CHAPTER - I

Introduction

Education has been considered as a powerful instrument for changing the subjugated position of women in society. Keeping this in view, considerable efforts have been made to provide special facilities for education of women. Yet, disparities have continued to grow in the educational status of men and women and also in their participation rates in various programmes. The differential socialization process, sex role stereotyping in the choice of educational courses as well as occupations, inadequate attention to the special problems faced by girls in pursuing their studies and traditional attitudes towards girls education have all contributed to the growing disparities between men and women. Mere constitutional guarantees or legal provisions do not ensure equal utilisation of educational and other opportunities. The situation can improve only through political will, concerted efforts of educators and in the microcosm of society, the family and the community.

1.1 Status of Women

The following statistics highlight the backwardness of women in all spheres of life.

Demographic trends: The 1991 census counted 407.1 million females against male population of 439.23 million constituting just less than half of the total population of India (846.30 million). The sex-
ratio which was 972 females per thousand males in 1901 has declined to 927 in 1991. The decline has been more or less steady over the years. The decline is attributed to high mortality among females because of limited access to the health infrastructure contributing to high maternal mortality and relative deprivation of female child from nutrition, health, medical care and further compounded by practices of infanticide and foeticide in some parts of the country. Life expectancy for women is 60 years. Sex-ratio and female mortality rate clearly bring out the prejudice and discrimination against women in our country.

Educational Status: According to the 1991 Census literacy rate of the nation was 52.11%; for males and females it was 63.86% and 39.42% respectively. Social attitudes towards women's education appear to be still rather negative. A survey conducted by the Committee on Status of Women in India (1971) reports that 16.8% of the respondents rejected the view that girls should be educated at all and 64.5% disapproved higher education for girls even if they were intelligent. The drop-out rates of girls at primary and secondary levels are high. In professional and technical colleges their representation is very low.
Table 1.1: School Enrolment by Stages/Classes for Boys and Girls (1951-1993) 
(in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary (I-V)</th>
<th>Middle (VI-VIII)</th>
<th>Higher/Hr. Sec.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>5.4 (28.1)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>11.4 (32.6)</td>
<td>35.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>21.3 (37.4)</td>
<td>57.0</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>28.5 (38.6)</td>
<td>73.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>41.0 (41.4)</td>
<td>99.1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1991-92 (P)</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>42.4 (41.7)</td>
<td>101.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93 (P)</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>44.9 (42.6)</td>
<td>105.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94 (P)</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>46.4 (42.9)</td>
<td>108.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parentheses are percentages of girls’ enrolment to total.

(Source- Selected Educational Statutes for respective years, Government of India, New Delhi)
Employment Status: The female work participation ratio is very low and insignificant in organized sectors. According to Human Resource Development Index (HDI) the status of women is closely linked to their participation in decision-making. The extent of this participation is a measure of empowerment. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) for Indian women is very low; less than 5% of women have made their way to Parliament or Government Bodies. The percentage of women managers and administrators is only 2.5%. The Gender related Development Index (GDI) reflects the disparities between men and women in the country. In India, women earn only 19% of the national income because 90% of them work in unorganised sectors on jobs with low pay or no pay. Women are economically dependent and powerless.

Legal Status: The Government of India has made legal provisions for the protection of women in the following circumstances - domestic violence, dowry, rape, child marriage, infanticide, facticide, exploitation of women in media and the like. However, very few families and individual women have the courage to take recourse to law.

Political Participation: The political participation of women as reflected by the voter turn-out and the proportion of women contestants and winners in election is very poor. The number of female contestants in the parliamentary elections have been negligible (within 2 to 4% of the total number in the field).
To sum up, the correlates of women's backwardness are early marriage and pregnancy, limited opportunities for development, low self-esteem, social abuses (like rape, prostitution, abandonment, salt), lack of will and inadequate media coverage.

