

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study has been set to examine the importance of education, guidance and training for the empowerment of women with special focus on district Sehore. The society is witnessing changes in the role-status of women. There is greater emphasis of education on girls and women in the same way as we educate boys and men. The current eloquence of women's empowerment insists on exercising their civil, social, political and economic rights. This will help improve the overall condition of women in the society.

In economic field so long as women remain backward and economically dependent on men, the helpless condition of women cannot be changed. Economic empowerment and independence will only come through proper education and employment of women. Paid employment has always been the main key for upliftment of women.

Every working woman deserves fair pay, respectful working conditions, and opportunities to advance. So that, both women and men should be able to share work and family responsibilities with each other. Freedom from discrimination is fundamental. Ensuring workplace fairness is not only the right thing to do, it's good for families, communities, and our economy and Nation.

Women need education and training programs which enable them to boost earnings and achieve their aspirations. It's important to ensure that women, especially low earners, can increase their skills in order to get better jobs where they can be paid with family-supporting wages. But once we start analyzing the empowerment issue we need to understand the need of empowerment especially in developing country like India and for that we need to examine truth, fact and figures

related to the pathetic status of women in both ancient and modern India.

There are different perceptions towards education. Its definition also varies from person to person. In this study the word education means knowledge, learning or what one has learnt which expand his/ her awareness and change perception toward oneself, family and society. Women can have knowledge in various ways. Yes, academic skills are necessary and have their importance in its own ways. But a person cannot learn without academic skills, it is not mandatory. Again in this research, education is altogether learning either learning by academic skills or learning through experience or guidance. With the help of this learning women's dependency on others might get reduce or they can be self dependent. Learning makes them more confident which is followed by clear awareness or clarity in perception, further followed by better decision making in their day to day matters whether economic, social, political matters or general awareness. Women should have confidence, clarity and awareness in order to know their worth to make their life better which develops their families too. Government is also doing campaigning through "Padhega India to Badhega India" and "Skill India" which shows that education and vocational trainings is significant tool. No matter women are literate or not still they can be educated in different ways. Training is an important tactic to educate both literates and illiterates. It is a useful weapon to make women skilled and financially independent. Training brings development. In this research, training means any organized vocational training programs either by local government bodies or NGOS/ SHGs.

District Sehore has been taken up in Madhya Pradesh (India) for this study and took into consideration four key Empowerment indicators that is economical, social, political and general awareness.

Many researches on women's status in developing countries are considerable evidence that, by and large (with exceptions, of course),

the average achievements of women in consumption, health and education are lower than those of men. But, these differences are invariably smaller than, for example, differences across developed and developing countries, between rural and urban residents within a country, or between the top and bottom quintiles within a country. How are we then to address the question of whether or not gender inequalities are “large”? There are both conceptual and empirical issues. Conceptually, a common enough approach is the following consider any variable measuring individual attainment, the inequality of which is of interest. This could be educational attainment, or consumption, for example. The inequality in the distribution of this variable across individuals can be measured using any one of a number of standard inequality indices. Suppose now that individuals also have other characteristics such as gender, location, or age.

Today, it is globally recognized that fulfilling the rights of women and girls is central to development. But if one were to trace the origins of this realization, many threads would lead back to Cairo in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development, here development organizations agreed that important development outcome targets can only be addressed once women’s empowerment takes place properly: “The empowerment and autonomy of women show us a way for better world in the form of improvement in political, social, economic and health status. All these are important because they constitute an important end in themselves and one that is essential for achieving sustainable development.”

Gender equalities is key in Empowering women and is not only the right thing to do: It’s also smart economics and vital to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity as well as women’s empowerment is key for the improvement of women and men’s well-being, social justice, and for the achievement of development goals.

Over the past decade, gender equality and women's empowerment have been explicitly recognized as key not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development. Since gender inequality and women's disempowerment occur in all the different domains in which women and men interact and function, both concepts are multi-dimensional; consequently, they give rise to a large number of potential indicators. Indicators of gender equality/inequality are typically designed to compare the status of women and men on particular characteristics of interest; whereas, by definition, indicators of empowerment/ disempowerment tend not to be relative. Instead, indicators of empowerment are designed to measure roles, attitudes, and rights of women and sometimes men.

There has always been assumption that there is a connection between employment and women's empowerment, both in terms of economics and gender relations. This assumption is widely accepted and supported by NGOs, multi-bilateral organizations, by academicians and development workers around the globe.

A 1999 report by UNESCAP says the following:

Economic empowerment constitutes one of the fundamental building blocks in efforts towards the overall empowerment of women. Participation in formal economic activities on terms and conditions which reflect the productive capacity of women, and their control over their own incomes, are some of the important dimensions of economic empowerment...Access to earn income from outside improves women's position within the household substantially, gives them greater control over the distribution of earnings and household resources, and generally improves their status, strength and position in society as well as their own self-esteem. The ability to earn income from outside and to engage in activities other than household-oriented ones can lead to significant social change in the long run. Where women are generally denied the ownership of property and control over assets, the

ability to earn outside income can become an important instrument for the transformation of gender relations and challenge many traditional modes of social and economic relations.

Despite the widespread support for the above assumption that employment leads to women's empowerment, there is very little research that empirically examine the relationship and looking deeper into the employment experience and considering a broader range of empowerment indicators is important to developing a better understanding of the complex relationship between employment and empowerment. This research is set to tests this assumption by looking deeper into these connections and analyze between various aspects of work and indicators of women's empowerment. This study asks the question, what implications does employment have for Indian women's?

1.2 Status of women in India: Ancient and Modern Era:

In Ancient India: The cultural history of India reveals that in India theoretically women enjoyed the status of devi (goddess) as described in many religious texts of Hindus, the majority community in India.

Though woman enjoyed the theoretical importance which these texts outline for the wife who was defined as ardhagini (better-half), but in practice she had a subservient position than man. She was regarded as a corporal moveable property with no rights. It was generally seen and believed that women had lower status with reference to power and influence than men in all spheres of life i.e. family, community, religion and politics. Till recently, it was held that up to marriage, she is protected by her parents, during married life, she is looked after by her husband, and after the death of her husband, she was used to spend remaining years of her life under the roof of her children without any will or desire and rights in the family. Medieval society had been very traditional. Women had little or no role to play within the country at large. Within towns, society would have effectively dictated what jobs

a woman could do and her role in a medieval village would have been to support her husband. As well as doing her daily work, whether in a town or village, a woman would have had many responsibilities with regards to her family.

Along-with the invasion of the country by the Muslims, the position of women declined further. The Muslim period witnessed several indicators of low status of women, particularly the Hindu women. As polygamy was a normal practice for these invaders they used to pick up any woman of their choice and kept them in their "harems". . In order to protect them Native Indian men made their women started using 'Purdah', (a veil), which covers the body and even eye contact cannot be established with strangers. The child marriage became a rule to safeguard the chastity and honor of the girls. In many cases the Hindu girls were given in marriage before the age of nine or ten. This clearly indicated that the Hindu girls were denied education. Polygamy and 'purdah' system were 'practiced during the Muslim period. Women were restrained through the 'purdah' system and the movement outside the home was checked. Thus the purdah system affected their education. It also made women dependent on men for external work India experienced the breakdown of social institutions, the upsetting of traditional political structure and economic depression. All these had effect on the social life, especially among women. Women were not allowed to move freely on their own and which lead to the further deterioration of their status in society. These customs related with women resulted in changed mindset of society and they began to consider a girl as misery and a burden. Thus a vicious circle started for women where they were at the receiving end.

All these activities and acts gave rise to some new evils such as **Child Marriage, Sati, Jauhar and restriction on girl education.**

Sati: Historically, the practice of sati was to be found among many castes and at every social level, chosen by or for both uneducated and the highest ranking women of the times. The common deciding factor was often ownership of wealth or property, since all possessions of the

widow devolved to the husband's family upon her death. In a country that shunned widows, sati was considered the highest expression of wifely devotion to a dead husband. It was deemed an act of peerless piety and was said to purge her of all her sins, release her from the cycle of birth and rebirth and ensure salvation for her dead husband and the seven generations that followed her Sati literally means 'a pure and virtuous woman'. It was an obsolete Indian funeral custom where a widow immolated herself on pyre of her husband. A widow was burned either with her tacit consent or most of the times forcefully by her in-laws after the death of her husband. This practice shows a dark and evil side of Hindu society, especially of ancient and medieval India.

The practice of Sati or self-immolation by the widow was associated with a kind of virtue. The 'virtue' of this practice was defined by a religious logic that it was inauspicious for widow to live after the death of her husband. It is little wonder that women growing up in a culture in which they were so little valued as individuals considered it the only way for a good wife to behave. The alternative, anyway, was not appealing. After the death of a husband an Hindi widow was expected to live the life of an aesthetic, renouncing all social activities, shaving her head, eating only boiled rice and sleeping on thin coarse matting. A widow who agreed to self-immolate herself at the funeral pyre of her husband was considered to be very virtuous and go straight to heaven and it was also believed she attained to the status of Sati Mata or Sati Goddess. So it was considered good to practice such ritual. We can still find Temples of Sati Mata in some States of India such as in Rajasthan and M P.

The unfortunate women who could not commit or were prevented from Sati were doomed to lead the most austere life. Their presences at family public functions were totally forbidden. The widows slogged in joint families, died unwept and unsung.

Sati was considered to be the better option than living as a widow. As the plight of widows in Hindu society was even worse. Some of the scriptures like 'Medhatiti' had different views it say that Sati is like committing suicide so one should avoid this.

Jauhar: It is Similar to the custom of Sati but it was a mass suicide. Jauhar was originally the voluntary death on a funeral pyre of the queens and royal womenfolk of defeated Rajput castles in order to avoid capture and consequent molestation. The term is extended to describe the occasional practice of mass suicide carried out in medieval times by Rajput women, or by entire Rajput communities, when the fall of a besieged city was certain.

