CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER - IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Women constitute the disadvantaged and depressed section in modern society. All over the world, especially in the third world, one experiences a distinct tendency among grown up people to treat a girl very differently from a boy. The girl child is considered to be a less important child in our society. She continue to be neglected at all levels and discrimination against her is rampant in all strata of society irrespective of class, caste and economic conditions.

Bachi Karkaria sums up the state of the 'Prisoner of Gender' with much feeling when he writes, "She is an unknown intrusion, the cause of sorrow, when she is born. A burden for parents, who have to amass a dowry. She is also the convenient workhorse, the one, who has to be fed less than her male counterparts and an easy prey to sexual exploitation. She is the girl child. In a society, where women and children have few rights, she, by virtue of being both, has none" (Chaterji.J. 1990).

The status of Indian women has never been on par with that of women in developed countries. Low standard of living, low level of literacy, economic dependence, ignorance of their fundamental rights, low inter-spouse communication and the strong-hold of tradition are some of the factors which stand in the way of improving the status of Indian women. Of these factors, literacy and level of education play an important role.
All over the world, the movement for improving women's status has always emphasized education as the most significant instrument for social change. The social reformers of the 19th century tried to use education more to ameliorate the position of women socially; they were able to awaken the consciousness of the nation to the evils of child marriage, sati, polygamy, enforced widowhood and dowry system etc.

Education and knowledge will give women the power to reason and will in turn help them much in their fight against social injustice. Also this will accelerate social transformation. Education has been a means of personal growth and emancipation and for many a motivational force changing them into agents of social change. Women scientists and social scientists, educationists, women in the legal profession, women politicians, administrators, social workers, sports women, philanthropists and learned religious leaders—all are a case in point.

The history of female education in India goes back to the Vedic period, when women had equal access to education and other fields.

With the Independence of India, female education saw the dawning of a new era. The constitution of India (1951) guaranteed equality to everyone. Various laws have been made to give equal rights to women in respect of marriage, divorce, inheritance etc. Article 45 of the Constitution makes provision for providing free and compulsory education to all children until the age of fourteen.
The various Five Year Plans gave priority to female education. The eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97) gives special impetus to increase girl's enrollment by providing comprehensive package of incentives, especially to backward castes. Different committees and commissions recommended various measures to encourage female education such as supply of mid-day meals, uniforms, free text-books, etc. One of the major recommendations of the recent National Policy of Education (1986) is to promote "empowerment" of women through the agency of education. As a result of this, female education achieved phenomenal progress. Female education increased from 7.90 per cent in 1951 to 39.42 per cent in 1991. However, compared to male education (64%) female education (39%) lags for behind.

There is an uneven rate of progress at all levels of education, not only between states but between different levels of education in the same state. There is a vast disparity between education of girls in rural areas (33%) and urban areas (64%). Though in urban areas all-over India, girl education has made satisfactory progress since Independence and the gap between the elementary education of boys and girls has been substantially reduced, in the rural areas the prejudice against sending girls to school is still there. The rural social system operates as a constraint on girl's education.

Concept of Social System

The theory of 'social system' by Talcott Parsons was taken as a model for this study. The larger system consists of various sub-systems.
The Indian rural social system consists of various sub-systems such as family, economy, caste and religion etc. All these subsystems affect female education.

The present study was intended to investigate the aspirations of parents for daughter's education in the social context. The main issue of the study was to investigate how far the rural system is disposed towards female education. The present research tried to trace the impact of family system, economic system, caste system, value system and others on the aspirations of parents for female education.

In order to trace answers to these issues, Wakkund, a village in North Karnataka was selected. As per the limitations for the selection of respondents, 400 parents (family heads) were selected for the sample. The pre-coded structured interview schedule was used, which consisted of three parts: (i) Family system, (ii) Economic system, and (iii) Attitude scale. The attitude scale was constructed to measure the attitudes of parents towards value orientations related to female education. This is the Likert type attitude scale consisting of four dimensions, social, educational, caste and economic value orientations. For the collection of data the personal interview method was adopted.