1.2 Gender Discrimination

The root cause of women's backwardness is practice of gender discrimination which begins at the foetal stage itself. Socialization patterns of boys and girls are different. Gender differences are perpetuated in clothing, play and behaviour. The gender differences get heightened with the onset of puberty. Many restrictions are imposed on the girl and her movements are curtailed in Indian society. Repeated reminder of females being an inferior sex, constant brainwashing into submission and lack of exposure to outside world contributes to their restricted self image. There is conscious attempt on the part of the parent, not to allow a girl to become 'independent'. Her educational opportunities are limited. She acquires qualities of submissiveness and self sacrifice. The socialization process reinforces these stereotypes at all levels in the society, building her into a prisoner of her gender unable to retaliate against implicit and explicit injustice, customs, rituals. Traditional practices make a girl child the "Lesser child", who is denied the optimal opportunities and means required for growth and development.
1.3 Women's Movement

In India: The history of women's movement in India can be traced to the social reform movement initiated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Eshwar Chandra Vidyasagar and other in the nineteenth century with focus on abolition of sati, encouragement of widow remarriages and girls' education. The Freedom movement saw women assume equality and fight along with men. This was the period which showed the ability of some outstanding women like Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamala Nehru and others. Unfortunately, immediate post independent India saw women relegated to the background. Perhaps, as a reaction, women organised themselves and a number of women's organisations came up. The objectives of the organisations ranged from welfarist to development and then later to empowerment. For example, the welfarist concerns were about rape, dowry, domestic violence against women; the developmental activities were Chipko movement and the movement against alcoholism. At present women's organisations are concerned about development of marketable skills and entrepreneurship in women. The women's organisations with welfarist objective are Progressive Organisation of Women, All India Women's Conference, Stree Sangarsha, Vimochana and the like whereas SEWA, Kali for women and others have both Welfare and Human Resource Development as their objective.

Women's Movement Abroad: Even until recent times women in the west have struggled continuously to attain equality and
empowerment. It has been a long struggle and a well documented one starting from the French Revolution, the writings of John Stewart Mill (1869) and the suffragette movement. In the UK. and USA, women's movements have been successful in changing the perception of Government, albeit slowly regarding equality, adult franchise and individual liberties and rights of women.

In the west modern women's movement have run the gamut from women's lib, the feminist movement and now to women's activism. Feminist movement is a world wide cultural movement for securing equality between men and women in all spheres of life. In the development of human societies two different and contradictory attitudes towards women can be seen - a social tradition of inferiority and a moral tradition of equality.

Women's movement in India has been proceeding on a low key, probably because the Constitution itself has made many provisions wherein the rights of women are taken care of and the Government has passed, amended and ultimately brought in legislature aimed at welfare, protection and empowerment of women. It is only in the last three decades that women's studies as a discipline has gained importance. As a result of writing on women, by women and sometimes by influential, empathetic men scholars, issues concerning women have caught the attention of policy makers at national and international levels.
The first effort on the global level were made in 1975, the year which was observed as the International Women's Year and it had as its motto - Equality, Development and Peace. During the year, meetings, rallies, seminars, symposia and conferences were held in all countries of the world on the problems of women and long term programmes for their solution were deliberated on. International conferences on women were held in Mexico (1975), at Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and in Beijing (1995). The United Nations declared 1975-1985 as the International Decade of Women, during which a lot of awareness and interest was generated in women's issues.

The government and voluntary organisations have a large number of programmes for improving the status of women and to empower them.

1.4 Women's Empowerment

Human development is an index of the development of a nation. It has three components - per capita income, life expectancy and adult literacy. For women all these three are significantly lower when compared to men.

The UN concerned with the problems women faced the world over, summed up the situation in the following manner: "1/2 the world's population, do 2/3rd of the world's work, earn 1/10th of the world's income and own 1/100th of the world's property." (Davis, 1991).
Even after 50 years of independence the Government of India has not been able to translate equality and equality of opportunities into action. Girls need to have access to the type of education that would develop in them intellectual curiosity, self-esteem, independence of thought, action, decision-making and individuality.

Educational experience should empower women and that is possible only when power, prestige and status of women can be enhanced.

Empowerment of women takes on an urgency viewed in the context of rising crimes against women and the increasing divorce rates. As a consequence of the latter, women have to face economic insecurity, the difficulty compounded by lack of marketable skills. The component of income generation should be considered as one of the important objectives of women's empowerment programme.

The parameters of women's empowerment according to Programme of Action (POA), 1986 are the following:

a) building a positive self-image and self-confidence.

b) developing ability to think critically

c) build up group cohesion and fostering decision making and action.

d) ensuring equal participation in the processes of bringing about social change.
e) encouraging group action in order to bring about changes in the society.

f) providing wherewithal for economic independence.