On several occasions when defeat in such an engagement became certain, the Rajput defenders of the fort scripted a final act of heroism that rendered the incident an immortal inspiration and afforded the invaders only an exceedingly hollow, inglorious victory. In such incidents, the ladies of the fort would commit collective self-immolation. Wearing their wedding dresses, and holding their young children by the hand, the ladies would commit their chastity to the flames of a massive, collective pyre, thereby escaping molestation and dishonor at the hands of the invading army. As the memorial of their heroic act, the ladies would leave only the imprint of the palm of their right hands on wet clay, which have become objects of veneration.

Child Marriage: Child marriage, known as ‘Bal Vivaha’, is believed to have begun during the medieval ages of India. Later child marriage became a widespread cultural practice with various reasons to justify it, and many marriages were performed while the girl was still an infant.

After independence, the feudalistic character of the Indian society coupled with caste system gave a major boost to incidences of child marriage, particularly in the rural areas.

“Castes, which are based on birth and heredity, do not allow two people to marry if they are from different castes. This system was threatened by young people’s emotions and desires to marry outside their caste, so out of necessity child marriage was created to ensure the caste system continued. Also parents of a child entering into a child

marriage are often poor and use marriage as a way to make their daughter's future better, especially in areas with little economic opportunities.

During times of war, parents will often marry off their young child to protect her from the conflicts raging around her. Some families still use child marriage to build alliances, as they did during the medieval ages. Child marriage created its own share of problems such as increase in birth rate, poor health of women due to repeated child bearing and high mortality rate of women and children.

Restriction on Widow Remarriage: A woman who has lost her husband by death and has not remarried is called a widow. Widows are considered to be a marginalized group in India because they occupy a very low social status in society. Consequently they have to face severe social, economic and cultural deprivations. Widows were considered inauspicious and were not permitted to attend festive occasions, despite many of them being young girls whose marriage had not even been consummated. It was very common for the mother-in-law to taunt her as being responsible for her son's death. The death of the husband was only the beginning of a young woman's problems. She was either expected to commit sati or return to her parents. If she stayed with her husband's family, she had to do all the menial work, was ill treated and not allowed to eat properly. They were not treated as equals and were subjected to a lots of restrictions. They were treated a marginalized segment in India and were supposed to live pious life once their husband died. Consequently they had to face severe social, economic and cultural deprivations even they were not allowed to enter in any celebration as it was considered to be a bad omen. In many parts widows also had to have their head shaved off as a mark of mourning. Any widow remarrying was looked down by the society. This cruelty on widows was also one of the key factors which made the large number of widows to opt for Sati and commit suicide on husband's

pyre. In medieval India living as a Hindu widow was no short of a curse.

Purdah System: Purdah or veils were practice of female seclusion prevalent among some Muslim communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as upper-caste Hindus in Northern India, such as the Rajputs. The veil or the 'Purdah' system was widely prevalent in medieval Indian society. Muslim rule of northern India during the Mughal Empire influenced the practice of Hinduism, and the purdah spread to the Hindu upper classes of northern India. During the British colonialism period in India, purdah observance was widespread and strictly-adhered to among the Muslim minority

Female Education: Women in India have been experiencing different status since the inception of the civilization. Though women form half of the population, yet the masculine principles made the women suffer a lot. They were denied equal opportunities and importance as men.

Woman in general in ancient and medieval India had various responsibilities to take care of i.e. looking after the comforts of her husband and children, serving elders, showing compassion to the guests and servants, etc. Though an average woman received a little education she had good knowledge of morals, religious rites and rituals to make her an ideal woman in all respects. However, after 500 B.C, the position of women started to decline. The Islamic invasion played a role in restricting freedom and rights of the women to take formal education. A radical change attended and there was a terrific constraint for women education in India. Reform movements such as Jainism also allowed women to get to religious education but by and large women in India faced confinement and restrictions.

Women education in medieval India weakened further and declined severely with the introduction of Purdah system. Different customs and conventions of diverse religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity

further deteriorated the state of women. Literacy of women at that time was looked upon as a disgrace. The idea of providing formal education to female children never came into the minds of parents. A superstitious feeling existed in the majority of the Hindu families that a girl taught to read and write will soon become a widow after marriage. It cannot be denied that the picture of formal education for women was the most unsatisfactory and women received practically no formal learning whatever, except for the little domestic instruction that was available to the girls of the upper and higher class families.

Many leaders took several initiatives to make education available to the women of India. The ordered form of women education in India was incorporated in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Devadasis: In India, in the past, the devadasis were a very important functionary of Hindu society. The functions of devadasis were a part of religious services in a long history of temple institution. In India the practices originate and developed during the early medieval period. There are a large number of inscriptions which give us a lot of information regarding the existence of the institution of the devadasis. Devadasi system is a religious practice in parts of southern India, whereby parents marry a daughter to a deity or a temple. The marriage usually occurs before the girl reaches puberty. In these system girls were dedicated to temples in the name of gods and goddesses. The girls were meant like servant of God which is termed as 'Devadasis'. The functions of devadasis were a part of religious services in a long history of temple institution. These Devadasis needed to live life of celibacy. Their requirements were managed and fulfilled by the grants received by the temples. Their main duty was to perform worship along with singing and dancing for God. Even Many Rulers' used to invite temple devdasis to perform at their court for the pleasure of courtiers and their guests. Thus some Devadasis converted to Rajadasis (Palace Dancers) prevalent in some tribes of South India like the Yellamma cult. During the colonial times, Many social reformers

started working towards removal practice of the Devdasi system on the grounds that it supported prostitution.

The plight of women in medieval India and at the starting of modern India can be summed up in the words of great poet Rabindranath

Tagore:

"O Lord Why have you not given woman the right to conquer her destiny?"

Why does she have to wait head bowed,
By the roadside, Waiting with tired patience,
Hoping for a miracle in the morrow?"

Women's Struggle and Reforms

The role of women and their political, economic, and social opportunities in Indian society shifted greatly. In History and in today times also at many places women were viewed as "subordinate to males" and were therefore subject to the laws and regulations imposed upon them by men. They were expected to marry, raise families, and perform the duties of diligent wives and mothers. In spite of fifty percent of the population on India, women are not at par with her counterpart in Western world but she is giving her best effort to make her mark in men's world. We can take into account certain names from the British era where women set an example of extraordinary courage and intrepidity which even men might not be able to show.

Rani Lakshmi Bai

Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi was the one the woman. Rani Lakshmi Bai will always be remembered for her unbreakable patriotism and astonishing courage. Her courage, bravery, wisdom and her progressive views on empowerment of women in 19th century India, and her sacrifices made her an icon of the Indian Independence Movement. Lakshmi Bai was no match for the Britishers. Under her leadership the Rani Laxmi Bai's Army showed undaunted courage and returned shot for every shot from British army. She was considered by the British as

one of the best military leader of rebels, this sparkling epitome of courage died a hero's death in the battlefield. However, she could not overpower the British forces, but she fought till her last breath and laid down her life for the nation as freedom fighter. The Rani was memorialized in bronze statues at both Jhansi and Gwalior, both of which portray her on horseback. Her story became a beacon for the upcoming generations.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Born on 22nd may 1772 Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great social reformer. He modernized Indian society in many ways. He was the torchbearer of social reforms for the women. He undertook a lot of social reforms to change the society and worked to uplift the status of women in India. He raised his voice against the Sati system.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated the liberty of Women. He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati, he advocated in favor of widow remarriage. He also told that like the sons, daughters have also their right over parental property. He also influenced the British government to bring necessary modification in the existing law. He raised voice against child-marriage and polygamy. He was the advocate of women education. Thus, he advocated women's liberty out and out and awakened them.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Born on 26 September, 1820 Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was one the key pillar of social reform movement of Bengal in 19th century. He thoroughly read ancient Hindu scripture and came to know that the genders divide which was prevalent in Bengal and also it was not encoded in ancient texts. Instead it was narrow mind thinking to keep women subordinate. He felt that mass education, irrespective of caste, creed and sex, was the necessity of the day to bring about a real change in the society. And to ensure it, spread of education among women was

very much essential. He was convinced that mass education could not exclude female education. So he planned to open more schools for the females. He championed the uplift of the status of women in India, particularly in his native Bengal for that he persuaded people to send their girls child to school. He opened many schools for girls.

He is best remembered for his relentless efforts in fighting the injustices meted out to women, especially widows. Moved by the plight of child widows, he persuaded the British Government to take action and pushed for it to pass The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule

Born on April 11, 1827, Pune, Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was a real was an Indian thinker, activist, social reformer, writer theologian and philanthropist. He was a pioneer in the field of women's education. At a time when women were among the most downtrodden sections of the society, Jyotirao's endeavor to educate them came as a shock to everyone. But he persisted and built many schools for girls from different backgrounds. After educating his wife, he opened the first school for girls in India in the month of August 1848. He is also credited to setup first home for upper caste widows and newborn girl children so that they can be saved from infanticide.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Dayanand Saraswati born in February 1824 was a Hindu religious leader who founded the Arya Samaj. It is a Hindu reform movement of the Vedic tradition and gave a cry, "back to Vedas". He translated Vedas from Sanskrit to Hindi so that It can be accessed by a common man and can be read and understood. Swami Dayanand Saraswati opposed the practice of child marriage. This objective was achieved through the opening of new schools and making society aware about the benefits of education system. He also worked for the cause of women education through schools by the early 1890s. In addition to

that, Swami Dayanand Saraswati encouraged the remarriage of widows and raised his voice against this social stigma. He tried to change the mindset of people with his Vedic teachings.