The profile of the sample shows that a majority of respondents are males (93%) and are below 50 years. Hindus (93%) dominate the sample. The major sample hails from upper caste, medium size family, elementary family and intact family. The larger portion of sample has 3-4 children and one or two female children. The majority of the grand-parents are
illiterate. The majority of fathers were educated up to the primary level but the vast majority of mothers were illiterate. A few had primary education. A large portion of respondents (82%) married their daughters at an early age, (below 18 years).

Regarding urban contacts, less than half (43%) have near relatives in the city. Of them a majority visit the city once a month (39%) and some rarely (21%). A very large proportion of relatives in the city have educated daughters (87%). All the respondents with urban contacts were inspired to educate their daughters. The greater part of the sample (77%) depended on agriculture and allied work (76%). A majority of the sample (85%) had less than 10 acres of land-holdings and belonged to low income group (below Rs.10,000). A larger share (64%) of the respondents do not send their daughters to work outside. Among the working mothers, a majority (83%) were occupied in agriculture and allied work.

One of the important aspects of the study was to assess the extent of aspiration for daughter's education by computing the percentages. In the sample, 71 per cent of them expressed their willingness to educate their daughters. There is an increasing trend among the rural parents to educate daughters due to mass literacy programmes publicised through mass media. A majority of parents (43%) aspired for secondary education for their daughters. A considerable portion (31%) of parents also aspired for college education, which is attributed to the local availability of a college and the general raise in the age at marriage of daughters. Further analysis shows that a majority of parents (53%) wish to educate
their daughters to improve their marriage prospects. A majority of respondents (83%) aspired to the traditional career of housewife for their daughters. And only (28%) of respondents who expressed their reluctance toward education of their daughters cited the reason of need for daughters in domestic chores (34%).

Another important aspect of the investigation was to examine the impact of various subsystems on the aspiration of parents towards daughters' education.

1. An attempt is made to examine the relationship between the family system and the aspirations of parents for daughters' education. The type of family is significantly related with aspirations for higher levels of education for daughters but not with education of daughters in general. The elementary family has shown more aspirations for higher levels of education. Because such type of families have less economic burden and are less traditional in nature.

Factors like age of the parents, age at marriage of daughters, size of the family and the number of children have no significant influence on the aspirations for female education in general and higher levels of education in particular for daughters. However, the number of female children is significantly influential on the aspirations of parents for higher levels of education for daughters but not the education
of daughters in general. Lesser the number of female children, greater the aspirations for higher education. A large number of siblings lessen the available resources per child. Moreover, higher education involves more expenditure.

The educational status of parents (both father and mother) significantly influences their aspirations for daughters' education in general and higher levels of education in particular. The aspiration for the level of education went up with the educational status of parents. Education of the mother acts as a model for daughter's educational attainment.

The structure of the family is another important factor which affects significantly the education of daughters in general and higher levels of education in particular. There is significant difference in the aspiration of intact and non-intact families for daughters' education. Non-intact (single parent) families have expressed no aspiration for higher levels of education of daughters, as they have meagre income and children are an economic asset for them.

2. Further, the economic system is found to be more influential on the aspiration of parents for daughters' education in general and higher levels of education in particular. Occupation of the respondents, income of family and occupation of mother greatly influence the aspirations of parents for daughters' education as well as higher levels of education. Occupation of
service, agriculture, and business categories have more aspirations for higher levels of education for daughters. Higher education of daughters is an increasing phenomenon of higher income groups. Families with non-working mothers and girls have higher aspirations for female education. The aspirations for higher levels of education is related to the occupation of mother but not with girl child labour.

3. The caste system is significantly related with aspirations for daughters' education. But caste has no influence on the aspirations of parents for higher levels of education for daughters. It is the economic condition of a family rather than caste that determines aspirations for higher levels of education. Religion is non-influential in the aspirations of parents for daughters' education in the present rural system. Religion neither supports nor supresses female education in the village.

Urban contact is another factor which influences significantly the aspirations of parents for higher levels of education for daughters. Urbanites are more aware of economic returns of higher education for females. The rural parents who have urban contact aspire more for higher levels of education, because they have 'role models' to emulate.
The aspirations for education of daughters in general is not necessarily affected by urban contact. Because ruralites have become more aware of education for their daughters due to the intensive literacy campaigns of Government.

The percentage analysis of inter-generational progress of female education shows that there is considerable progress of education in the present (third) generation compared to the first and second generations. The number of illiterates decreases considerably as one moves from first generation (grandmothers) to third generation. At all the levels of education, there is phenomenal increase in the percentage of educated in the third generation (daughters).

