CHAPTER-7

Conclusion and Suggestions
Women empowerment had been discussed by various scholars around the world in different ways, they all agree with the point of view that both men and women are two wheels of the same cart called civilization, without any one of them the society will not be in balance. It is that juncture of the society where the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of the entire individual should be same rather than determining them on the basis of the gender. But unfortunately women have seen so many ups and downs as far as their social status is concerned that they were never able to gain equal status in society.

Throughout the history and in all sections of societies including India, sub-ordination of women was the part of male dominated section of the society, the patriarchy system in family, marital status, inheritance and succession practices have always lead to the sub-ordinate status of women in the family. They should be seen as the part of the productive section rather than giving importance to their reproductive functions. Making headway in the economy and improving the status of the women are interlinked in the society, women participation in decision making increases the economic productivity and will automatically reduce infant mortality, it will also contribute to improved health and nutrition, increased chances of education, which will lead to empowerment and ultimate equality for next generation.

Further, there are various feminist thoughts, which have given rise to various feminist theories. Liberal feminism is one amongst them, which shares the view and insist on women freedom and gender equality. Liberal feminists believe that “female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women’s entrance to and success in the so-called public world” and they work hard to emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. Liberal feminists also tend to support marriage as an equal partnership, and more male involvement in childcare, they tend to rely on the state and political rights to gain equality -- to see the state as the protector of individual rights.

The radical feminism is a current perspective within feminism that focuses on the patriarchy system of the society that organizes society into a complex relationship based on male supremacy and oppression of women. Radical feminism aims to
challenge and overthrowing patriarchy by opposing standard gender roles and subordination of women.

Marxist Feminism is a form of feminism, which believes that women's oppression is a symptom of a more fundamental form of oppression. Marxist Feminism postulates that women are not oppressed by men or because of gender but by capitalism itself. If all women are to be liberated, capitalism must be replaced with socialism. Marxist feminists believe that private property leads to economic inequality and negative social relations between men and women. According to Marxist feminism theory, capitalism should be replaced with socialism in order to achieve equality and positive social relations between men and women.

Socialist feminism is a bilateral theory that broadens Marxist feminism argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and radical feminism theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy. They reject radical feminism’s main claim that patriarchy the only or primary source of oppression of women. Rather, socialist feminists assert that women are unable to be free because to their financial dependence on males in society. They see economic dependence as the driving force of women’s subordination to men. Further, socialist feminists see women’s liberation as a necessary part of larger quest for social, economic and political justice.

While there are various feminist theories, In India, feminism is popular only with educated urban families. In India, women have to survive through oppressive of patriarchy system, caste, dowry, kinship, son bearing and community to prove themselves. However, there are Nair’s of Kerala, certain clans of Marathas; some of the Northeastern communities and Bengalis families where matriarchy prevails and eldest women in the family leads the family. The women in India and western world have completely different demands for their empowerment as Indian women have to still come out of darkness of their homes and have to walk hand in hand with their counterparts. Women in India are still struggling against violence in private and public sphere, female feticide, dowry deaths, and sexual assault and so the list goes on. The various Indian writers have presented feminism in the form of fiction work so as they are not accused of interfering in the Indian age-old cultural values.
By the review of the literature on women empowerment, it is inferred that, the process of women’s empowerment has not followed a logical sequence of thought and action. It needs a deliberate process of organization and mobilization of the women. Though strong women organizations with drive and urge are far and few, it has been suggested that organizations of women serve as a collective force to mobilize power and resources for their development. For participation, being meaningful women must possess knowledge and skills related to reproductive, productive and emancipator roles.

The role of the state in empowering women through affirmative action is crucial to accelerate the process towards gender equality. It is necessary to bring them in the centre of the public state politics, which can enhance their participation for change. In India, both governmental and non-governmental agencies at their respective level have therefore aimed to work for and towards women empowerment. Government has undertaken various policies and programmes for women development, and the voluntary agencies have worked closely with the women at grassroots. Studying women status means a sensitive diagnosis of the nature of gender subordination through the study of gender relation in specific context.