Mahatma Gandhi

Dayanand Saraswati was a Hindu religious leader who founded the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement of the Vedic tradition. As a social reformer he laid down a stage for the emancipation of women but it was Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi under whose influence these reforms reached to the society. He was the one who helped in empowering women socio-economically through increased awareness of their rights & duties.

Gandhi worked for liberation of all the suppressed and oppressed sections of society. One of the noteworthy results of his life-work has been the empowerment of women, which made them shed their deep-rooted sense of inferiority and rise to dignity. For Gandhi, "When woman as we all call abala becomes sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerful".

According to the Mahatma, social reforms were essential for the restructuring of the societal values and to empower Indian women. He also realized that certain customs and traditions of the Indian society were antithetical to the spirit of development of the women of the nation.

The custom of child marriage became a target of his criticisms. According to his thinking, child marriage was a source of physical degeneration and also a moral evil. The dowry system could not pass unnoticed from his critical eyes. He was severely against dowry marriages and considered them as 'heartless'. He even stated that girls should never get married to a dowry demanding men as Gandhi believed that the basis of marriage is mutual love and respect. He even

urged people to go for inter communal marriages between the Harijans and Hindus caste. Gandhi was extremely perturbed by the plight of the widows, particularly child widows.

For Gandhi, Men and women are essentially endowed with the same spirit and therefore have similar problems. Women are at par with men, one complementing the other. According to Gandhi, education for women was the need of the time that would ensure their overall which would lead to make them capable of occupying the same platform as men do. In Gandhi's views, women can never be considered to be the weaker sex. In fact, women for Gandhi were embodiments of virtues like humility, tolerance, sacrifice and faith, knowledge.

Gandhi had immense faith in the capacity of women to carry on a non violent movement. Under his leadership, women shouldered critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. Women held several public meetings, organized picketing of shops selling foreign alcohol and articles, sold Khadi items and actively participated in National Movements.

In his opinion, women could take to economic activities to support financially to their family. In the social realm, Gandhi envisaged a critical role for women in doing away with the forces of communalism, caste system and untouchability.

In his lifetime Gandhi inspired many Indians to take concrete and practical initiatives regarding women education which will bring them out of these centuries' old conservative customs and rules, which were responsible for their mental and social slavery

Status of Women in modern India:

The status of Indian women had been subject to many great changes which took place in the past few millennia. With a severe decline in their status and life from the ancient to medieval times, to the

upliftment and promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful.

There was a time when women were just kitchen keepers and housekeepers in the Indian society. Gradually women began to get educated, even highly educated and a stage came when some of them came out on the social and political field to rub shoulder with the men folk in these fields. The freedom struggle of India was the opening up of the new horizon for womanhood in India. In modern India, women have adorned high offices including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, etc. In the modern time, women are given freedom & right such as freedom of expression & equality as well as the right to be educated. They're enjoying the 'ladies first' facility in different fields. However, some problems such as dowry, domestic violence, sex selective abortion, female infanticide are still prevalent. In the Population Census of 2011 published on <http://www.census2011.co.in> sex ratio was 940 females per 1000 of males. Some Strict measures needs to be brought in to take care of these issues.

Development of our country depends on the empowerment of women. A man and a woman are like two wheels of a cart. The cart can move fast and safely too, when both of them pull it in the same direction and with equal strength. Hence no developing country or society can afford to ignore the role of women, if they are to progress. There are many problems which women in India have to go through daily, some of which are:

Malnutrition defined as ill health caused by deficiencies of protein, calories, and minerals and vitamins interacting with infections, other poor health and social conditions, saps the strength and well-being of millions of women. Malnutrition is devastating and the single biggest contributor to women's death. There has unfortunately been no change in women's nutritional status and malnutrition rates remain unacceptably high. Around 46 percent of girls under five are stunted,

21 percent are underweight, and four percent are wasted. One of the major causes of malnutrition among Indian women is gender inequality. In many parts of India, especially rural India, women are the ones who feed every member of the family first then eat last and least. This also means they get to eat whatever is left over after the men folk are satiated. This becomes one of the causes as most of the times their food intake does not contain required nutritional value for maintaining healthy body. In villages, many times women do not get to eat a whole meal due to poverty. The UNICEF report of 1996 clearly states India and other South Asian countries are doing poorly overall in areas of adequate nutrition. Contributing to this problem is the perceived low status of women and the lack of nutritional knowledge, which adds to the high prevalence of underweight children in the region. There are two major consequences of nutritional deficiency for women first one is to reach at a stage of anemic and secondly they could never achieve their full growth, which leads to an unending cycle of undergrowth as malnourished women generally not able to give birth to healthy child.

Poor Health

Malnutrition is a major health problem, especially in developing countries. Water supply, sanitation and hygiene, given their direct impact on infectious disease, especially diarrhea, are important for preventing malnutrition. Both malnutrition and inadequate water supply and sanitation are linked to poverty. Malnutrition leads to poor health of women. The women of India are prejudiced from birth itself. They are not breastfed for long. For the desire of a Boy Child they get pregnant as soon as possible which decreases the caring period to the girl child, whereas male members always get adequate care and nutrition. Once born, daughters are prone to being fed lesser than boy child and male person, especially when there are multiple girls in a particular house. Women's health in India can be examined in terms of multiple indicators, which vary by geography, socioeconomic standing

and culture. To adequately improve the health of women in India multiple dimensions of wellbeing must be analyzed in relation to global health averages and also in comparison to men in India. In most of the areas Women are not given the right for free movement which means they cannot go move outside their home on their own. If they want some male person would accompany them or at least they have to take permission of male member of the family. This result many times women miss visiting doctors even when they should, which also adds to their poor health.

Maternal Mortality

Maternal Mortality is the death of a woman while she is pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration, from any cause or aggravated by the pregnancy or but not from accidental or incidental causes. India has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. As females are not provided with proper attention, which results in the malnutrition and then they also get married at an early age which leads to pregnancies at younger age even when her body is not ready to bear the burden of a child. Analysis of the important causes of maternal mortality reveals that most of them are preventable. This makes the persistence of a high MMR for last 50 years more shameful, and indicates that we have not been able to establish appropriate maternal health services especially in the rural areas. An improved, accountable health care system at primary level is essential for decreasing maternal mortality to the desired level. Adolescent mothers are less likely to seek medical attention as a result the rates of infant and maternal mortality are higher in these cases.

Lack of Education

There are several deep rooted social, religious and cultural norms that serve to exclude women from receiving an education and thereby, occupying a position of power and authority.

Lack of education has an impact throughout a woman's life cycle. Even before birth, female fetuses are killed in countries like India and China where the birth of a baby girl is not preferred. This is because a girl would lead to a greater financial burden on the family to get her married and virtually no income.

In the middle years, girls face another type of discrimination. They lack access to education. Many of them have to help out with the household work and take care of their siblings instead of going to school or playing. Although the rates of girls' primary education have improved in most countries, only 43 per cent of girls in the developing nations like India attend secondary school. In India women's education never got its due share of attention. From medieval India women were debarred from the education and remained confined to household work only. Although scenario in urban areas has got changed a lot by time and women are now opting even for higher education but majority of Indian population residing in villages still live with old values of medieval times. The gender gap in education in developing nations is extremely problematic. One of the main reasons for not allowing girls to go to school is the poor economic condition. Another reason is distance of school from home is too far. In Indian society virginity and purity is given utmost importance during marriage and people are afraid to send their girl child to far off schools where male teacher teach them along with boys. So for security purpose people want girl child to remain at house only.

Lack of education limits many prospects for women, decreases family income, reduces health, puts women and girls at risk of exploitation this also leads to poor economic advancement of entire Nation. Young girls who are exposed to secondary level may be more likely to perceive that they have greater autonomy. They may have a better ability to make decisions, to move around freely, to earn money, and to have control over their expenditure. They might also have a larger role in the decision about the choice of a husband and the marriage timing. Also within marriage, they may have better relation with their

husbands, particularly in relation to childbearing decisions. Education is the only way that can break this intergenerational cycle of oppression, abuse, and poverty of women is more aware of their rights. They are likely to have fewer and healthier children. Women education has a great power to transform life of women and societies at large.

Mistreatment

In India violence against women is a common evil not just in remote parts but even in town and metros women bear the brunt. **Mistreatment against women** is commonplace, often subtle and is perpetrated in many different ways. A man who batters and abuses a woman does it to gain and maintain control over her. Physical violence is not the only form of domestic abuse that battered women experience. An abusive man will also use the following tactics to exert his power over her:

Dominance — Abusive men need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question. .

- **Humiliation** — An abuser will do everything he can to make you feel bad about yourself, or defective in some way. After all, if you believe you're worthless and that no one else will want you, you're less likely to leave.
- **Isolation** — In order to increase your dependence on him, an abusive man will cut you off from the outside world. He may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school.
- **Threats** — Abusive men commonly use threats to keep their victims from leaving or to scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets.
- **Intimidation**— Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making

threatening looks or gestures, violent yelling, smashing things in front of you, destroying property, hurting your pets, or putting weapons on display.

- **Denial and blame** — Abusers are very good at making excuses for their behavior. They will blame their abuse and violence on a bad childhood, a bad day, and even on the victims of their abuse. Your abuser may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred.

Overworked

Thinking about doing household chores may not seem like a lot of work because we find it unskillful— but if we consider it properly we will find women work for more number of hours than men but their work is hardly recognized as it is a unpaid labor. Let's remember that unpaid labor is work too and we need to give it proper consideration. Not only do women spend many more hours on household chores than men, but they also tend to do the least pleasant tasks, most of which are relentless, obligatory, and performed in isolation.