4. An effort is made to assess the impact of value orientations on female education. The value orientation consists of 4 dimensions - social, educational, caste and economic value. The comparison of different dimensions on value orientations reveals that there is significant difference between social and educational values, educational and caste values, social and caste values, social and economic values, whereas between caste and economic values, educational and economic values there is no significant difference.

Value orientations related to female education are influenced by the social system. Under the family system age, education of
respondents and structure of family significantly influence the attitude of parents towards value orientations related to female education whereas the size, type of family and number of female children do not affect attitude towards value orientations related to female education.

In the economic system all the factors i.e., income of family, occupation of respondents, size of land-holdings and girl child labour profoundly influence the attitudes of parents on value orientation related to female education.

Religion does not influence value orientation related to female education in the present rural social system. Caste and urban contact have significant influence on value orientation related to female education.

Further analysis shows that a majority of parents (90%) express less positive (traditional) attitude on total value orientation as well as different dimensions related to female education. The highest percentage of more positive (modern) attitudes is expressed on the dimensions of educational (35%) and economic (30%) value orientations.

Value orientation related to female education influences the aspirations of parents for daughters' education. There is significant relationship between value orientations related to female education and the aspiration of parents for daughter's education in general and higher levels of education in particular. Various dimensions of value orientation
related to female education are significantly associated with daughters' education as well as higher levels of education.

The comparison of attitudes of fathers and mothers shows that there is no significant difference between them on value orientation related to female education.

The main conclusions of the present study are presented below:

1. There is greater aspiration among rural parents to educate their daughters,
2. The highest percentage of parents aspired to secondary education for their daughters,
3. Elementary family is significantly related to higher levels of education for daughters but not necessarily to female education in general,
4. Size of the family is not significantly associated with aspiration of parents for daughter's education as well as different levels of education for them,
5. The number of children has no significant relationship with aspirations of parents for daughters' education as well as different levels of education for them.
6. The number of female children is significantly related with aspirations of parents for higher levels of education for daughters but not with education of daughters in general,

7. Intact family (both parents alive) is significantly related with aspirations of parents for daughter's education as well as higher levels of education for them,

8. Higher the education of parents, higher the aspirations of parents for daughter's education as well as higher levels of education for them,

9. Age of respondents has no influence on their aspirations for daughter's education as well as higher levels of education for them.

10. Age at marriage of daughters does not affect aspirations of parents for daughter's education as well as higher levels of education,

11. Occupation of service, business and agriculture have more positive influence on education of daughters in general and higher levels of education in particular,

12. Higher the income of the family, higher the aspirations of parents for daughter's education in general and higher levels of education in particular.
13. Families with non-working mothers have higher aspiration for daughter's education in general and higher levels of education in particular.

14. Lesser the number of female child labourers, higher the aspiration for daughter's education in general but not higher levels of education,

15. Higher the caste, higher the aspiration for daughter's education in general but not higher levels of education,

16. Religion is not significantly related with aspirations of parents for daughter's education in general and higher levels of education,

17. The existence of near relatives in city is significantly related with aspiration of parents for higher levels of education for daughters but not necessarily with education of daughters in general.

18. Frequent visit of respondents to near relatives in city is significantly related to their aspirations for higher levels of education for daughters but not education of daughters in general,
19. All the respondents are inspired to educate daughters by relatives in city,

20. Education of relatives' daughters in city significantly influences aspiration of rural parents for their daughter's education in general but not higher levels of education in particular,

21. The level of female education varies with successive generations,

22. There is significant difference between different dimensions of value orientations related to female education,

23. Age, education and structure of family significantly influence value orientations related to female education,

24. Size, type of family and number of female children have no influence on the value orientations related to female education,

25. Economic factors significantly influence value orientations related to female education,

26. Religion has no influence on the attitude of parents towards value orientations related to female education,
27. Caste and urban contact have significant positive influence on value orientations related to female education,

28. Rural parents have less positive attitude towards value orientations related to female education,

29. Value orientations related to female education significantly influence aspirations of parents for daughter's education as well as higher levels of education for them, and

30. Fathers and mothers do not differ significantly on attitude towards value orientations related to female education.