1.4.1 Measures undertaken to empower woman - A Historical Perspective

1.4.1.1 Legislative Measures for Equality of Women

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women neutralising the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. To uphold the constitutional mandate, the state has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially for working women. Although all laws are not gender specific, the major provisions affect women significantly. Amendments have been periodically carried out to keep pace with emerging demands. They include special Marriage Act (1954), The Hindu Marriage Act (1955), The Hindu Succession Act (1956), The Family Court Act (1954), The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1986), The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961, amended in 1984, 1986), The Child Marriage Restraint Act (1928, amendment 1976), The Equal Renumeration Act (1986), The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971), The Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition)Act (1986) and the like.
The legal edifice thus, effectively affirms and promotes the principles of equity and equality of women and takes care of their special needs. Amendment by themselves do not help, unless the laws made to eradicate social evils are implemented in the spirits of the law.

1.4.1.2 Policies and Programmes

As a part of this effort many policy instruments have been brought forth over the years. In addition there are important woman related policies like the National Policy on Education (1986), The National Health Policy (1983), The National Population Policy (1993) and the National Nutrition Policy (1993). One of the most significant documents to emerge from the International Decade for Women was the Forward Looking Strategies (FLS) for the advancement of women. It was intended to provide a blue print for action to advance the status of women in national and international, economic, social, cultural and legal spheres by the year 2000 A.D. The document was divided into five sections dealing with equality, development, peace, areas of special concern and international, regional co-operation. Each section identified obstacles and specific measures to implement relevant strategies. The full participation and integration of women in all areas of society was stressed as well as the close relationship between the three goals of equality, development and peace.
The Government has responded to the Forward Looking Strategies (FLS) in tune with its own constitutional and developmental paradigms. An important step taken in this direction was to revitalise the machinery at the national level by setting up a separate Department of Women and Child Development under the newly created Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Women's Welfare and Developmental Bureau under the erstwhile Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare thus became part of the new department and continues to function as the nodal agency.

1.4.1.3 National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Women (1988)

The NPP was drawn to facilitate mainstreaming of women's issues in policies and programmes. It contains a set of recommendations aimed at the welfare and development of women, guided by principles and directives germane to existing development parameters. It is the first comprehensive report on women since 1974. It has set out a series of action relating to sectors of rural development, health, legislations, political participation, education, employment, support services, communication and voluntary actions.

Another decadal plan of action - National Plan of Action for the Girl-child (1991-2000) was prepared in 1992 to take care of her gender specific needs. A number of initiatives have been launched - enactment of legislation to ban sex determination tests to prevent female foeticide, survey of problem of female infanticide, multimedia campaigns to develop a positive image of the girl child and the like.
1.4.1.4 National Commission for Women

This was set up in 1992 as a national apex statutory level body to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women, recommend remedial legislative measures, facilitate redressal of grievances and advice government on all policy matters affecting women. The Commission took up several initiatives to discharge its statutory functions such as - law and legislation, custodial justice for women, sexual abuse of girl child, redressal in case of atrocities and deprivation of rights of women, promotional work for the advancement and empowerment of women and networking with state level commissions for women.

The other measures initiated to strengthen empowerment of women are:

1) Reservation for women in grass-root level democratic institutions

2) Support of Training and Employment Programmes (STEP) launched in 1987

3) Mahila Samriddhi Yojana (MSY) 1983

4) Training cum Employment cum Production Centres

5) Gender sensitisation and Awareness generation

6) Support services like Integrated Child Development Service Scheme (ICDS) - world’s largest programme.
7) Legal literary Manuals published by government 1992 laws concerning basic rights.

8) National Resource Centre for women to act as a apex body for promoting and incorporating gender perspective in policies and programmes of the government.

1.4.1.5 Committees on Women’s Education

The Government of India from time to time set up commissions on girls’ education.

The Deshmukh Committee (1959): It recommended that at the middle and secondary stages, curriculum should be differentiated for boys and girls and even at the primary stage provision should be made for girls to learn fine arts and cooking.