Lack of power

In India a most of the women do not have power to take decisions independently not even related to their own life. Women belong to class which is powerless. Any 'power' they have is simply proxy power given them by a group of men. This is nature, this is reality. Because women are incapable of effective violence, they have no power in their own right any power they may display is simply proxy power given them by men. They have to seek permission of male members for each and every issue. They are not allowed speak up in any important household matters and not in matter of their own marriage.

Marriage

In India marriages are mostly arranged that to by the liking and decision of family members. The scenario in villages is even worse where girl is not even consulted about groom but is told to marry a

groom whom her family chooses. The decision for a young girl to marry is most often made by her parents or the community. Social and gender norms, cultural beliefs and economic situations all contribute to the pressure put on girls to marry at a young age. Some parents believe that, by marrying their daughter at an early age, they are helping her to fulfill her main societal function – that of wife and mother. They may also believe that they are providing her with protection by limiting sexual relations to only one partner, and by ensuring some kind of financial stability for both the daughter and the family. There is mainly a bias attitude towards men as they are considered superior in marital relationships. The iniquitous dowry system has been spread to all communities as dowry is sometimes used as a means to climb the social ladder, to achieve economic security, and to accumulate material wealth.

Dowry

One of India's more extreme evidence of abuse is seen through dowry practices, commonly found throughout India amongst Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Dowry transactions go way back in Indian culture. Traditionally, dowry customs were an act of love as parents would gift their daughter with a dowry when she entered marriage. These gifts range from money to real estate and entitled a woman to be a full member of the husband's family, allowing her to enter the marital home with her own wealth. It was seen as a substitute for inheritance, offering some security to the wife and was a gift from her family. It is a custom that is prevalent in all the sections of our society in one form or the other. Courts are flooded with dowry death cases which are caused by dowry harassment by husband and in laws. In ancient times women were given 'Stridhan' when they departed from the house of their parents it was voluntary. These dowry demands do not end at the marriage agreement, they can go on for many years. The birth of children often becomes an occasion for the husband's family to command more money. The inability of the bride's family to comply

often leads with the daughter-in-law being abused, killed, or led to commit suicide to make way for a new financial transaction when the husband remarries.

Female infanticide feticide

Female infanticide in India has a long history. Dowry system, Poverty, births to unmarried women, famine, deformed infants, lack of support services and maternal illnesses such as postpartum depression are among the causes. Female infanticide is the intentional killing of infant girls. In addition to the active methods undertaken to eliminate baby girls soon after birth, neglect and discrimination leading to death and sex-selective abortion are also means by which many female children die each year

Preference for sons over daughters is cited as the number one reason for sex selective abortions in India. "One reason for desiring sons, common to all the patrilineal societies of the world, is the transmission of family name and property" (May & Herr, Populations Studies, 1968). It is expected that marrying a son will extend the family lineage. "May you be the mother of 100 sons" is still a common blessing for a pregnant woman. According to the Hindu religion, a son or a male relative must fulfill the last rites for a parent. Most people think it worthwhile to spend money on a boy who is expected to contribute to the family even after marriage, both financially and emotionally, by supporting aging parents. Women were supposed to be at home and in some areas of India are still considered to be curse by some strata of society their birth was taken as a burden. Female infanticide is a major cause of concern in India. It has been argued that the "low status" in which women are viewed in patriarchal societies creates a bias against females.

Divorce

The divorce rate in India is not so high compared to western countries that are because in India, there is a cultural, religious, and social

stigma associated with divorce. Community disapproval is stronger for divorced women.

Studies of divorced and deserted women show that a majority of them experience serious financial problems, and as a result, many of them are unable to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their children

A woman without a husband cannot be accommodated over the long term within the framework of the joint family structure without considerable compromise and tension.

In some communities like Muslims women do not have the right to divorce but whatever a woman earns or is given before and during the course of the marriage remains her property if the marriage ends. In Hindu Society woman is entitled to claim permanent alimony and maintenance if the marriage comes to an end.

1.3 Meaning and Definition of Empowerment:

What is Empowerment?

Many use the term empowerment without understanding what it really means. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives the community and society they live in, by acting on issues they define as important. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. At the core of this process there are actions which help to build individual and collective assets that lead to improve the efficiency and betterment of life. Empowerment suggests a sense of control over one's life in personality, self-esteem, and motivation. It expresses itself at the level of feelings, ideas about self worth and at the level of being able to make a difference in the world around us.

Empowerment can be best described as a process which will provide advice, counsel and orientation programs. Through this process, individuals, organizations or groups, can become aware of the power dynamics at work, develop skills and the capacity to gain proper control over their lives and support the empowerment of others in their community.

The World Bank (2002) defines empowerment as the “expansion of the assets and capabilities [of individuals]...to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.” Kabeer’s (2001) popular definition adds a layer of complexity to the simple component of control and states that empowerment is “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where the ability was previously denied to them.” According to Malhotra et al. (2002), Kabeer’s conceptualization of empowerment is particularly relevant because it contains both the element of process and the elements of human agency and choice, with empowerment implying “choices made from the vantage point of real alternatives” and without “punishingly at higher costs”. Basu and Koolwal (2005) add that choice must be extend to the ability to choose not to do something without fearing the consequences.

There is a heavy reliance in the empowerment literature on the concept of choice and agency. Alsop and Heinsohn’s Empowerment—that is, enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes—is an increasingly familiar term within the World Bank and many other development agencies. Targeting practitioners engaged in the analysis of projects and policies that have empowerment components and provide guidance on how to unpack the concept in order to measure related processes and outcomes.

A number of researchers have also expanded the concept of empowerment as a process to incorporate empowerment as a condition or as an outcome. In other words, empowerment is not just a process, but it is the state of being that results from the empowerment process.

While words like “autonomy” and “empowerment” are often used interchangeably, there have also been some attempts in the literature to distinguish between the two. The most popular distinction (e.g., Dixon-Mueller, 1998) seems to be one between the freedom or liberty to do certain things (autonomy) and the ability to resist controls over one’s life or resist the denial of one’s rights (empowerment). To the extent that no freedom is really complete (not even the freedom of the patriarch), Dixon-Mueller qualifies her definition by defining empowerment as the capacity to resist arbitrary controls and the denial of just right. In this sense, empowerment is the process by which an individual or group overcomes their own ideas and the external barriers that oppress them (conscientization), and also the outcome of this process, being empowered (consciousness).

Other scholars also present similar concepts of empowerment mentioning the importance of both process and its outcome. Batliwala (1995) says that “women’s empowerment is the process, and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society”, and a report by CIDA (1999) emphasizes that “empowerment is about people both men and women taking control over their lives: setting their own agenda, gaining skills, increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome.” The last common component of most definitions of empowerment is that it is multi-faceted. If a person or group is empowered, they possess the capacity to make effective choices; that is, to translate their choices into desired actions and outcomes. In a five-country study on measuring

empowerment currently overseen by the World Bank's empowerment team, it is assumed that degrees of empowerment can be measured. This capacity to make an effective choice is primarily influenced by two sets of factors: agency and opportunity structure. Agency is defined as an actor's ability to make meaningful choices; that is, the actor is able to envisage options and make a choice. Opportunity structure is defined as the formal and informal contexts within which actors operate. Working together, these factors give rise to different degrees of empowerment. For example, a farmer in India chose to take out a Bank loan to finance a lift irrigation system, but the process for obtaining the loan required that he an illiterate person complete 20 forms, offer all his land as collateral, and obtain a lawyer to verify that he owned title to the land. The farmer's choice was well informed and economically viable, but the opportunity structure in this case the regulations concerning procurement was an obstacle in his ability to make his choice effective.

The literature on women's empowerment suggests the relevancy of women's empowerment as an approach to address gender inequality in societies. It then goes on to illustrate three strong models of women's empowerment that is contemporary development, breaking down traditional fundamental concept, and dimensions of women's empowerment in every phase. Additionally, Empowerment process take up various ways in which power is exercised by individual is and groups and review the dimensions in which women's empowerment operates.

There are variety of understandings for the term empowerment, the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those sections who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such skills and ability. Thus, there could be statistical swells indicating improvements in indicators of gender equality, but unless

the process involves women as a core player of that development, one cannot term it as empowerment.

1.4 Need for Women Empowerment in India:

It is as important as male's empowerment in India. But there is no such thing as male's empowerment, which means you have a point. So assuming, women need empowerment more than men, some basic facts and trivia about women in India.

Child Sex Ratio (0-6 years):

The child sex ratio has dropped from 945 females per 1000 males in 1991 to 927 females per 1000 males in 2001

The United Nations Children's Fund, estimated that upto 50 million girls and women are 'missing' from India's population because of termination of the female fetus or high mortality of the girl child due to lack of proper care.

Women as Workers:

Female share of non-agricultural wage employment is only 17%
Participation of women in the workforce is only,

- 13.9% in the urban sector and
- 29.9% in the rural sector

Women's wage rates are, on an average

- only 75 % of men's wage rates and
- constitute only 25% of the family income

In no Indian State do women and men earn equal wages in agriculture Women occupy,

- only 9% of parliamentary seats
- less than 4% seats in High Courts and Supreme Court
- less than 3% administrators and managers are women

Women and Education:

Close to 245 million Indian women lack the basic capability to read and write

Adult literacy rates for ages 15 and above for the year 2000 were

- female 46.4%
- male rate of 69%

Women and Health:

- The average nutritional intake of women is 1400 calories daily. The necessary requirement is approximately 2200 calories
- 38% of all HIV positive people in India are women yet only 25% of beds in AIDS care centres in India are occupied by them
- 92% of women in India suffer from gynecological problems
- 300 women die every day due to childbirth and pregnancy related causes
- The maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births in the year 1995 was 440

According to Rameshwari Pandya (2008) Empowerment has become the ultimate solution to many social problems. Empowerment of women is empowerment of family and society and in long run it is also development of a nation. Empowerment of women leads to benefit not only to the individual woman and to a group women and also to the families and community as a whole.

