Chapter 9

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION
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9.1 Summary and Findings

Women upliftment is a dynamic process without a uniform definition. It is not something that can be transferred from one segment of society to another. It needs to be acquired, and once acquired, must be exercised and sustained.

On the basis of survey and interview through questionnaire and schedule various facts have been found which are based on some scientific exploration and analysis. Women are in fact very enthusiastic towards doing their jobs and businesses even. They are very curious with passion to do something in the society. They wish to do something for their family and do not wish to remain dependant regarding any aspects over their family members. They wish to stand parallel to their husband and participate in every decision making related to their children education and some other decisions.

Despite the many programs and policies designed by government to encourage women’s upliftment in India, women still face severe problems as reflected in a broad range of development indicators. Women score low on education, income, health status, etc. Government efforts to promote empowerment need to be continued and strengthened. There is no time for complacency.
After very rigorous research it was found that women upliftment is a very critical issue which is an urgent need to look upon with reference to various strategies. After making a critical analysis with various research tools and techniques various hidden aspects emerged which could be concluded as:

- HRD strategies are effective in upliftment of women employees in industrial and non industrial sector of Sultanpur district.
- In Sultanpur District HRD effort is not sufficient for increasing of the girl children in primary education.
- The fact that women have held the most senior positions in government, including that of Prime Minister and Chief Minister, has no direct impact on women in India apart from the realization that women can reach certain heights and do certain things.
- Studies of various female leaders in Sultanpur show that generally, they were not particularly gender-sensitive. They were more bound by political affiliations and party policies.
- Most women came to power in the PRIs (Panchayiti Raj Institutions) because of the reservation. In a few places in Sultanpur, however, a good number of women were personally motivated to fill the quotas as well.
- In the some of the areas of Sultanpur District, there is a lot of dependence on government with unemployment being a particular problem.
• Caste can obstruct in political performance, especially among women belonging to other backward castes (OBC) and scheduled castes (SC). Caste was often a facilitator for upper caste women and an obstruction for OBC and SC women.

• Most women surveyed were aware of new economic policies, but awareness of political developments was lower. This was particularly so in urban areas of District where education rates are high, but other adverse indicators such as female infanticide are also high.

• Just sensitizing women and building up their capacity through training was not enough to promote women upliftment in the district. The bureaucracy also needs to be sensitized.

• Most of the women in the study considered the state to be synonymous with government. Their aggregated vision of what the state should be was that of a gender-sensitive, secular, participatory, democratic body. They thought that it should be an efficient provider of services; work for the upliftment of weaker sections of the community; promote a society free from exploitation; and move to a system of governance that was ‘transformed and transformational’. The experience of the state is that of a large, complex, contradictory entity, unfriendly and even hostile at times.

• The study found that women were anxious to know about not just their rights, but about their responsibilities to the state and community as well. One may infer that when women feel they are decision-makers, both rights and duties are defined and a sense of responsibility grows. Women have to shoulder all kinds of responsibility from a very young age. When treated
with a welfare mentality and handouts, they are deprived of the right to decide their priorities.

- The study also revealed that there is an increase in the number of women professionals in industrial sector of the district and there is no increase in the number of women professionals in non industrial sector of the district.

- HRD programmes initiated by the government have made women self reliant in both industrial and non industrial sector of Sultanpur district.

- A major issue now confronting in the district surveyed is that of alcoholism. Corruption is also an issue to which women are not immune.

Main points emerging from group discussions on obstacles and factors mediating women's political participation:
A range of factors hinder women’s participation in politics including:

- Inexperience in politics and lack of exposure to it.
- Illiteracy.
- Family responsibilities and objections from family members.
- Restrictive social norms.
- Lack of an enabling environment for women.
- Lack of confidence interacting with the public.

However there are factors enabling such participation including:
• Capacity-building measures that are being undertaken &
• Support systems for women.

9.2 Suggestions

The challenge for the future is to merge qualitative and quantitative methods in order to get over their respective deficiencies: the problem of generalization with one approach contrasted to the predicament of capturing all the various aspects of upliftment especially the relational, perceptual and cognitive dimensions. It may also be required to carry out this appraisal over a large area and across different programs, in order to identify strategies to support women’s upliftment and transformation in gender relations. Another enduring challenge would be to build a comprehensive framework for measuring the multidimensional facets of empowerment that can be applied to get credible comparisons across different milieus, while at the same time being flexible enough to allow modifications in accordance with variations in culture and context.