The Hansa Mehta Committee (1962) set up to examine the need for differentiated curricula for boys and girls recommended that the curriculum for girls should be developed to meet the special needs of girls. However, special encouragement should be given to girls who study maths or science at the secondary stage and special efforts should be made to prepare women teachers of maths and science. The committee also recommended that co-education should be adopted at the primary stage but at the secondary and the collegiate level freedom should be given to the parents and managements of educational institutions.
Bhaktavatsalam Committee (1963) appointed to look into the causes of lack of public support for girls' education particularly in rural areas recommended that co-education should be adopted only at the primary level and that suitable accommodation must be provided for women teachers and students and that more women teachers should be appointed.

This concern for girls education has been mirrored in the National Educational Policies of 1968, 1979, and 1986. The National Policy on Education (1986) laid emphasis on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education. It also opined that educational institutions should be encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development. All text-books should be screened for sexist statements.

On going through the recommendations of the various committees, the modification in the attitudes towards women's education can be clearly discerned. In the fifties girls' lives were restricted and was confined to home-making and raising children. Deshmukh Committee matches this role perception. Later the Hansa Mehta Committee categorically asserted that 'education will be related to individual capacities, aptitudes and interests which are not related to sex; therefore, there would be no need in such a society to differentiate curricula on the basic of sex. The NPE (1986) has stressed the issue of women's empowerment responding to the global feminist movement.
The target groups for empowerment are rural women, women workers like the representation in Village Panchayat, Zilla Parishad, Mahila Samakhyas, Balwadi and Anganavadi workers, Mahila Mandals, school and college going girls, professionals, housewives, victims of atrocities and boys and men.

The stage of youth covers partly the school and college going adolescents. A nation can progress only when the energy of youth is channelized into constructive work. They form nearly 1/3rd of the total population in India. Many programmes are being implemented to fulfil the aspirations of this group and empowering them to be active and constructive agents of positive change. The stage of youth ranges from 16 to 24 years (UN, 1980). The early part of the youth also overlaps with the adolescent and late adolescent stage. Adolescence in the period of transition from childhood to adulthood and is the most critical period of development in men's life cycle.

1.5 Youth and Adolescence

To developmental psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists, the period of adolescence has been fascinating. Perhaps as a result of societal modernisation and industrialisation, many of the jobs required considerable academic competence thus keeping youth for a longer time in schools. This betwist and between stage creates tensions for adolescents themselves, the family and society at large. During the
60's youth became more visible, vocal and demanding as evidenced by the world-wide youth movements [for example, Free Speech Movement (FSM), Student Activism, The Flower Children]. In fact the adolescent stage was given so much coverage by the media and academics that parents must have dreaded their children’s approaching adolescence. The many dimensions and ramifications of this stage have been well researched. Some of these are psycho-biological dimensions of youth, the identity crisis, socialisation patterns in specific cultures and varieties of youth culture. In the following pages the researcher keeping in mind adolescent girls has delineated the above themes.

1.5.1 Psycho-Biological Dimensions of Adolescent Girls

The new complexities of society has increased the need to understand young women and their problems, understanding of social and cultural factors that constitute socialisation. It was recognised that experiences could be either beneficial or detrimental in shaping future social behaviour - that experiences contribute to continuous stream of interaction with the environment. Some adolescents experienced discontinuity and stress, while others found integration and satisfaction.

According to Inkeles' (1969) theory of socialisation, every stage of development can be described using four elements. The 'main tasks', one of the elements at adolescence is that the young
person is expected to manage the changes in himself and in society's expectations of him without drastically upsetting the existing pattern of adult control and dominance. A second element is the “agents of socialisation” (teachers, peer groups, community leaders, heroes, religious leaders and various public figures). Assuming mature roles is the third element towards which the agents of social change strive to help the adolescent to achieve. Assumption of mature roles in adolescence means extinguishing childish gratification and by training oneself for new obligations. The fourth element is the “central issue” which in adolescence refers to identity formation.

An adolescent must face:

i) striking increase in height, weight and development of sexual characteristics which lead to new appraisal of his attractiveness and self-image.

ii) newly developed intellectual powers and capabilities that stimulate him/her to explore new ideas and roles before selecting a life-style.

iii) peers as sounding boards for language, dress and dating norms.

iv) a transition in sex role behaviour, from a flexible and submissive childhood to either masculine or feminine orientations marked by reciprocal authority and relative independence.
v) a struggle for a place in the increasingly complex world of work.