In this contemporary world, women need to have the same amount of power that most men have. In India, women are still facing multiple obstacles in male-dominated cultures. These things are related to women status and their future. The worth of civilization can be arbitrated by the position a women carry in the society. In India women are still victim of abuse and violent crimes. The current status of women empowerment is going through a positive change. You can clearly notice an ever-increasing need of women workforce as they are considered as consistent workers. They are even paid equally for equal

work. In fact, women deliver the work more efficiently. The female literacy rate is also lower in compare to the male literacy rate. The ground reality is deprivation, degradation and exploitation of women especially in rural areas and those belonging to deprived sectors of the society.

1.5 Importance of women Empowerment:

There are Innumerable benefits of women empowerment. It improves the educational level of our country. Only if is equally implemented among the women of rural areas also. With the improvement of educational level literacy rate strengthen simultaneously. It creates an educational society as well as encourages employment rate. In this era 50% population of the country are women but their contribution at work places are 16-18 % only. Empowerment of women promotes the reduction of discrepancy and brings equality between the two genders and society. It has been found women can go far ahead of men in socio-economic activities. In reference to talent and skills a woman is equally talented as a man but owing to discrepancies they are allowed to explore their skills. Nowadays, due to encouraging the awareness of women empowerment, women are also becoming and proving themselves as a strong pillar of society. Therefore, it is beneficial for the globe. Empowerment of the women brings overall development in the society. The financial earning made by women not only encourages her and family but providing aid in changing the status of developing countries like India. As she become of all her rights, the crime against women in the society also reduces. It has also seen some time in family that a man is only bread earner and money earns by him is not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the family. In these cases also money or salary get by women gives a good support and satisfaction to the man as well as family tends to overcome from poverty. Finally women can become part of National Development.

1.6 Principles of Women Empowerment:

A set of principles has been provided by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) which can be act as guidelines for the agencies those are working in the sector. The interest of government has also been reflected to enhance the position of women. The efforts to evolve the standard of women by reducing the social intricacies also indicate towards the sense of urgency towards women empowerment.

The Women's Empowerment Principles in brief are:

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Principle

1. Establish high level corporate leadership for gender equality: It leads to orient gender sensitive policies vary from men and women which can include women at top management level. Leadership by women at high level reduces the gender differences and brings equality which brings respect for both the gender. Participation of women at top management work as an epitome for others and amplify the other women also that provide aid at individual, social and economic level of women.

2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non discrimination: This principle offers aid at work place to women. It includes flexible working options; share the responsibility of kids through establishing crèches. The principle also opens the door of equal opportunities to women at promotions and assuring at least 30 % of greater participation in the process of decision making at all the levels. This principle also includes equal pay and equal benefits to both men and women for equal work.

3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers: Under this principle consideration of physical difference of women have taken under care i.e. physical weakness of women and provide safe working conditions and offers insurance also. This principle provides zero tolerance policies against harassment, exploitation and all sort of violence at work place. Various sorts of securities including travelling from work to home and training to identify the indicators of violence is introduced under this principle.

4. Education, training and professional development for women: This principle support educational programs that includes different work related trainings, literacy classes, IT trainings and vocational training which can help women to be financially independent and explore their knowledge. Formal and informal mentoring equality also brought under this principle. In short, this principle leads towards all sort of required education that can beef up the position of women in society.

5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women: Training and other related aid to develop small scale business have been introduced under this principle. Orientation of training programs which expand the knowledge of marketing under which women can extend their business and establishing entrepreneurship. Easy credit policies for women and

respect of the dignity of women and their business policies have been taken into consideration in this principle.

6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy: Philanthropical programs either alone or in partnership with multiple communities brings under this policy. In order to motivate the equality through recognizing women leadership introduced under this principle.

7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality: Transparency regarding the equality policies which promote gender equality with the public brought under this principle. It also leads towards establish benchmark by introducing women at all level before public. Reports and measures over the progress at external and internal level using statistics incorporate in it.

1.7 Tools of Empowerment:

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. Some of the tools which will help in empowerment are below mentioned:

1.7.1 Education: There are different perceptions towards education. Its definition also varies from person to person. In this study the word education means knowledge, learning or what one has learnt which expand his/ her awareness and change perception toward oneself, family and society. Women can have knowledge in various ways. Yes, academic skills are necessary and have their importance in its own ways. But a person cannot learn without academic skills it is not mandatory. Again in this research, educations can either academic skills, learning through experience or guidance. With the help of this learning women's dependency on others might get reduce or they can be self dependent. Learning makes them more confident which is

followed by clear awareness or clarity in perception, further followed by better decision making in their day to day matters whether economic, social, political matters or general awareness. Women should have confidence, clarity and awareness in order to know their worth to make their life better which develops their families too. Government is also doing campaigning through “ Padhega India to Badhega India” and “Skill India” which shows that education and vocational trainings are significant tool . No matter women are literate or not still they can be educated in different ways. Training is an important tactic to educate both literates and illiterates. It is a useful weapon to make women skilled and financially independent. Training brings development. In this research training means any organized vocational training programs either by local government bodies or NGOS/ SHGs.

Education plays a significant role in Women's Economic Empowerment. It actually takes the center stage, but for long, most women especially in the rural areas have been denied this right and have been subjected to very degrading practices and responsibilities. Education empowers girls to achieve more in their social, career, economic and family lives. To women education can mean going to class or being trained on capacity building and skills development or better yet being mentored on very essential of development. Education is a very broad concept - school curriculum, life skills training, special courses, adult education etc. Education helps a woman to be more self confident and take decisions for family and self. Education makes women aware of people and places outside our community also broaden her thinking and perceptions and exposes her to a world which might be different from hers. Education also gives her an opportunity to explore employment opportunities or become self employed and also plan a better future for her kids.

Hence to think harmonious development without educating women is impossible. Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power.” Education is the most powerful tool of change of

position of women in society. Education is the basic tool which leads to the reduction in inequalities and it functions as a means of improving their status within the family and society.

Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of empowerment as it enables women to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The growth level of women education in rural areas is currently very slow. This obviously means that large numbers of women in our country are still illiterate, weak, backward and exploited.

Despite various efforts made in the direction to improve educational status of female literacy rates, a major gap still exists between boys and girls in the area of enrolment, retention and academic achievement levels. The low literacy rate of women and their low participation in school create a need for reinforcement of better strategies to promote girls' education. At the same time it is need of the hour for more specific and focused strategies to be implemented so as to increase girls' participation in education.

“Equalization of educational opportunity recognizes that "Education of women should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice but also to accelerates social transformation and overall development of the country”

The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. The present study explores the role of education in women empowerment and the status of women education in rural India. In this study, how important education is for women empowerment has been felt, when it is not there!! It has been found that the women should continue education and career by strategizing and acknowledging the support of their family members.

Murtaza (2012) examined the current status of women in higher education in Gilgit Baltistan. Education among women is the most powerful tool of attaining power in the society. It helps in reducing inequalities and functions as a means for improving their status within the family. As we all know that education is must for everyone but unfortunately, in this male dominating society, the education of women has been neglected for a long time. Empowering women is an important end in itself and as women acquire the same status, opportunities and social, economic and legal rights as men, as they acquire the right to health and gender based violence, human well-being will be enhanced. The present study explores the role of education in women empowerment and the status of women education in India. It shows that the education is most important part in the life of every woman.

1.7.2 Training: Training for gender equality and women's empowerment is an essential component for Women's commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

Training for gender equality is a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviors. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create inclusive societies that recognize the need to promote gender equality.

Training is a tool, strategy, and means to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality by raising awareness and encouraging learning, knowledge-building and skills development. It helps women and men to understand the role gender plays and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for advancing gender equality in their daily lives and work. Training for gender equality is part and parcel of delivering our commitments to equal human rights for all.

Skills development is a key to improving rural productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities, enhancing food security and promoting environmentally sustainable rural development

and livelihoods. Despite rural women's major role in agriculture and other rural activities, higher barriers in education and training limit their participation in more productive and remunerative work, perform managerial and leadership roles and participate fully in the development of their communities. Targeted action is needed to dismantle these barriers. Despite significant problems in a male dominated society, Indian women have found their way out for growth and empowerment through various self-help groups, NGOs, banks, government assistance, and micro finance institutions. In the coming years the role of women will be of immense importance for competing with the developed world as they are man power source as well as diverse consumer group. It serves the cause of education for women indirectly by changing attitudes, challenging social stereotypes, and redefining women's role providing the way to empower the women through education. Need of the hour is many more such organizations along with the government's involvement in promoting Vocational Education and Training for the rural women.(Anuradha & Reddy, 2013)

1.7.3 Legal Provisions & Women Rights in India:

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Following are constitutional privileges which are guaranteed to women in India for their empowerment.

1.7.3.1. Constitutional Provisions

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Constitution guarantees to women the fundamental right to

equality and is firmly grounded in the principles of fraternity, liberty, equality and justice, and accordingly it contains number of provisions for the empowerment of women. It not only grants equality to women but also empowers them. The Constitution has specified many provisions some are mentioned below.

Article 14: It gives assurance for Equality before law for women. No law is discriminatory under this article.

Article 15 (i): Under this article the State does not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Article 15 (3): The State under this article makes any special provision in favor of women and children.

Article 16: This ensures Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 39 (a): The State has to direct its policy towards securing for men and Women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood under this article.

Article 39 (d): Under this article the State is obliged to pay equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

1.7.3.2. Legislative Provisions

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 to working women. Following is the list of crimes mentioned in Indian Penal code as well in special acts against women. Although women may be victims of any of the crimes such as robbery, murder, cheating etc. the crimes which took place especially against women, is characterized as “Crime against Women”. These are broadly divided under two categories.

