

CHAPTER – II

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

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A. Introduction

The period following the conclusion of World War-II (1939-45) has witnessed most nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America becoming free of imperial rule and facing the challenge of development. With the attainment of independence, they turned their attention to the tasks of political and economic development. Their primary goals were state building and national unity as well as rapid structural transformation of under developed agrarian economics to modern industrial ones. Development became the center of politics in developing countries. The United Nations and its agencies and many international institutions and commissions began to focus attention on development of the developing countries. Faced with problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, inequality, population growth and environmental despoliation, the developing countries were economically unstable and were engaged in the developmental tasks of nation building and socio-economic progress. It is an issue which has drawn the attention of the international community to the twin problems of nation-building and socio-economic progress. International peace and security and international economic order will remain insignificant until the problem of ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘maldevelopment’ is solved¹. Development is a universal problem as one American scholar has observed: “The whole world is caught up in the concept of development – there seems to be no escaping it.”²

Attainment of social development with equality will not only depend on how effectively these and other provisions are enforced but also how sensitized the planners, implementers and common people are to this issue and to what extent are they prepared to concede and accommodate the spirit behind the provisions. Social development is by far the most difficult and long-term goal to attain, because social equality includes equality of treatment, equality of respect, equality of opportunity, equality of recognition and above all equality of status. It basically entails a change in perception, attitudes and values which is hard to come.

The developing world now faces the challenge of accelerating the pace of socio-economic development. Countries of the developing world aspire to modernity. There is high ambition to achieve national development. However, ambition alone does not solve the problem of mal development and underdevelopment. Government have to struggle hard to develop the economies of their countries, sustain improvement in

social system, increase the capacity of political system and to revitalize public administration system with a view to achieving their main goal of development. To quote from the World Development Report: “Today’s intense focus on the state’s role is reminiscent of an earlier era, when the world was emerging from the ravages of World War II, and much of the developing world was just gaining its independence. Then development seemed a more easily surmountable – and largely technical – challenge.”³ Building a more effective state to support sustainable development and the reduction of poverty now remains the most important challenge facing the human world. According to the World Development Report (1997), five fundamental tasks lie at the core of every government’s mission, without which sustainable, shared, poverty-reducing development is impossible: “(i) Establishing a foundation of law, (ii) Maintaining a non-distortionary policy environment, including microeconomic stability, (iii) Investing in basic social services and infrastructure, (iv) Protecting the vulnerable and (v) Protecting the environment.”⁴ To make development stable and sustainable, the state has to keep its eye on the social fundamentals. Public policies can ensure that growth is shared and that it contributes to reducing poverty and inequality, but only if governments put the social fundamentals high on their list of priorities.

B. Concept of Development

Development is a continuously changing and dynamic concept. Since the beginning of civilization, it has been taking different shapes and dimensions. The nature of development as seen in the early 1990s differs considerably from that seen in the early 1950 or from that in the 19th century. The Brandt Commission Report,⁵ states that “Development never will be, and never can be, defined to universal satisfaction”. Similarly, Uphoff and Ilchman point out that development is probably one of the most depreciated terms in social science literature, having been used more than it has been understood⁶. Many have defined ‘development’ in terms of increase in national economy, some other include social improvement in it and others think of it in terms of increase in the capacity of a political system. There are also others who make no distinction between development and modernization. Thus, development is a complex phenomenon comprising diverse dimensions-social, political, economic, administration. We may speak of ‘economic development’, ‘political development’, ‘social

development', and so on. So, while defining the concept of development, it is necessary to take an integrated approach.

According to Colm and Geiger, development means change plus growth,⁷ Weidner defines it as a process of growth "in the direction of modernity and particularly in the direction of national-building and socio-economic progress.⁸ To T.N. Chaturvedi, it is a process which stands for 'transformation of society'⁹. In a seminar paper, Dudley seers argued that development involved "the realization of the human personality" and went on to suggest that this was best achieved through the "reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality." Alternatively, if one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would have been strange to call the result 'development' even if per capita income double".¹⁰ He also felt it necessary to include self-reliance and increased cultural independence.¹¹ Denis Goulet went ahead and indicated, "that life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom of choice are the core values of development for individuals and societies."¹² Michael Todaro described development as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty¹³. Chi-Yuen Wu defines development as "a process of societal transformation from a traditional society to a modern society, and such a transformation is also known as modernization."¹⁴ Currently, this definition of development appears to be widely accepted by social scientists. The Brandt Commission report also indicates that development is now widely recognized as involving a profound transformation of the entire economic and social structure¹⁵. In brief, development is a process of improving the well-being of the people. It is about raising the standard of living of the people, improving their education and health, and also opening out to them new and equal opportunities for a richer and more varied life, better health, a longer life with less sickness and a better standard of living. The World Development Report (1991) looks at several indexes of development. To quote from the report. "The challenge of development, in the broadest sense, is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the World's poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes, but it involves much more. It encompasses as ends in themselves, better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more quality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and richer cultural life"¹⁶. The overall goal of development is

therefore to increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religions races, regions and countries.

Development should not be discussed in terms of economic development alone. The political component of development seems to consist of increasing rationality secularization, equality and participation in the political system.¹⁷ As regards the social component of development, it seems to consist of such features as accent on rationality as opposed to reliance on traditions and customs, transformation of obligations from a network of individual, family or group relationship into obligations to the community, selection by achievement rather than by ascription, increase in social mobility and social freedom as opposed to social rigidities are regarded as desirable¹⁸. It may, however, be stated that it is not possible to draw a line of demarcation between the economic, political and social components of development. All these components tend to come to play when development is seen taking place through the cumulative circular causation process. Thus, development is a complex phenomenon comprising many dimensions – social, political, Economic, administrative and cultural.

