CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY

Ever since the International year of women, 1975, was declared, efforts are on globally to achieve equality of women, especially in the fields of employment, health and education. In India too, new impetus is being given to the encouragement of women's education since then, and this aspect is given an important place in the National Policy of Education, 1986. The expectation is that through education and by providing ample opportunities for gainful employment of women, the goal of equality can be achieved. Thus, education is viewed as an effective and essential tool to lead to gainful employment.

However, a review of reported literature revealed that owing to the influences of various factors which have their roots in the socio-economic background and socialization process, even educated women tend to have either low vocational aspirations which are unrealistic in view of their potentialities or no vocational aspirations. This unfortunate state of affairs calls for effective guidance and counselling to combat the negative influences of the said factors and to enhance the educational and occupational aspirations of women students. Aspirations determine goal seeking behaviour of a person.
Hence, an enhancement in the educational and occupational aspirations of women students can be expected to lead to an improvement in the status of women. To plan any intervention programme aimed at enhancing these aspirations, the knowledge of the variables that influence the educational and occupational aspirations becomes necessary.

In this context the present study sought to explore the influences of a few selected variables, namely socio-economic status (SES), attitude towards equality of women (ATEW), faculty of study (FOS) and type of college (TOC) at which one is studying, on the educational and occupational aspirations of women students.

The study is a descriptive survey of the educational and occupational aspirations and attitude towards equality of women of final year female undergraduate students. The sample consisted of 819 women students studying in the mixed and single sex colleges of Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Kurnool and Nellore districts, which fell in the jurisdiction of Sri Venkateswara University of Andhra Pradesh state.

The instrument used for data collection consisted of four parts i.e., 1. Socio-Economic Rating Scale developed by Rao (1970), 2. Job Aspiration Inventory developed by Khaund (1982), 3. Educational Aspiration Inventory and 4. Attitude scale on
Equality of Women developed by the investigator. The data was collected by the investigator by administering the instrument to the respondents at their colleges in small groups of about 15-20 members.

Statistical analysis consisted of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Chi-square test was used to test the association between dependent and independent variables, for qualitative analysis. Under quantitative analysis, 't' test is used to test the significance of differences between mean, and correlation co-efficients are computed to know the relationship between the variables.

Step-wise multiple regression is also carried out to know the relative contribution of the independent variables viz., SES, ATEW, FOS and TOC in determining the educational and occupational aspirations of women students.

ATEW is treated as a dependent variable while studying the influence of SES on ATEW and as an independent variable while studying its influence on educational and occupational aspirations. The results are discussed for their implications for counselling and guidance.

Of the 819 respondents, 313 are from arts, 231 are from commerce, 231 are from science and 44 are from Home Science.
When classified based on type of college 397 are from mixed type of colleges and 422 are from single sex colleges.

Among 819 women students 561 belonged to middle socio-economic stratum, 129 to high and 129 to low socio-economic strata.

SALIENT FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Of the 819 respondents, 23.57 percent and 20.51 percent had low and high levels of educational aspirations respectively. The remaining 55.92 percent had middle level of educational aspirations. Lack of knowledge among women students pertaining to systematic ways of study and the effective ways of answering the questions in the examinations is found to be lowering their level of achievement in their present course of study. This in turn affects their self-confidence and their educational and occupational aspirations.

2. A large majority (94.71 percent) of the women students aspired to go for high academic courses i.e., M.A., M.Sc., and M.Com., which are suitable for salaried employment. This finding reflects the lack of awareness among the women students about the demands of employment market. Simply
acquiring degrees in higher education which do not lead to profitable and satisfactory employment causes frustration to the individuals. Not only that, it involves unnecessary and wasteful expenditure for the family and the government. Further, it reflects very badly on the improper management of human resources.