The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)

- Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)

- Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes (Sec. 363-373)
- Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
- Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
- Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
- Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
- Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age)

The Crimes identified under the Special Laws

- The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
- The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
- The Family Courts Act, 1954
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
- The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

1.7.3.3. Various Laws to Protect Women's Rights in India

Parliament of India, including state legislatures have taken several initiatives and launched various schemes for promotion of Women's Rights in India. These laws inter alia include Special Marriage Act-1954, Hindu Marriage Act-

1955, Hindu Succession Act-1956, Dowry Prohibition Act
1961, Indian Penal Code 1860, Criminal Procedure Code 1973
Amended in 2005, The Domestic Violence Act, 2005 etc

Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856: The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, enacted in July 1856, legalized the remarriage of Hindu widows in all jurisdictions of India under East India Company rule. Marriage of a widow was prohibited among certain sects of Hindus and life of a widow was in miserable state. In order to safeguard their status, "The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856" was passed to legalize the marriage of Hindu Widows in certain cases.

Indian Penal Code, 1860: Various sections have been incorporated in Indian Penal Code with a view to prevent and curb evils like cruelty against women, dowry death, sexual harassment etc.

The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872: This Act deals with the law relating to the solemnization in India of the Marriages of persons professing the Christian religion.

The Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939: This Act deals with the suits of dissolution of marriage by women married under Muslim Law.

Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (later Amended in 2005): According to latest amendment, daughters have equal share, rights and liabilities in the partition of family property and guardianship in a Hindu family.

Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956: This act aims to deal with the problem of prostitution and to promote the welfare of fallen woman

Hindu Marriage Act, 1956: This act has recognized the equal rights of man and woman in the matters of marriage and divorce.

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961: This Act provides for maternity benefits to women.

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: The main objective of this Act is to abolish giving and taking of dowry at the time of marriage.

Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (Amended in 2005): This Act deals with provisions like arrest of women by female police, search and seizure of goods and maintenance etc. No women should be arrested

before sunrise and after sunset. Whenever, it is necessary to cause a female to be searched, the search shall be made by another female with strict regard to decency. The husband of the wife should give maintenance to his wife, children and parents.

The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978: This act has altered the marriageable age of bridegroom to 21 years and bride to 18 years.

Family Court Act, 1984 : According to this Act, the state government after consultation with High Court shall establish for every area in the state comprising a city or town whose population exceeds one million a family court, and may establish family court for such other areas in the state as it may deem necessary.

Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986: “Indecent representation of women” means the depiction in any, in manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have effect of being indecent, or derogatory to or denigrating, women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals; This Act aims to deal with the prohibition of indecent representation of women. s

Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987: This Act has declared the custom of Sati as illegal in our country.

Legal Service Authorities Act, 1987: It has provision for free legal aid to women

Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994 (Amendment Act, 2002): This Act seeks to prohibit pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of sex of the foetus leading to female foeticide.

Domestic Violence Act, (Prevention) 2005: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 is enacted to protect women from domestic violence. It provides for the first time in Indian law a definition of "domestic violence", with this definition being broad and including not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse.

Domestic violence is defined by Section 3 of the Act as ‘‘any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it:

1. Harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or
2. Harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or
3. Has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or
4. Otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.’’

The Act goes on, through the section Explanation 1, to define "physical abuse", "sexual abuse", "verbal and emotional abuse" and "economic abuse".

1.7.3.4. Abuse of Women’s Rights

Women’s rights means to promote a position of legal and social equality of women with men. Women constituting nearly 50 percentage of the population are regularly subjected to torture, starvation, terrorism, humiliation, mutilation and even murder. One of the biggest human rights abuses was accepted and kept quiet: ‘‘violence against women.’’

Violence against Women is a Violation of Human Rights Violence against Women is a Violation of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of women. Violence against women is an obstacle towards gender equality.

Women are entitled to equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms that include among others:

- The right to life;
- The right to equality;
- The right to liberty and security of person;

- The right to equal protection under the law;
- The right to be free from all forms of discrimination;
- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- The right to just and favorable conditions of work;
- The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Women's human rights are violated in a variety of ways. Of course, women sometimes suffer abuses such as political repression that are similar to abuses suffered by male counterpart. In such situations females victims are not much visible because the dominant image of the political actors in today world are male. However, in many violations of human rights the victims are women. Violence is in many cases behavior learned within families, from relationships with other people, at school, and from media. Decrease of violence in society is a long term aim, achievable through individual daily efforts for non-violent behavior and peaceful resolving of conflicts, and by sharing necessary and appropriate knowledge with the community. That way one can stop harmful (abusive) patterns of behaviour being handed down from generation to generation.

It should be assured for girls and boys to receive upbringing and education which neither encourage traditional society and cultural patterns about the role of girls and boys, nor foster prejudice or stereotypes about each gender.

It is important to strive towards creation of social climate with no tolerance for violence against women or any other form of violence. The conviction that violence against women is not acceptable should become generally accepted norm.

It is necessary to provide women with effective protection from violence, and to give clear message to perpetrators of violence that they will be punished according to the law for causing violence.

1.7.3.5. Women and Violation of their Human Rights:

Violence against women across class, culture and regional differences. Violence against women not only takes a direct physical form, but it also happens psychologically and includes the deprivation of their basic needs. Physical, sexual and psychological violence strikes women in epidemic proportions worldwide. It crosses every social and economic class, every religion, race and ethnicity. From domestic abuse to rape as a weapon of war, violence against women is a gross violation of their human rights. Not only does it threaten women's health and their social and economic well-being, violence also thwarts global efforts to reduce poverty. Violence is, however, preventable. Although no silver bullet will eliminate it, a combination of efforts that address income, education, health, laws and infrastructure can significantly reduce violence and its tragic consequences. First and foremost, abusive behavior towards women must be viewed as unacceptable. Communities need to have an important role in defining solutions to violence and providing support to victims. And men must be engaged in the process too, as agents of change standing alongside women to end violence. Dowry deaths are the culminating point of violence. Thousands of girls are being badly treated by their spouses and in laws. In the process, they immolate themselves at the altar of this evil every year. Despite anti-dowry measures, the government has not been able to curb this violence against women. Discrimination in the choice of boy child resulting in female infanticide accounts for nearly 3 million deaths in the country. (Khullar: 2004). These expressions of violence take place in a man -woman relationship within the family, state and society. Usually domestic aggression towards women and girls, due to various reasons remain hidden. Violence affects the lives of millions of women world-wide in all socio-economic and educational classes. There are many kinds of violence which vitiate the rights of women are discussed below:

Domestic Violence:

In our society, violence is bursting. It is present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another. This form of domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. Though women today have proved themselves in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against them are much larger in number than against men. The possible reasons are many and are diversified over the length and breadth of the country. According to United Nation Population Fund Report, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 per cent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. In India, more than 55 percent of the women suffer from domestic violence, especially in the states of Bihar, U.P., M.P. and other northern states.

The most common causes for women stalking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of it, arguing with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children, going out of home without telling the partner, not cooking properly or on time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in-laws etc. In some cases infertility in females also leads to their assault by the family members. The greed for dowry, desire for a male child and alcoholism of the spouse are major factors of domestic violence against women in rural areas. There have been gruesome reports of young bride being burnt alive or subjected to continuous harassment for not bringing home the amount of demanded dowry. Women in India also admit to hitting or beating because of their suspicion about the husband's sexual involvement with other women.

(As expressed by **Rebecca J. Burns**) in the following lines, “When I am asked why a woman doesn’t leave abuser I say: Women stay because the fear of leaving is greater than the fear of staying. They will leave when the fear of staying is greater than the fear of leaving.” A common Indian house wife has a tendency to bear the harassment she is subjected to by her husband and the family. One reason could be to prevent the children from undergoing the hardships if she separates from the spouse. Also the traditional and orthodox mindset makes them bear the sufferings without any protest.

Dowry Harassment and Bride Burning:

Dowry is a transfer of property from the bride’s family to that of the bridegroom, at the time of marriage. (Negi:1997: 14). ‘In 1995, Time Magazine reported that dowry murders in India increased from around 400 a year in the early 1980s to around 5,800 a year by the middle of the 1990s. A year later CNN ran a story saying that every year police receive more than 2,500 reports of bride burning. The Indian National Crime Records Bureau reports that there were about 8172 dowry death cases registered in India in 2008.’ According to the present practice, dowry usually subsumes material gifts and cash paid to the bridegroom and his kin. This practice continues even after marriage (Paul: 1993). This process leads to a crime that is prevalent only in India, where greedy husbands and his relatives harass the newlywed bride for getting more dowries, and often kill her in the process and most of the time she is burnt alive. This horror is therefore called bride-burning. Bride burning is linked to the custom of dowry, the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings to her husband in marriage. Thousands of young married women in India are routinely tortured and murdered by husband and in-laws who want more dowries from the bride’s parents. After burning the bride to death, the husband is free to remarry and get new dowry again from new bride. In India, in every one hour and 40 minutes a woman is killed by husband or in-laws who are consumed by greed. More than 5000 women get killed for dowry each year. ‘In 2004,

Amnesty International said, 'at least 15000 women are murdered in dowry related cases each year in India.' Some women's organizations in India said, 'the number is much higher'.

Dowry Prohibition Act in India bans paying and receiving dowries but the tradition continues to exist. As long as patriarchy and misogyny exist, women will continue to pay dowry and will continue to be harassed, humiliated, oppressed, suppressed, beaten, and threatened. They will continue to be burned to death by beloved husband if they are unable to give them more money, more gold, all house furniture, a house, a car, a motorcycle, AC, a branded wrist watch, a set of clothes, anything expensive.