The adolescent girl desires to engage in adult behaviour and share responsibilities; there is a tendency to break childhood friendships and withdraw into family activities. Disinclination to work, lack of agility, feelings of boredom, resistance to parental authority and lowered self-confidence are common manifestations during adolescence. It is called as the negative phase. One of the striking changes in the girls during puberty is the heightening of self-consciousness, accompanied by a strong sense of feminine modesty. As the girl advances in adolescence, she likes being taken notice of by the opposite sex.

1.5.2 Identity Crises among Adolescents

The socialisation of adolescents is held by many social scientists to be synonymous with identity formation. The foremost proponent of this view is Erickson (1965) who avers that identity formation may be a trial and error process. The adolescent faces a series of important decisions in choosing an educational course, a vocation, friends and a mate. His choices are difficult to reverse; his sense of self worth will be strengthened if he succeeds in meeting each challenge constructively, but it may not be diminished if his choices limit future options and opportunities. "Identity formation meets its crisis in adolescence" (Erickson, 1965, p.13). In an identity
crisis an adolescent faces the increasing irreversibility of choices, each of which represents an inescapable turning point for better or for worse. "Better" means a confluence of the constructive energies of individual and society, which contributes to physical grace, sexual spontaneity, mental alertness, emotional directness and social actualness. 'Worse' means prolonged identity confusion in the young individual (Erikson, 1966, p.160). When worst occurs, the adolescent energies disintegrate, his grace and alertness disappears and he acts without aim or purpose.

Erikson (1965) suggests that an identity crisis may not be too significant for a youth who is able to invest his 'fidelity' or 'disciplined devotion' in activities that are congruent with contemporary society. The three cited sources of pressures on adolescents are - (1) adult hypocrisies - in the area of morality, ethics, economics and patriotism which cause many young people to question and often reject conventional social values; (2) higher population growth - in the adolescent age group. The number of youth who have been seeking work has far exceeded the demands for unskilled labour; (3) Alienation of youth from social values and institutions has presented a serious problem which is manifested at times in a communication gap. The above three sources may contribute significantly to identity crisis.

Adolescents are clearly saying that a communication gap exists,
the problem is serious because few parents and teachers are willing to allow youth to take charge of situations that directly affects them or to express contrary values. Adults have long recognised that each succeeding generation enters a world characterized by major and rapid technological and ideological changes. But the adult society has done little more than to forewarn youth that new alternatives will confront them and to ask them to accept the fact that life will be different. The occasions for conflicts are many which would eventually lead to the harmonizing of social norms, a trend away from absolute, uncompromising positions and for individuals, a more personally integrated value system.

1.5.3 Socialization of Adolescents

The concept of socialisation refers to "the process whereby individuals acquire the personal system properties - the knowledge, skill, attitudes, values, needs and motivations which shape their adaptations to the physical and socio-cultural setting in which they live" (Inkeles 1969, pp.615-616). "It may also emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships to social growth." (Smith 1968).

Adolescence is a time when individuals begin to assert themselves as distinct human beings. Every adolescent is expected to learn to participate effectively in society and to acquire the necessary competence through interpersonal relations. As a result of substantial
interaction with parents, teachers, employers and peers - who exhort, assess, reward and punish him/her, the adolescent's competence is continuously being evaluated. The important persons in his life partially direct and prescribe his behaviour and their censure or approval helps to determine his emotional commitment to responsible behaviour (Brim 1965). His sense of competence and his self-concept or identity depends upon the degree to which he interprets the expectations of others into his personal life-style. He learns to live up to the standards of certain significant persons.

The distinctive personality of each adolescent depends upon the relative significance of the person with whom he/she interacts, the kind of behaviour available to him/her in their role models and the ways in which he/she assimilates new expectations and early experiences. By studying the fundamental congruencies, tensions and contradictions in the developing selfhood of adolescents, one can understand the process of transition undergone by adolescents as they pass into adult stage.

Effective socialisation is marked by mature comprehension of social expectations, skillful performance of appropriate role behaviour and efficient use of resources in the social system to achieve goals. In a simple and stable society the process of socialisation would be analogous to putting on a play where roles are clearly prescribed, instructions are explicit, performances are pre-planned,
variations in role expectations are minor; in such cases the individual role would ensure social and cultural contiguity (Inkeles 1969). An adolescent today living in a complex and fluid society encounters a relatively unstructured social scene. An adolescent must compete in a merciless arena for academic standing, an attractive mate and a career.