Qualitative factors like social norms and perceptions have a decisive effect in influencing women programs. To improve women’s bargaining power would thus need strengthening both their economic situation, and changing gendered norms and perceptions. Altering public perceptions and awareness is certainly a key to providing supportive environments at the
community-level, so that collective pressure can be brought about to change male behavior. Critical linkages between the ability of women to resist violence and positive self-images supported by good health and access to empowering education clearly exist, and point to the direction that development policy and programs should ideally follow.

Thus on the basis of different findings of the research various suggestions could be categorised in three broad heads which would include all other relevant points, these are:

1. **State Initiatives in Gender Upliftment is the key**

'Empowerment' is the new buzzword in the development dialogue today. It appears to have supplanted 'emancipation' which used to be the most common objective of national and international policies, development programs and NGO activities. Empowerment is a dynamic process without a uniform definition. It has been variously described as economic independence, social transformation, a process, a means and an end. Empowerment is not something that can be transferred from one segment of society to another. It needs to be acquired and once acquired, must be preserved, exercised and sustained. Therefore, women themselves have to realize their ability to become empowered at all socio-economic and political levels. Laws, policies and technologies can only provide an environment to facilitate empowerment. Women’s upliftment is primarily a politico, socio-economic project. Women upliftment particularly emphasizes gender equality.
Since India's independence, the government has made various efforts to women upliftment including constitutional provisions, laws, designating years and decades to celebrate women's empowerment, as well as other programs by the central and state governments. Despite these efforts women still face severe development problems as reflected in UNDP's Human Development Reports.

Focusing on Uttar Pradesh, various human development indicators show that there has been some improvement in the lives of women over the last decade based on factors such as life expectancy, female infant mortality and literacy rates. However, women are still lagging behind men in Uttar Pradesh which is highly patriarchal in structure. This fosters the oppression of women in different ways. Development indicators for women in Uttar Pradesh are still considerably below those for men and behind many other states in India. While the female work participation is rising, it is low compared to male work participation. Despite all efforts, violence against women – including crimes such as dowry death, abduction and rape – are on the rise in Sultanpur District, Uttar Pradesh.

Areas in which government policies could be strengthened to foster the empowerment of women include the following:

- Education programs to improve knowledge about critical issues such as health, hygiene, sanitation, purity of drinking water, use of modern contraceptives and the legal age of marriage.
• Development of innovative and replicable health programs using the assistance of NGOs and the private sector
• Increased efforts to universalize primary education for girls and to retain girls in schools up to secondary level.
• More rigorous effort for formation of self-help groups (SHGs) for women.
• Enhancement of women’s income and earning opportunities through improved access to credit, training, technology, market support, etc.
• PRIs should be strengthened to focus on women and children.
• Policies and laws should be strengthened to deal with violence against women.

After having a discussion with through observation while researching about women upliftment, the following suggestions could be given:

• Gram sabhas should be made accountable, including accountability on women’s issues. Moreover, it is important to work out strategies to make gram sabhas more democratic and assertive in order to promote community priorities.

• Gram sabhas should be convened in reality, not on paper. To begin with, one can convene gram sabhas in wards and clusters of houses, etc. where some common issues could be discussed. Community agencies, such as NGOs, could sensitize citizens and gram panchayats in this regard.
2. Human Rights Education (HRE) is must

The importance of human rights education has been proclaimed in successive global and regional legal instruments since 1945, when the UN Charter called for cooperation “in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights (HR) and fundamental freedoms”. This made the state responsible for teaching its citizens about their human rights.

Initiatives in the field of HR and human rights education have grown with the proliferation of NGOs. NGOs are increasing their educational work both as a strategy to prevent HR violations and as a technique to empower people to address their own needs. Empowerment is the main goal of human rights education which is concerned with people learning their rights, and moving on to voice, protect and advance these rights. This leads to the issue of gender empowerment as the more marginalized the women, the greater risk they face in terms of human rights violations.

Human rights education is particularly important in rural areas of Sultanpur district as the majority of the rural population is ignorant about human rights and this ignorance itself constitutes a human rights violation. Human rights education is linked to gender upliftment because women’s rights are human rights and women experience more violations of their rights than men. Human rights education should result in systematic analysis and viable action. Human rights law also provides a framework from which a number of important principles can be extracted when promoting the
uplifting of women. These include respect for human
dignity; rule of law; right to freedom of thought and
expression, and right to take part in the government of his or
her country. Women need to be educated about their rights
and to use this information to help the advancement of other
women. Used in this way, human rights education is an
excellent tool for promoting gender upliftment.