Sexual Harassment at work:

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual behavior, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person's sex. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

According to Mac Kinnos (1979) sexual harassment at work is primarily a problem faced by women that men rarely face. Therefore it should be considered a form of sex discrimination. (Sikhri: 1999: 128). The Indian Penal Code 1860 defined sexual harassment as: "Such unwelcome sexually determined behavior (whether directly or by implication) as physical contact and advances. In cases where the accused sexually harasses or insults the modesty of a woman by way of either- obscene acts or songs or- by means of words, gesture, or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman, he shall be punished under Sections.294 and 509 respectively.

Under Sec.294, the obscene act or song must cause annoyance. Though annoyance is an important ingredient of this offence, it being associated with the mental condition, has often to be inferred from

proved facts. However, another important ingredient of this offence is that the obscene acts or songs must be committed or sung in or near any public place.

Section.509 of IPC, comes into effect when there is an intention to insult the modesty of any woman by the offender by uttering any word, making any sound or gesture or by exhibiting any object, with the intention that such word or such sound be heard, or that such gesture or object be seen by such a woman, or by intruding upon the privacy of such a woman.

Eve Teasing:

We know, the term ‘eve teasing’ is an Indian origin. The term itself has some demerits. Eve represents temptress and the term actually signifies that eves (women) tempt or provoke males for vulgar comments and behaviors. Ironically, that also means women cause the problem and are also a victim to it. But that is almost like blaming the victims for their sufferings. It also depicts an element of male chauvinism prevalent in India.

Eve teasing is a huge issue in India. A large number of Indian women have faced or are facing this menace. Whether it is a public transport system or public places or shopping malls women find themselves vulnerable to the threat of eve teasing everywhere. Eve teasing is complex problem and it requires more attention that what it has actually got. The harsh reality in India, it is going on in most of its towns and cities with more and more women going out for education and work independently, this problem grew to an alarming proportion. It has become an inseparable part of a girl’s life, causing her irreparable mental agony. Cheap gestures, hurling lewd comments, a seemingly casual touch, bumping in or staring, humming a song or even a sly whistle are all instances of eve teasing. The ways a woman can be abused are endless; and if unchecked could lead to public humiliation in broad daylight. This happens at auto/bus terminals, theatres, restaurants, parks and at an alarming rate on the roads. The most

disgusting fact is that even small children aren't spared by these eve teasers because of their high vulnerability.

Rape and Sexual Violence:

The term "sexual violence" refers to a specific constellation of crimes including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. The perpetrator may be a stranger, acquaintance, friend, family member, or intimate partner. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers agree that all forms of sexual violence harm the individual, the family unit, and society and that much work remains to be done to enhance the criminal justice response to these crimes. Rape definitions vary by state and in response to legislative advocacy. Most statutes currently define rape as nonconsensual oral, anal, or vaginal penetration of the victim by body parts or objects using force, threats of bodily harm, or by taking advantage of a victim who is incapacitated or otherwise incapable of giving consent. Incapacitation may include mental or cognitive disability, self-induced or forced intoxication, status as minor, or any other condition defined by law that voids an individual's ability to give consent. Rape is a weapon that distorts a woman's sexuality, restricts her freedom of movement and violates her human rights. It leaves a woman feeling exposed, humiliated and traumatized. A rapist not only violates the victim's privacy and personal integrity, but also causes serious physical and psychological damage.

Rape under Sec.376 of IPC is considered crime where, whoever commits rape shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 7 years and which may be for life.

But when we look into the statistical data conviction in rape against Women as per National Crime Records Bureau on the rate of cases in each state around the country the situation is not good at all. Some 15,423 rape cases were decided countrywide in 2011 of the total number of cases that made to court, the overall rate of convictions stand at 26.4%, or 4,072 convictions while 11,351 acquittals were recorded. These included cases pending from previous years as well.

In 2010, 14,263 cases of rape were decided, with the accused being convicted in 3,788 cases, or 26.6%. If we look into the matter properly we need enforce the existing law effectively to tackle rape crime in India.

Reproductive Rights:

Reproductive rights were clarified and endorsed internationally in the Cairo Consensus that emerged from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. This constellation of rights, embracing fundamental human rights established by earlier treaties, was reaffirmed at the Beijing Conference and various international and regional agreements since, as well as in many national laws. They include the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of children, the right to voluntarily marry and establish a family, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health, among others.

Out Line - Reproductive Rights

Attaining the goals of sustainable, equitable development requires that individuals are able to exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives. This includes the rights to:

- Reproductive health as a component of overall health, throughout the life cycle, for both men and women
- Reproductive decision-making, including voluntary choice in marriage, family formation and determination of the number, timing and spacing of one's children and the right to have access to the information and means needed to exercise voluntary choice
- Equality and equity for men and women, to enable individuals to make free and informed choices in all spheres of life, free from discrimination based on gender
- Sexual and reproductive security, including freedom from sexual violence and coercion, and the right to privacy.

Reproductive rights and international development goals

The importance of reproductive rights in terms of meeting international development goals has increasingly been recognized by the international community. In the September 2005 World Summit, the goal of universal access to reproductive health was endorsed at the highest level. Reproductive rights are recognized as valuable ends in themselves, and essential to the enjoyment of other fundamental rights. Special emphasis has been given to the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls, and to the importance of sex education and reproductive health programs.

Abortion:

Abortion is the ending of pregnancy by removing a fetus or embryo from the womb before it can survive on its own. Women's access to have safe and legal abortions is restricted in law and in practice in most countries in the world. Even Countries where abortion is permitted by law, women only have limited access to safe abortion services. Only a small number of countries prohibit abortion in all cases.

Abortion in India is legal only up to twenty weeks of pregnancy under specific conditions and situations which are broadly defined as:

- the continuance of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman or of grave injury of physical or mental health, or
- There is a substantial risk that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

An adult woman requires no other person's consent except her own. In many parts of India, daughters are not preferred and hence sex-selective abortion is commonly practiced, resulting in an unnatural male to female population sex ratio due to millions of developing girls selectively being targeted for termination before birth.

In most countries and jurisdictions abortion is allowed to save the pregnant woman's life, or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. Some internationally famous Human Rights Groups, such as Human Rights Watch, consider abortion will be permitted within the context of human rights in exceptional circumstances. However safe abortion services are first and foremost a human right. Approximately 13 percentages of maternal deaths worldwide are attributable to unsafe abortion which leads to about 68,000 and 78,000 deaths annually. .

Custodial Violence against Women:

Violence against women by the people who are supposed to protect them (State-owned institutions typically include police, military, prisons and jails, but can also include nursing homes, hospitals, and institutions for the mentally ill) is widespread. Although torture is employed against both men and women, some forms of custodial violence and torture are clearly gender-specific. Violence perpetrated by the state against women is, in many cases, indistinguishable from that which is perpetrated by the state against men, states often use gender-specific forms of violence, most notably rape and other forms of sexual violence, to persecute women. Women are physically or verbally abused and molested. They also suffer sexual abuse and physical torture. According to Amnesty International, thousands of women held in custody are routinely raped in police detention centers worldwide. The report of the Amnesty International underlines the necessity for states to prosecute those accused of abusing women in detention and to hold them accountable for their actions. The most particularized element in custodial violence against women is the secularization of torture. Although the sexual anatomy of men as well as women is targeted in the physical stages of torture, rape and the threat of rape, as well as other forms of sexual violence such as sexual harassment, forced impregnation, virginity testing, forced abortion, forced prostitution and forced miscarriage, are perpetrated more consistently against women detainees.

1.7.4. Government Five Year Plans:

S.NO	Five Year Plans	Inspection on Women
1.	First Five Year Plan (1951-1956)	Visualized a number of welfare measures for women. Sets up the central and social welfare board for promoting welfare work.
2.	Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961)	Supported the development of women to work at the grass roots.
3.	Third & Fourth Five year Plan. (1961-1966) (1969-1974)	Supported female education as a major welfare measures.
4.	Fifth Five Year Plan (1974- 1979)	Emphasized training of women
5.	Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985)	Recognized women's lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their growth
6.	Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990)	Emphasized the need for gender equality.
7.	Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997)	Focused on empowering women, especially at the grass roots level.
8.	Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	Adopted a strategy of women's component plan
9.	Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)	Aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women
10.	Eleventh Five Year Plan(2007-2012)	Encourage Women in Setting up their own ventures
11.	Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017)	Women integrated in each sector of 12 th five year plan

1.7.5. Role of SHGs:

Self-help groups are generally facilitated by NGOs, and increasingly advise and train members in a variety of on- and off-farm income-generating activities. Indeed, in a number of recent projects, NGOs were substituted by trained facilitators and animators drawn from self-help groups. Through promoting self-help group.

In the Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project, for example, 90 per cent of the beneficiaries reported increased access to and control over resources such as land, dwellings and livestock. Under the Livelihoods Improvement Project in Himalayas, women self-help group members in Uttarakhand were even elected as gram pradhans (heads of the local governments at the village or small town level) in 170 out of 669 panchayats in villages. In those operations, the country program evaluation also found unequivocal advances in the self-confidence and assertiveness of self-help group members.

A self-help group is a village-based financial intermediary group usually composed of 10–20 local women or men. A mixed group is generally not preferred. Most self-help groups are located in India, The SHG offers the platform to conduct social intermediation, provide women the opportunity to acquire the ability and entitlement to their own lives, set their own agenda, gain skills, solve problems and develop autonomy (Meenai, 2003). It typically comprises a group of micro entrepreneurs having homogeneous social and economic backgrounds; all voluntarily coming together to save regular small sums of money, mutually agreeing to contribute to a common fund and to meet their emergency needs on the basis of mutual help. These groups assist in rural area people in their financial needs to ensures that unemployed people get the better opportunity and could start to earn their livelihoods by themselves. Highlights of SHG are below mentioned:

- From one family, only one member (More families canjoin SHGs this way)
- The group consists of either only men or of only women

- (Mixed groups are generally not preferred) Women's groups are generally found to perform better.
- Members have the same social and financial background
- Compulsory attendance

Self-help groups are started by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that generally have broad anti-poverty goals. Self-help groups are seen as instruments for empowering women, developing leadership abilities, increasing school enrollments, and improving nutrition and the use of birth control. Financial intermediation is generally seen more as an entry point to these goals, rather than as a primary objective. SHGs enhance the equality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. (Ritu Jain 2003).

