal change in the urban areas.

The present study is among the first of its kind and it is hoped, will lead others to research in this field. The findings of the study do much more than merely provide with research data. It shall be useful not only to the educationist but also to sociologists and policy makers. It highlights the importance of women empowerment, for a better society. It also emphasizes the need of providing education to women/girls for the betterment of society. It highlights some of the factors which keeps women disempowered. The findings of the study help policy makers to frame policies which strengthen women empowerment in a real sense. It is also going to help sociologists and economists to develop an insight into various factors related to social and economical sphere and to analyze, to what extent these factors leave an impact on society and economy of a city like Mumbai. It also analyses the access and control over resources by women in different social-economic stratas of the city.

In this connection, the researcher has prepared a women empowerment scale which cover 6 dimensions (political, familial, social, educational, religious
and economical) – which measures all three – agency, resources and achievement.

The study intended to make the people/educationists realized, the effects of various levels of education, streams, age, social conditions, on women empowerment of Muslim women of Mumbai.

The study also intended to make the women realize the importance of education and employment in their lives and to see the various factors which dis-empowers them and makes them weak and dependent.

Human resources and specially the women power needs to be assigned a key role in any developmental strategy. Trained and educated on sound lines, they become an asset in accelerating economic growth and in ensuring social change in desired direction, as education develops basic skills and abilities and forces a value system conducive to national development goals.

There is a dearth of research work on women in general and Muslim women in particular. No research so far conducted on socio-economical and educational status of Muslim women of Mumbai and no research conducted on Empowerment among Muslim women of Mumbai.

1.23 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The present study deals with critically investigating, the extent to which, educational and socio-economic factors strengthens women empowerment in the Muslim women of Mumbai city. The researcher has selected women with different educational level (from illiterate to post graduate), professionals (trained/untrained professional 12+) and women from different economic strata (from low level of income to high level of income (self and family both), social stratas (employment, different marital status, earning status, age, etc.) of society. A total of 1000 women selected as a sample from all over Mumbai i.e., from S.T. to Thane, from Churchgate to Dahisar and from S.T. to Mankhurd from all
the wards of greater Bombay. The women are taken from different age groups (i.e. from 18 to 27, 28 to 37, 38 to 47 only) to give a clear picture on the effect of social and educational factor on women empowerment in city of Mumbai.

The researcher has taken only 2 factors viz., educational and socio-economical, to study the impact. The researcher has chosen the women of Mumbai only, in the limits of B.M.C. – not the women of Navi Mumbai. The study does not include men in this study. The comparison is not made between men and women and from other religion in the study. The researcher has selected only 6 dimensions of empowerment – viz.: (1) Educational empowerment, (2) Social empowerment, (3) Legal empowerment, (4) Religious empowerment, (5) Familial empowerment, and (6) Economical empowerment.

Only Muslim women from different socio-economic stratas are selected. Only 12 demographic factors have been chosen by the Researcher.