Thus, the study “Empowerment of women in India with special reference to North and South Delhi” sought to analyze and understand the problems of women in India with reference to Delhi from a variety of perspectives. The issues related to women are multifaceted and therefore, complex in nature. Low-level representation of women at political level as well as the problems relating to socio-economic and educational backwardness of women is the major cause of bringing change in the status of women. Therefore, the study have sought to pinpoint the problems that the women face and given some of their opinions so the study can play a small but critical and constructive role in the process of social transformation and egalitarian and inclusive development.

In the preceding chapters the statistical profile of the women in India as well as in Delhi is studied in detail, further the policies opted by government for the upliftment of women, the socio-economic status of women and the contribution of non-governmental agencies for women in crisis has been discussed in detail. A sample of
200 women has been studied through questionnaire to find out the actual status of women in Delhi and suggestions are given for further improving the status and standards of women in the society so that they are not treated as second-class citizens.

The statistical profile review reflects that while there are gains in the fields of improving the status of women whereas in areas such as health and education still there is need for significant change. Though the overall sex-ratio is 940 but still the sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 914 in India whereas if we see Delhi separately the overall sex ratio stands at 866 which has improved in comparison to 861 in 2001 but the 0-6 sex-ratio is at 866 which is worse than 868 of 2001 census. The adverse sex ratio of female is attributed mainly to higher mortality among females, as compared to males due to limited access to the health infrastructure and relative deprivation of girl child from nutrition, health and medical care.

The life expectancy of females has risen and it is higher than that of males. The IMR of girls have reduced from 97 to 47.57 in India whereas in Delhi is quiet low at 18.38. There is decline in the fertility age of the women as the mean age of the marriage has increased 15 years to 22 years, in the earlier decades if century when fertility rates were very high, and women were unsure of the child survival they bore a very heavy burden of repeated pregnancies. Child bearing and child caring started at the very young age of 15 and continued throughout the fertility period until the age of 45, which is full span of reproductive period. The fertility rate has significantly reduced for the age group above 30. The shrinking age of span of fertility among the urban women, especially after 35 years have facilitated them to join other productive services.

In the field of education, the literacy rate has risen but constantly visible difference persisted in comparison with male in 2011 the literacy gap between women men is recorded at 16.68 per cent whereas in Delhi it is 10.10 per cent. The percentage of girls in total school going children has risen to 81 percent but out of which 32 per cent of girl child drop out of school or does not reach secondary level.

In the area of employment and income generation, the work participation rate for women has increased significantly. In 1981, work participation rate for women was only 19.67 per cent that increased up to 22.73 per cent in 1991 and 26.68 per cent in
2001. As on the 31st March 2005, a total number of 50.16 Lakhs women employees were engaged in the organized sector, out of which 29.21 lacs (58 per cent) in the public sector and 20.95 lacs (42 per cent) in the Private Sector. Employment of women in public sector increased by 1.1 percent and by 2.5 percent in the private sector during 2004-2005 but still low as compared to males, of 81 per cent in organized sector. An overall representation of women remains low.

The approach of women in empowering women have become more of concrete and focussed over years as various women related plans and policies have come up every time with a renewed focus on the empowering women’s lives, some of these are swalamban, swayamsiddha, Support and Training for Employment Programmes (STEP), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) etc.

The 93rd and 94th constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 marked historic event in the empowerment of the women as they ensure 1/3rd seats for women in local bodies and further the reservation bill for the parliament seats for the women is also an important step taken as this will me a landmark decision in the history of women empowerment.

To sensitize planners, policy makers, and the citizens the enforcement agency and development agency have launched country gender sensitization programmes such as Women Empowerment Policy (2001), National Mission for Women Empowerment (2011). The 2001 programmes have focussed on integration rather than fragmentation, greater gender sensitivity and accepting women as active partner in the development of the country.

The results of recent policies have still to bear results, however reviews of past efforts have mostly been critical concluding that the government policies and programmes did not deliver as they had too. Often they were insensitively planned and many a times out of reach of the women adding to the substantial burden on them. Women require mobility and skills to cope up in the today’s world of technology and change but schemes such as SABLA and STEP and other such schemes provide training of traditional nature which is of very less commercial use, the women are yet to take control of resources the area in which they work such as dairy, weaving etc. Therefore government should change its policies from giving to facilitating, so that the women’s can utilize their skills and talents for their better future.
Several policies and programmes have been made to improve the status of women and empower them, but much of the success could not be achieved, as still 51.7% of births take place in India without any assistance from health personnel. West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand have brides below the age of 18. Until 92% of rural domestic energy comes from unprocessed biofuels, inadequacies of clean cooking fuels adversely affect women and children. The gender literacy gap continues to be 11.8% wide and this is much worse in the case of marginalized women. The women's contribution in the economic development goes unnoticed as many times they contribute as agricultural labour. Also, they bear the double burden of family and kids. Whereas most of the women work in the informal sector, with low or no skills and education. Therefore, we can clearly see that the upliftment of women is linked from the beginning that is right from her nutrition levels, education and until the point of contributing in the economy.