Challenges

Apart from weak market linkages in the context of income-generating activities, there are also a few other concerns in relation to women's empowerment. First is the capacity building of self-help groups, which are in need of support in accounting, financial management, and organizational development. The second concern is about the gender focus in rural financial services. Despite the focus in project design, there were gaps during implementation. In Maharashtra Rural Credit Project, women tended to be small borrowers and were able to capture only 32 per cent of the bank credit that was provided. Therefore gender focus in designing and implementing rural microfinance services should be enhanced. The third challenge is about how to link self-help groups to agricultural activities, which are of key importance for the livelihoods of small farm holders in India, but at the moment self-help groups have not taken much agricultural activities, as the decisions on agriculture are mainly taken by men.

1.7.6. Role of NGOs :

Though India's women have made rapid strides in every walk of life and done their country proud, yet very often incidents of atrocities committed on them are reported by the media. There are many women

who at some time in their life have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse. A large number of non-government organizations, besides the efforts put in by the government have come forward to help the battered and disadvantaged women.

Women Empowerment is a universal theme and yet it is much needed in India. The new India and the old India is still divided in its thoughts. However, the fight for equality starts with the right kind of support and education. A lot of NGOs are working towards empowerment of women in India. A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Many NGOs have oriented their projects of social and economic empowerment towards low-skilled women belonging to disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This group tends to have low access to waged and formal sector of employment. Main interventions are to focus on advancing their technical and vocational skills and insertion in waged and self employment. Activities typically included a limited set of vocations such as Sewing, Tailoring, handicrafts and agro-food production. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs are performing a variety of service and humanitarian activities which bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some NGOs are focused to a particular specific issue, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Women Empowerment has always been the key agenda for both government and NGO's. Voluntary action promoted by voluntary agencies engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level for the success of rural development which is dependent upon the active participation of the people through Non-Government Organizations (NGO). The various roles of NGOs are described below for better understanding:-

- Education of the Rural Women

- Supplementation of Government Efforts
- Efforts Organizing the Rural Women
- Building various Model and Experiment
- Ensure Women's Participation in their empowerment
- to Mobilizing the optimum Resources
- Promoting Rural Leadership
- Representing the Rural Women
- Promoting Technology in Rural areas
- Activating the Rural Delivery System
- Providing effective & efficient Training to Rural Women.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Impact assessment
- Planning and Implementation

As indicated earlier, the main model of intervention for the majority of Indian NGOs working for women on issues of gender and poverty is the self-help group. It is a form of savings based microfinance, which is essentially a mutual-based model aimed primarily at women, and is now the preferred model for government, NGOs and multilateral agencies for community intervention in India. In 2006 there were over two million SHGs across India, with 33 million members and delivering services to well over 100 million people (Isern et al. 2007). The basis of the SHG is that 10 to 20 women come together to form a thrift and credit group: each member puts a small amount of money each week into a common fund, and after a period of six to twelve months, small loans from the fund are then made to selected members, based on their savings level and a needs assessment. This fund is often supplemented on a matching basis from additional resources from an NGO, either as a loan or grant, or by loans from commercial or state financial institutions facilitated by the NGO.

While the Indian state has effectively kept NGOs out of many of the broader political debates, at the local level there are greater opportunities for NGOs to use modes of intervention that enable both service delivery and empowerment, largely free of state scrutiny. As a

consequence of the pressures placed on NGOs by the State through the 1980s, NGOs are now reluctant to act as spokespeople for the poor, but act more as mediators or facilitators to enable the poor and marginalized to speak for themselves. This has its advantages, as NGOs are generally not good in the role of spokesperson: they can exacerbate, rather than help overcome, the exclusion of the poor from the political processes. They can foster a level of dependency of the poor on NGOs to carry out the role of speaking for the community, rather than the more empowering role of facilitating the community to speak for itself (Kothari 1987; Robinson 1995).

1.8. Research scope and Limitation:

Scope of Research: The scope of Research is to glean the data on the status of women in the study area. Here the level of awareness is being checked with respect to four parameters. The parameters are political, social, economical and general awareness. In this research, academic education and training organized by NGOs/ SHGs has been considered as instrument to encourage the awareness of women. Hence, the data has been mustered over the level of education as well as training conducted in the targeted area by NGOs/SHGs in order to evaluate the position of awareness owing to these instruments.

As it was not possible to gather entire data on the subject and turned everything inside out. The study has been limited to the females under 5 gram panchayats (Dhabla, Hirapur, Amajhir, Thuna kalan and Jamonia kalan) Of Sehore district in Madhya Pradesh within four mentioned parameters.

Limitations of study: Observing the physical constrains the research is limited to the female of different age group among five gram panachayats(Dhabla, Hirapur, Amajhir, Thuna Kalan and Jamonia kalan) of Sehore District in Madhya Pradesh followed by 30 specific Questions on four dimensions . The dimensions restricted to economic, social, political and general awareness. The Questionnaire has been considered as a limited tool to survey. The outcome of survey is

revolving around the base levels of awareness among women in the study area.

1.9. Research Objective and Hypothesis:

The topic of women empowerment and its impact on women hood is a widely research area. The extensive survey of literature in this domain suggests that women empowerment could play an important role in the growth of the area specific. These researches will an attempt to investigate the relationship between Education and Women Empowerment in the context of women growth with special reference to five villages of Sehore district.

This research work aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To find out the low income self-dependent women in the area with different age groups i.e.20-25 year, 35-40 year, 50-55 year of ages.
- To educate girls between age of 15-20 years regarding their rights i.e. rights against domestic violence, wage equality, gender equality
- To find out the social and economic development through women empowerment in the area

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Study has been further restricted to the specific and exact objectives which can directly associated with worthwhile research. The chief objective of current study is to probe the connection between the empowerment of women and training provided by NGOs/ SHGs as well as the status of current academic education in the study area. The primary objectives are:

1. To study the various methods and techniques used for women empowerment among different age group in the study area.
2. To study the perception among women regarding socio-economic, political empowerment as well as general awareness in the study area.
3. To study the status of recent education and the role of vocational training programs on women empowerment in the study area.
4. To identify the difference in the perception towards empowerment among the females of study area.

HYPOTHESIS: The General hypothesis specifies the contribution of education and training in the development or in the empowerment of

women in the study area. Specific following Hypothesis has been made on the considerable observations:

H₀ There is no significant level of difference among the perception of women towards empowerment level in the study area.

H₁ There is significant difference among the perception of the women towards empowerment level in the study area.

H₁ Training through NGOs and SHGs has a significance bearing on women empowerment.

1.10. Research Methodology:

Survey Research Method has been adopted in order to carry out this research. The selected and approachable population was females of different age group among 5 selected gram panchayats of district Sehore in Madhya Pradesh. Where, population has been assessed through Questionnaire/Scheduled survey on the basis of four dimensions. These four parameters are economic, political, social and general awareness. The mentioned parameters are being considered as *sin quo none* to elevate their standards. Hence, necessary to check the status.

1.11. Research Population: District Sehore has been chosen due to a few conditions. Firstly, it is considered as rich and established due to its high production of wheat and soyabean. Secondly, it was deep desire to check the status of women's perception towards empowerment in rural area. Thirdly, in order to survey any village the permission of local government bodies is needed and sehore district is under proximity. Hence Sehore District was fulfilling all the required conditions it has been chosen as study area.

The collection of primary data has been gone through questionnaire/scheduled survey. For describing some other facts and figures secondary is also being gathered. In this research, questionnaires have been handed out to among 500 females of selected

gram panchayats named Dhabla, Hirapur, Thuna Kalan, Amajhir and Jamonia Kalan out of which 400 females have provided the required piece of information.

1.12. Research Instrument:

Personalized and refined questionnaire “survey schedule” has been handled as a research instrument which is being consisted of list of 30 questions out of which 8 items under economic parameter, next 8 items are under social parameters, 4 items assess political parameter and last 10 items to consider general awareness.

1.13. Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument:

In order to check the reliability of data. Pilot study has been conducted on 200 females of Dhabla and Hirapur. After collection of data from the study area alpha value has been calculated to test the reliability. The coefficient alpha come out to be .869, indicating that the scale is reliable for carrying out of analysis of the subject matter covered in the study. Further analysis is being carried out with the help of Descriptive statistics.

1.14 Data Analysis & Interpretation:

Analysis of data has been done after has being gone through SPSS by utilizing the descriptive statistics. In this descriptive analysis, frequencies, mean percentage and standard deviation have been included. But t-test goes under inferential analysis.

Interpretation of the study has been made on the basis of the calculations of frequency and graphical method of data. For signifying the differential in two independent samples, t-test has been used. Factor analysis also has been carried out to identify the components explaining the phenomena covered in the study.

1.15 Conclusion:

Compact knowledge of subject matter of study provides under this chapter. Women empowerment term comes with empower which means to give power or authority and to enable them to beef up their power and position. Practically however, the process of challenging against existing discrimination and gaining control over resources and power by the underprivileged is empowerment. In the rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, 50 percent of population of the state make by women in significant manner. Yet, they are going through various kinds of deprivations in spite of their contribution in the society. To sketch the umbrella of circumstances of females in M.P an array of social temporal and spatial behavior of social indicators is used to bring in the cultural, social, political environmental and developmental context of the region.