1.6 Impact of Culture on Personality Development

Personality of an individual is gradually shaped by the culture one is born in. Culture refers to total life of a society, what the people think, feel and do constitute culture of a society. It is a complex of physical ways of life, social situations and psychology of people fused together. The personality of an individual is moulded by the customs, beliefs, rituals and religious faiths and early childhood training of children.

Culture influences the personality development of an individual. This aspect is highlighted in Mead’s (1958) study conducted on development of adolescents in Samoa, a primitive culture. She concluded that cultural conditions play an important role in moulding the personality patterns of individuals. According to her findings, the development of sense of security seemed to be one of the chief factor determining the formation of personality.

Culture moulds the personality through two processes - internalisation and institutionalisation.
1. **Internalisation:** Internalisation of values, ideas and customs occur through the process of learning. A child since his birth is reared in a definite cultural background where he is taught values, customs, beliefs, etc. which creates distinctive personality characteristics in the child.

2. **Institutionalisation:** Many religious faiths have different tenets, beliefs, rituals associated with worship and prayers, degree of organisation in the performance of rites of passage and the like create unique personality characteristics among the followers of different religions. Other institutions like family and marriage are also distinctive to each culture. They also have an impact on the personality of the members of the group.

   Within a culture one finds distinctive sub-cultures like teacher culture, student culture, religious culture, youth culture and so on.

   Contemporary youth sub culture manifests itself in the new forms of expressions of youth in domains of life such as consumption pattern, fashion and leisure time behaviours, dress-code, use of language, political preference, sex and marriage. The youth are generally unique in the above matters compared to the early adolescent or the mature adults even though they may share common values in the areas of religion and the like.
1.7 Youth Culture

Culture of the society of which he is a member presents the youth with a confusing, stressful and some times incoherent array of moral values and expectations. The youth's only recourse is to withdraw partially from the adult world and to rely on the peer groups for standards of conduct, special language, grooming, clothes, idolized actors and singers, music, magazines and ritualistic role patterns in the clique, early dating and going steady etc. help youth express collectively a cohesive cultural distinctiveness, that is youth culture. Peers offer new patterns of reciprocity. They reverberate thoughts, feelings, expectations and demands. Peer interaction permits the adolescent to see how his friends respond to their parents, it encourages him to examine new values and relationship.

The structure and ideology of peer group differs according to age, social class, geographic, ethnic and family background. Douvan and Gold (1966, p.497) see youth culture activities as mediating through the demands of the adult world and cushioning the adolescents against the values and demands of that world. The adolescent seeks emotional sustenance from his peers because his family cannot help him attain full social and vocational maturity. Peers enable him to develop and crystalize his identity, attain personal autonomy and make an effective transition into the adult world.
Peers facilitate the young person's transition from reliance on her family to relative freedom in adolescence and new patterns of responsibility in adulthood. Her family can provide only a small range of role participation opportunities but peer interactions help in preparing herself for a place in the social structure. The values and behavioural norms permit the adolescent to acquire some perspective on her own values and attitudes. Untested social skills can be tried and modified and impractical aspirations can be changed. Once the adolescent identifies with the values of a given peer-group, it becomes a reference point for his/her behaviour. It enforces conformity to the group norms. Its sanctions are based on acceptance and rejections. Satisfying experiences with peers contributes to the development of a firm self-identity, whereas unsatisfactory experiences may precipitate identity crisis.

1.7.1 Youth Culture Distinctiveness

Youth culture possesses a particular distinctiveness that serves the needs of the youth. There is a distinctive youth culture that is, there are systems of communications and patterns of behaviour among adolescents that distinguish them from children and adults. Communications tend to integrate the language, values, beliefs and standards of young people into a coherent system that sets them apart from adults and thus contributes to their distinctiveness (Nelson and Rosenbaum, 1968, 1972, Schwartz and Mutan, 1967). The meanings adolescent assigns to status terms and prestige categories
constitute a cultural core, that is sufficiently different to comprise an independent status system, distinct world view and style of life. Thus terms and categories pertain to social virtues or defects and provide standards by which adolescents can measure their own worth. An adolescent’s estimation of his own competence and his rank in the prestige hierarchy of the youth culture depends on his peers' evaluation.