Women representation in the financial sector has increased from 11% in 1981 to 18.5% in 2004, at grass-root level women are playing important functions and their participation in decision-making has gone up. However, in parliament women still need a proper representation as it is low at 9.1% in 2004, and still the women reservation in legislature is pending. Women are aware of their political rights, but as voters their participation is still low. Women are not confident to come out of their houses and elect the member of their choice and if they do many times, others affect their decision.

The post-independence era in which lots of legal measures have been taken for the emancipation of women. Right from beginning, the women were given equality before law or equal protection of law to avoid discrimination of women on the ground of sexes. Moreover, the government has passed special laws to protect them from age-old evils such as dowry, polygamy, child-marriage, sati pratha, etc. Also, as the time passed the government made laws to combat the evils in the modern society e.g. Female feticide, indecent representation of women, human trafficking, protection against sexual harassment, protection at work place, honour killing time and again the government has been working on its toes to make society safer for them.
Whereas the laws and legislations are made to fit into, the diverse culture of the Indian society but many a times it does not always suits the need of the local areas and the sentiments of the people of the area. Therefore, the need arises of the organization that works at the grass-root level and there step in NGOs. In developing country like India many a times there are gaps left in the people needs and the policies of the government at times unknowingly and sometimes due to lack of awareness and funds and therefore the need of NGOs arise so that they work hand in hand for the local community. Many a times there are people from the community itself and so they understand the basic requirements and at times work better than government.

In this study, we have discussed SEWA and SWADHINA which has brought a drastic change in the life of women and had made them self-sufficient and to be masters in their own work. The three case studies of SEWA had been discussed to show how SEWA has worked to improve the life of the women and had made them self dependent and confident. These NGOs have identified problems of women at micro and macro level and organized them in such a way so that they work for their own good and are active participants in their self-reliance actions. Free and fuller participation of women at every stage, right from identification of issues, planning of actions until the evaluation, is emphasized by these organizations, which is essential sustainable development initiative whereby they become owner of the project rather than passive recipients of benefits.

Further in Delhi JAGORI and TARSHI, JAGORI raises the issues regarding single women, sexuality, mental health of women, and safe travel for women in the railways, and consistent advocacy on violence against women. Over the years, Jagori’s objectives have been bringing awareness on violence, health, education, development and other issues critical for women’s individual and collective empowerment, production and distribution of creative material on feminist issues is also one of the important function of this organization as to bring awareness regarding feminism in the Indian society. In addition, to develop organizations and advocacy on women’s rights and gender equality. Whereas TARSHI has been conducting trainings on sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights for practitioners. As part of its mission to create a broader public understanding about sexuality, reproductive health, and rights TARSHI, has also conducted learning programs it is working at the
community and grass roots levels in reproductive health, sexuality, gender and violence against women.

In addition, the increase in the range of their activities reflects not only the increasing professionalism with which major groups are fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities, but the greater recognition and credibility accorded to them by national governments, regional and international organizations.

The study has been conducted in the area of North Delhi and South Delhi, in North Malkaganj and Model Town are the areas whereas in South Delhi, C.R.Park and Amar Colony had been taken as the sample area. These areas have been selected because it represents all class of people in Delhi based on socio-economic level. As South is considered the most posh area of the Delhi and people of all community reside there, also new migrants can be found in this area. Whereas North Delhi is part of old Delhi and here, many of the people are settled in the area since independence. Therefore, the sample covers the age-old population of Delhi as well as new migrants of Delhi, which would give an unbiased status of women empowerment in the city.