3. Network as a support structure is essential for women
upliftment

- Some existing informal networks, like youth clubs and
  sports clubs, are often not used for networking. They should
  be tapped into and strengthened as they have the capability
to influence decision-making.

- These small networks should be linked with larger ones,
  where they could share their experiences and problems and
could utilize these networks in times of crisis. This might
open up space for furthering the issue of upliftment.

- Taking advice from others – be it a husband, brother or
  someone else with political experience - is not necessarily a
bad thing. Women may take such advice and still act
independently, i.e. consultation is not necessarily a sign of
dependency.

Thus:

- Women upliftment is a dynamic process without a
  uniform definition. It is not something that can be
transferred from one segment of society to another. It
needs to be acquired, and once acquired, must be exercised and sustained.

- Despite the many programs and policies designed by government to encourage women’s upliftment in India, women still face severe problems as reflected in a broad range of development indicators. Women score low on education, income, health status, etc. Government efforts to promote upliftment need to be continued and strengthened. There is no time for complacency.

- Human rights education is an important facet of women’s upliftment as human rights education is about people learning their rights, and moving on to voicing, protecting and advancing those rights. Human rights also provide a framework from which important principles can be extracted when promoting the upliftment of women.

- While women often have some networks in place to support them, including family and friends, alternative support structures and broader networking can facilitate women’s upliftment. Networking can play an important role in mobilization, training and capacity building. It can also help women to develop their confidence and bring them together across class and caste affiliations.

- Instead of viewing women elected representatives as mere ‘proxies’ for men, a more nuanced view is required that acknowledges that the entry of women into the political arena will inevitably transform politics in new ways. Women should be seen as capable and rational agents, not ignorant and dependent victims as assumed by the ‘proxy’ concept.
• The political participation of women in local government in India, even in its most modest form, has the ability to transform and re-interpret the practice of politics.

9.3 Conclusion of the Study

Women upliftment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one's without power gain greater control over their lives. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It involves power to, power with and power within. Some define women upliftment as a process of awareness and conscientization, of capacity building leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly it involves at the psychological level women's ability to assert themselves and this is constructed by the 'gender roles' assigned to her specially in a cultural which resists change like India.

Allocation for women directed scheme is pitiful. Only ten ministries/Departments have specially targeted schemes for women in India. The share of women specific programs in departments like education, agriculture, tribal affairs and social justice is also only around one percent. No proper administrative mechanism for execution and monitoring of expenditure is there in India and Sultanpur is not an exception. Shelter homes and counseling centers are still low on priority.
It is, however, necessary that even though schemes are relief oriented the process of accessing them has often been an individual and collected struggle which has sometimes led to empowerment and at others disheartening. PACS strategy of collective pressure to access public resources for women has largely been empowering though anecdotal.

There are several critical issues to ensure a just an equitable state with reference to gender. Some issues are not addressable due to procedural limitations of data collection which makes specific recommendations difficult. There is need to develop a workable gender audit system for govt. & CSO programs which would look at targets, training recruitments promotion, infrastructure and decision making opportunities. The verbal change from women welfare to women rights needs to be converted into reality. This has some direct fall outs.

Pitiful allotment for Vriddha and Vidva Pension and minimum wages will have to be reconsidered in terms of living wages, recent work and human right to opportunities for highest form of physical and mental health.

Greatest inequity exits in family but poverty alleviation schemes address only the family. Just as one, poverty calculation takes per capita consumption it should also address per capita income enhancement not family. Gender budgets need participation of other departments besides the existing ones. Gender auditing of all organizations is necessary.
As is evidenced in many studies level of awareness of government schemes is very low so more effective publicity is necessary. A more effective MIS system for monitoring women welfare, women empowerment programs is to be developed which is simple, transparent and involves both government and non government functionaries. Gender resource centers with autonomy need to be established in all states and in case of larger states there must be more than one such centre involving academic & activities.

Practically no schemes exist to encourage women in non stereo typical occupations. Training of women in leadership market research and entrepreneurship with follow ups must be institutionalized. At the national as well as state levels we need a full fledged mechanism to ensure gender sensitive policy, implementation through a participatory apex body. Clearer definition of work, Joint Pattas for women & men will ensure better control of women over resources as well as their acknowledgement in National income. Country's inclusive agenda requires a consistent engendering at all levels.