A distinguishing feature of youth culture is the characteristic spoken language. Nelson and Rosenbaum (1968, 1972) hold that slang serves adolescents by enabling them to transmit values and norms, express approval and hostility and reinforce their selective perceptions and categorisations of the social environment, all of which contributes to their cultural distinctiveness.

1.7.2 Youth Culture Patterns

The peer group activities of adolescents has received substantial attention. Three major patterns by which adolescents appear to participate in the youth-culture have been identified. They are hedonism, complacency and alienation.

**Hedonism:** The aim of life is to seek pleasure and develop an obliviousness to responsibilities. Youth subscribing to this view resist adult expectations, flout adult standards and ‘Having-a-good time’ becomes the focus of life. Hedonism in educational institution and among youth is reflected in the low priority given to academic
achievement; in fact, brains and high academic performance bring forth few rewards from the peer group. Morality is personal, interpersonal and relativistic; authority largely comes from personal conviction and not from institutions. The best examples of this type of youth culture are the hippies and the beatniks.

Complacency: Another segment of young people will be so thoroughly socialized in the adult cultural mode that they accept the dominant, political, economic and moral values of society without question. Adolescents learn to accept adult guidance and to adopt behaviour that offers little immediate pleasurable gratification but hold promise of gratification in the remote future. The tradition is a psychologically conservative one, involving retention of traditional and familiar values and producing no fundamental restructuring of their commitments - adolescents are seen complacently absorbing the adult culture.

Alienation and protest: A third section of young people are so disillusioned with contemporary social conditions that they express their discontent by either withdrawing from society or actively attempting to change some of its policies and practices. Alienation appears to be a universal phenomenon of adolescence, it engenders tensions that manifest themselves in various forms of protest - anarchy, activism, apathy and withdrawal. Contemporary analysts have emphasized present day cultural stress as the source of
alienation. Adolescents are generally disillusioned with the hypocrises, they observe in adult society with reference to morality, human rights, war and peace, poverty and wealth. The personality characteristics and value orientations of alienated youth appear to be wholly contrary to traditional values. Distler (1968) said that the dominant cultural orientation has shifted from 'patristic' to 'matristic'. Patristic culture refers to socialization for instrumental roles including achievement, goal directedness, delay of gratification, rationality, autonomy and individual responsibility as the cultural ideals for both sexes but specially males. Matristric culture values expressive roles, including feelings, intimacy, sensory experiences and self-exploration.

Each of the patterns can be found at present, but the dominance of one style or another appear to depend on the social conditions at a given time.

Among the different approaches to study of youth culture, this study confines itself to study it in terms of caricature or prototype of adult-culture. Youth internalises adult norms and values through the process of socialisation and when denied to play adult role in adult society, they practice them in the society of their own creation.

1.8 Need for the Study

From the times the UN declared the decade 1975-85 as the women's decade which also coincided with the rather spontaneous feminist and activist movements preceded by some riveting and
thought provoking writings on women, their status and their life situation (Frieden, 1963; Greer, 1971) concerns about women began to be highlighted. Women not being satisfied with listening to "politically correct" statements about women, have been vocal about the injustices perpetrated against women and demanding restitution and more important equity in real terms. Such a movement has resulted in two noticeable avenues of action: (1) legislation to protect women and promote their endeavours in all walks of life and (2) the development of women's studies.

The researcher was also interested in studying girls from the women's studies perspective. Women's studies has been defined as the pursuit of a more comprehensive, critical and balanced understanding of social reality. One of the components of women studies is studying women's perception of their own lives, the broader social reality and their struggles and aspirations. Studies on women's education in India formed a mere 3% of the studies conducted till 1986 (Desai, 1991). With the women's movement and women's studies gaining ground throughout the world, women's education requires to be studied in the development perspective and should be viewed as a critical instrument for social and academic development that would help to investigate the causes of gender disparity - analysing structural and attitudinal factors and to empower women in their struggles against inequality and for effective participation in all areas of society and developments. One of the
prime objectives of women's studies is to generate relevant data base through intensive field work, as it is essential for evaluation and correlation of developmental policies and programmes and in extending the areas for academic analysis, into hitherto neglected sectors (Gore, 1988). In the light of the above, it is clear that school and college going girls fall simultaneously into the categories of girls and youth. Moreover, this age group will also be going through the stress and strains of adolescence.