As discussed in the previous chapter it was hypothesized that “higher the education level of women higher is there empowerment” and so we could easily relate women with higher education are more empowered as the marriageable age has been delayed which leads to more maturity, and it automatically gives women right to take decision regarding their family-planning, decision regarding family matters also they have opportunity to grow in their careers as it has been proved in the previous chapter.

As hypothesized “higher the control of women in occupational matters, greater the level of empowerment”, Women more job satisfaction and with higher autonomy in work are more satisfied with their empowerment level as they say that they have more scope of growth and adequate rights of decision-making.

As hypothesized “higher the participation of women in family decisions, higher the level of empowerment” the women with higher level of empowerment in the family also contribute in the economic-decisions of the family rather than just deciding on the petty issues, like choosing of menu for the food or entertaining guest in the family.
As hypothesized “NGOs have significantly contributed in improving the empowerment of women” as this was accepted by many women respondents that NGOs all over India as well as in Delhi had been working to bring up the empowerment level of the women and also many of the women respondents have received aid from the local NGOs for their issues.

Further, hypothesized “Government policies have lead to the empowerment of women” very few of the respondents agree to this. Because less than 10% of women respondents know about the policies run by, the government for the empowerment of women and many of them say that these policies are not easily accessible to them. Therefore, they are only on papers and could not be achieved as aimed by the government policy makers.

Viewed in relation to the objectives of the study, the study has tried to provide a holistic understanding in the empowerment of women. Different approaches and strategies to define empowerment of women had been dealt in the study. The concept of women empowerment continued to be influenced by disciplinary, ideological and cultural prospective. The different aspects that occur in women empowerment are:

- Women access to resources,
- Women control to resource,
- Economic opportunities for women,
- Social opportunities for women,
- Political opportunities for women,
- Women role in decision-making,
- Women controls over lives,

The significant point to note is the gap between the theoretical and practical aspect of the women empowerment. The data from the study indicates that women development projects are not very clear about, objectives, and the process details to achieve objectives, the means and the sustainability of means.
When the status of women were viewed in relation to these indicators of empowerment, the status revealed that there is marginal improvement in relation to health and education in over all India compared to be low, although regional variations did exist. Although when concentrated on Delhi study women literacy levels are relatively high, improved economic status and political participation but low level of legal-awareness. Patriarchal values still exist and women lack access to land and assets. Value of women labour in household work is low but they have improved position in their office job and are paid adequately. As many of the women accept the fact that they are paid according to the qualification level and their capability to take up the job.

The primary role of the women is still seen as the reproductive function. The women compete in the economic world no more with the compulsion of economic compulsion to support the family but the priorities have changed to achieve sense of security and to utilize their education. Working six to eight hours a day is the usual working hours and about five to six days are the usual number of working days in a week. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no inequality between men and women in wages.

Almost everyone feels that they have equal facilities with men but heavy pressure at work, strike and competition are some of the main difficulties faced by the respondents during their past working experiences. Women are not always allowed to spend their salary as they wish in both the communities. They have to consult with the parents/husbands or elders before spending their own income. Usually the head of the family spends more money for family matters. Very less proportion of women take active part in the decision-making process at home especially in economic matters. Considerably low proportions of women have their independent bank account.

Some of the women are still married at very young age and do not have say in marriage or control over their bodies. Even today, women deliver kids at very young age. The legal system is not very favourable for women, as sexual assault is not considered as heinous crime as rape and marital rape is still not considered as an offence. The mobility of women and their presence in political sphere still needs attention. In spite of education or the fact that women are employed and considered empowered, there is considerable influence of family members on various aspects of a women’s life.
Suggestions for Improving Women Empowerment

- Government should promote the concept of the girl child. Women/girls can do almost everything men/boys can, provided they have opportunities.

- Women should be recognised as torchbearers of families, preserving heritage and culture.

- Girls are to be sent to schools and to demonstrate the correlation between women’s education and overall social development.

- Special inputs of health, nutrition and education for women.

- Parents are to be educated about the small family and family planning.

- Parents are to be educated about the importance of education and the economic benefits of having educated women to both family and society.

- Vocational skills are to be provided for girls so that they have opportunities to develop their socio-economic capacity.

- Giving ownerships rights to land and property.

- Enhancement for educational and training inputs for women.

- Changing women’s own outlook towards education, training and wage – employment.

- Distributive justice in favour of women.

- Amending the existing and enacting new laws and ensuring enforcement of laws concerning women’s employment.