3. The occupational aspirations of a vast majority of the respondents (79.37%) were low. Sixty-six percent of them aspired for either teaching or clerical occupations. These findings show that the women students are not aware of the demands of the employment market. The other possible reasons for their low occupational aspirations could be underestimation of their potentialities, fear of success, home-career conflict and a perceived split in the role demands of wife/mother and working woman.

4. About ninety-eight percent of the women students had a positive attitude towards equality of women. Education which enables one to think critically and objectively seems to have helped the women students to develop a positive attitude towards the equal status and also equal participation of women in social and economic activities.

5. Analysis for relationship between educational aspirations and each of the four independent variables revealed that there is
a positive correlation between SES and EA (r = 0.23, df = 817, 
P < 0.001), ATEW and EA (r = 0.17, df = 817, P < 0.001), and FOS and EA (r = 0.10, df = 817, P < 0.001). However, a significant negative relationship existed between TOC and EA (r = -0.08, df = 817, P < 0.01).

6. A significant positive correlation existed between ATEW and OA (r = 0.12, df = 817, P < 0.001), and between FOS and OA (r = 0.13, df = 817, P < 0.001). However, no significant correlation existed between SES and OA, and TOC and OA.

7. A significant positive relationship is present between educational and occupational aspirations of women students. (r = 0.21, df = 817, P < 0.001), indicating that higher the educational aspirations, higher are the occupational aspirations.

The findings of the study point out the need for 1) vocationalization of education and 2) the need for career education and educational counselling and guidance. The latter needs to be started at secondary level and should be followed through college education. This is essential to channelize the educational and occupational aspirations of women students so as to suit both their potentialities and the demands of the employment market. However, these aspects are
given importance in National Policy of Education, 1986. But, actual implementation of these programmes at the earliest is of very great importance, to arrest the adverse influence and the consequent wastage of human resources.

Further, the findings of the study emphasize the need for strengthening the functioning of the University Employment Information and Guidance Bureaux, by providing additional trained counselling staff and by providing sufficient funds for printing of related materials.

In addition, promoting an understanding of the influences of the environment in moulding the women students the way they are at present as regards to their role expectations, achievement related expectations, attitudes, inhibitions, fears etc., is of vital importance. This can be achieved by helping them to examine and analyse (i) the cultural influences that inhibit the achievement motivation of women, (ii) the effects of socialization process that have limited their aspirations, self-related expectations, desires, attitudes etc. As revealed by the research work done by Osborn (1977) and others, presentation of a historical perspective on women will also be helpful.

Thus, preventive intervention programmes aimed at combating the influences of sex-role stereotypes and socialization
process, along with educational and vocational guidance would go a long way in enhancing the educational and occupational aspirations of women students.

Some critical comments about limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The approach to the assessment of educational and occupational aspirations could have been more sophisticated by using rigorously developed tools. However, in this study though the tools used are not sophisticated enough, they were chosen mainly for the reason that for an exploratory study they provided descriptive data regarding various aspects of educational and occupational aspirations. However, an attempt was made to convert the data into a quantitative score by assigning arbitrary weights for different responses similar to Likert type of procedures.

Alternatively, analysis of a few case studies of individuals who are identified as high and low aspirants as related to the fields of education and occupation could have enriched the findings of the study.

A longitudinal study of a sub sample will provide a greater insight into the dynamics of the determinants of educational and occupational aspirations and related achievement of women
students. However, time and other constraints prevented the investigator from taking up such a study.

Though the present investigation limited its scope to a few variables i.e., socio-economic status, attitude towards equality of women, type of college and faculty of study, there is a need to explore the influences of self-concepts, sex-role attitudes and the motive to avoid success on the educational and occupational aspirations of women students.

In view of the inputs for the upliftment of socially and economically backward communities, it will throw some light on the impact of these inputs. If a study is undertaken to see what is happening to women students of low socio-economic stratum.

Further, planning, implementation and evaluation of preventive intervention programmes to check the negative influences of sex-role socialization on the aspirations and achievement motivation of women students as related to the fields of education and occupation will be of very great significance.