The socio-cultural reality of girls varies within the larger culture as they may hail from different localities, socio-economic backgrounds and caste. The researcher was interested in studying perceptions of socio-cultural reality of school and college going girls having different backgrounds as mentioned above.

One influence which shapes the young women's identity is the environment which is a socio-cultural reality, internalised by her, during her early formative years of life, specially childhood. This sometimes proves to be an impediment to her exercising her own choices among alternatives open to her, because the social and the cultural forces limit and structure women's roles. Except for small sections of women in our country, all are engrossed in the household tasks day after day which makes them identify themselves only with this role, that of the homemaker.

Another aspect of social reality is that of the mass media. In
these days of information technology, access to and dissemination of information is easier and faster. Mass media are important agents of socialisation as they are highly intrusive; in fact there is no escaping from the all pervading television with its capacity for both promoting togetherness in families as well as creating dissension in the family. Individuals are bombarded by messages on various issues, women's issues being one of them. It is likely that young women are influenced by such programmes. These are likely to shape their attitudes towards women's issues and educational and occupational aspirations.

The crises and issues in a given society at a particular period vary according to the pressures and the needs of the society at that time. The role and function of women like those of other components of society also get modified in accordance with changing situations and cultural setting. It is in this context this study assumes significance, as it attempts to investigate whether young women have been able to dissociate themselves from their stereotyped and traditional images and whether they have now been able to strike a balance between the past image and the present demands. The available information about adolescent girls in terms of their aspirations, value systems, their perception of reality is inadequate. It is not possible to speak about youth culture of girls as, systematic studies are few and far between. [Cormack 1961, Kalia
Hence, the study proposes to attempt to understand college going girls from the following angles:

- socio-economic backgrounds
- importance of parental education
- their life style
- extent of their awareness
- degree of modernity
- their attitude towards women’s issues and the like.

The information about the above aspects would help to throw light on the needs and problems of girls. The study would not be complete if it pursued the information the above aspects in isolation unless it addresses itself to studying the basic influencing factors such as their home and social environment, locality, educational levels, type of education and other related factors.

Youth is a symbol of power and young women comprise 25% of the total population and rightly the United Nations. General Assembly under the world programme of action for youth (year 2000 and beyond) has recognised that young people are both major human resources for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovations who would influence
current social, economic conditions and the well being of future generations. With regard to girls and young women world-wide, it has been observed that girls are often treated as inferior and are socialised to put themselves last, thus undermining their self esteem. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a life long downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream. Negative cultural attitudes and practices as well as gender biased educational process, including curriculum, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction reinforce existing gender inequalities. The UN has proposals for action to improve the situation of young women in the areas of discrimination, education, health, employment and violence against them.

The stage of adolescence has been studied extensively in the west and to some degree in India. However, studies focussing on adolescent girls have not been numerous; findings with respect to girls, when reported separately have been only incidental. The researcher was interested in studying girls in the context of youth culture as well as from the women's studies perspective. It is in this context the study has been taken up for investigation.

1.9 Statement of the Problem

A Survey of Girls at Different Educational Levels in the Youth Culture Perspective.
1.10 Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic background of girls (youth) studying at two levels of education.

2. To study the life-style patterns comprising various issues like interpersonal relations, exposure to mass media, aspirations, co-curricular and leisure time activities and the like.

3. To study the extent of awareness in various issues related to women such as laws pertaining to women, government programmes and schemes for women, women's organisations, health and nutrition and other general issues.

4. To study the attitudes towards women's issues such as family, marriage, equality, education, empowerment and gender discrimination.

5. To assess the degree of modernity of girls.

6. To study the five objectives mentioned above in the context of caste, locality and level of education.

1.11 Overview of the Report

To sum up, in this chapter the status of women, gender discrimination, empowerment of women, socialisation of adolescents and their problems, youth culture distinctiveness and identity crisis among adolescents and the need for the present study has been discussed.
In the next chapter a review of related studies would be presented. The third chapter deals with the methodology employed in the study - the operational definitions of the variables, a rationale for the hypotheses, sampling, tools used for collecting data and the statistical techniques used. Analysis of data and a discussion of the results obtained would be presented in the fourth chapter. The summary and conclusions, implications, limitations and suggestions for further research would be presented in the fifth chapter.