- Generating more employment in rural areas.

- To gather information on women’s needs and design products specifically to meet those needs.

- Better infrastructure for self-employment.
• Diversification of employment opportunities for women.

• Ensuring protection of health and occupational hazards.

• Include programs such as training or leadership opportunities that contribute to women’s empowerment.

• Bring women and women’s perspectives into the governance, management, and implementation of microfinance programs.

• Collection of gender-disaggregated data for use in the design and improvement of programs.

• Review organizational policies to ensure gender sensitivity and gender equity.

• Promotion of women co-operatives and women organizations.

• The formation of self-help groups as a basis for the social and economic empowerment of deprived and disadvantaged women has been found to be a successful mechanism this can be clearly seen in case of SEWA. This has also been illustrated through the IMY and Swa Shakti projects of the Department of Women and Child Development. These groups can facilitate the process of economic empowerment through small savings, training and skill upgradation and access to credit and other productive resources. These can also be instruments of social empowerment through awareness generation and convergence of delivery of schemes. With the feeling of ownership and management of their own resources and savings, poor women have been able to choose their priorities and have even been found to cover the cost of additional nutrition and health gaps. The success of this approach has resulted in universalization of this mode of organization in all the southern States. There is a need to replicate this mode throughout the country. Thus, this should be promoted by the government.

• Advocacy and social measures for change of attitude of men towards working women.
• Women and girls face violence in various forms at various stages of their life cycle. This takes the form of female foeticide and infanticide, rape, dowry death and more indirect forms such as desertion or abandonment of older women. This calls for a multipronged strategy of implementation of laws, awareness, community sanctions etc.

• Women should be adequately represented in all decision-making bodies.

• For empowerment, women need to have a voice in decision making and planning through adequate representation. Reservation of women in the rural and urban local bodies had enabled representation of nearly a million women at the grassroots who play a very important catalytic role in transforming the society. Similar representation in State Legislature and Parliament would further strengthen the process of empowerment of women. The bill pending for the reservation should be considered for the fast decision in the area.

• Women should have access to productive resources such as land, building, credit, housing and skill training.

• For encouraging women to participate effectively as part of work force there is an urgent need for providing supporting services such as maternal and child care services, crèches, hostel, appropriate technology and infrastructure.

• Voluntary organization should help in creating awareness and conscientization among women about their economic needs, availability of training and other facilities.

• One of the most effective interventions that can take place to address the issues of attitude and mindsets of men and women, of the community and of the functionaries of the government - the bureaucracy, police and judiciary is media campaigns. A sustained campaign through the print, electronic and folk media is necessary on various issues related to empowerment of women, health and nutrition, laws, value of the girl child, violence against women etc.

Women have shown the potential of challenging the unjust power relation in the public domain. Six million women representative in PRIs, directly and indirectly have given thrust to the process of social mobilization and women are reinventing gender
roles in private and public space, interestingly due to their increased visibility, the gender based distinction in the private and public space is becoming blurred. The government has taken various measures through law, policies and programmes in the last decade to address inequality and to eliminate discrimination against women and girl child.

Many laws and programmes are still being reviewed to appeal the discriminatory provisions. There are significant improvements on the various indicators, which have been discussed in previous chapters with improvement in the empowerment level of women, increase in female literacy; sex-ratio and the entry of women in decision making bodies, the inequalities that existed between men and women had been reduced.

However, the study highlighted that women have managed to improve in every field and identify their potentials but the side effects of the empowerment can be seen in the form on rise in divorce, single women, late marriage which many a times lead to biological problems in bearing Children and many more. Therefore, it is very important for government as well as for society to understand the need of the hour is the women empowerment should be done without affecting the balance of the society, which is very important for human existence.

We have also analysed that voluntary organizations have immensely contributed towards socio-economic development of women and also to realized more of their potentials, and basics needs of women.

However, gender discrimination continues to be a daunting challenge for government and society. The government should continue to pursue all measures, in a concentrated manner to eliminate discrimination against women and to translate the dejure rights into defacto enjoyment of rights and benefits. The government commits to pursue “The National Mission for Empowerment of Women 2010”, plan of action, strengthen gender budgeting and women component plan and other planning strategies that would enhance socio-economic gain for women, which in turn would lead to women empowerment.