Economic development is essentially an important component of development. Raising national income, reducing poverty and more equitable distribution of wealth and income are all essential components of economic development. The World Development Report (1991) defines economic development” as a sustainable increase in living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health and environment protection¹⁹. Kindleberger uses both growth and development in his discussion on economic dimension of development. To Kindleberger “economic growth means more output and change in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced²⁰.

For the definition of economic development, Gerald M. Meier lays emphasis on three words. “Process, Real National Income and Long Period.” To him Process is the operation of certain forces whereby real national income actually increases. As regards Real National Income, it refers to a country’s total output of final goods and services, expressed not in money terms but in real terms: the money expression of national income must be correlated by appropriate price index of both consumer and capital good.” finally, Long period of time implies the underlying upward trend in net national product. Meier concludes that policy maker should be “concerned ultimately with the achievement of better nourishment, better health, better education, better living

conditions and an expanded range of opportunities in work and leisure for the poor peoples of the world.” In this way, economic development is a means not an end for accelerating the progress of a country. While embodying economic growth, as increase in national product, economic development consists of other economic, social and cultural changes that produce such growth.²¹ - In industrialized countries, the process of economic development relates to the shift of an economy from the primary (extractive industries) and secondary (manufacturing) sectors, to the tertiary (service) sector. This involves; changes in the size, structure and migration of the population; industrial innovation; increases in efficiency; and changes in production techniques, institutions, attitudes and management and work practices. It also presupposes: improvements in education, skill and training; and changes in occupational structures, financial services and the structure of government. Furthermore, development requires increased investment in infrastructures. Economic growth is the outward evidence of the process of economic development. It is an objective measure of the expansion in such factors as employment, capital, national income, volume of trade (domestic, i. e. between regions, and foreign) and consumption. The standard measure of growth is to compare gross domestic product (GDP) over time. GDP is usually expressed per head and does not take account of the distribution of income and wealth. It can be used to ascertain the changes in the standard of living of the population as a whole. In recent years, the profession of development economic has also moved increasingly towards the direction of taking much more inclusive view of the nature of economic development. One way of seeing development is in terms of the expansion of the rural freedoms that citizens enjoy to pursue the objectives they have reason to value and in this sense the expansion of human capability can broadly be seen as the central feature of the process of development.

Social development is a broad concept which is quite close to economic development. In fact, in the process of modernization, both economic and social development have to go hand in hand. As Schumpeter rightly says, “economic development is not a phenomenon to explain economically but it is dragged along by the changes in the surrounding world. According to T.K.N Unnithan²², “social development may be seen as a process of ushering in a new order of existence. The quality of life and the quality of relations that exist would indicate the level of the order of existence. In brief, social development has come to mean bringing about

improvement in the social well-being of the people. Social development lays stress on provision of the health services, education, housing, cultural amenities, protection of children, a change in the status of women, regulation of labour and improved status for workers and reduction of disease, poverty and other social ills. Social development is by far the most difficult long-term goal to attain, because social equality includes equality of treatment, equality of respect, equality of opportunity, equality of recognition and above all equality of status. It basically entails a change in perception, attitudes and values which is hard to come. Social legislation has done little and could do little in this respect except providing a legal sanctity to a social equity measure (Ramya Subramaniam²³ 1992, Chanta Kalbagh, 1991).

Integrated means combination or unseparated and therefore integrated concept of development may be defined as the development completely, with a single approach. Thus, the Integrated development may be defined as the combination of development in social needs, economic needs and environmental needs. In other words, integrated development in the society may be defined as the endeavor of lowering the economic and social inequality in a society. In an integrated concept of development meaningful programmes are to be taken up to alleviate and eradicate poverty by way of employment generation. Furthermore, various suitable programme are to be undertaken to uplift standard of living, cultural development and economic development in a society. All the above factors, if taken together and meaningfully implemented then it may be said as the worth living integrated development, which satisfies the need for the dialectical harmony and balance in the process of accomplishment of development in the arena of economic, social, political and cultural dimensions and the same are in congruence with the traditions and nature. Economic development²⁴ is an integral part of the concept of worth-living integrated development. On the basis of its universal character and global scale, economic development upholds and contributes to the social, political and cultural development of all people of the world in a scientific manner, in the specific area and in time. It tends to protect the nature, which involves all people including their cultures as an integral part and takes further initiative and action to maintain the same at the local, regional, national and international level. The economic development protects from the squandering of the natural and human capital of the earth for the sake of maximum and immediate profit. It does not allow to maintain poverty, ignorance, ill health, want of food & clean water for the peoples of

third world countries. It tends to eradicate poverty by way of employment generation, make the general people conscious and thus improve the standard of living as far as possible and practicable.

The social development which agrees the worth living integrated development²⁵, contradicts the dominant model of production distribution and consumption, which are based on over production, consolidation of unequal distribution, intensified exploitation of the natural resources illogically on the earth by imposing maximum profit, continuously and without moral barriers.

C. Concept of Human Development

Human development is a much longer and all- encompassing concept, while human resource development is limited to the skill development by organizations for employment purposes or self-employment. “Human development is not limited to any specific sector. It does not focus on any specific sector. It does not focus on social issues at the expense of economic issues. It stresses the need to develop human capabilities. But it is equally concerned with how these capabilities are used - by people who can participate freely in social, political and economic decision – making and who can work productively and creatively for development”. (UNDP, 1992 b, P.12). “Human development concerns all activities from production process, to institutional changes, to policy dialogues .it is development focused on people and their well-being. It is as concerned with the generation of economic growth as with its distribution, as concerned with basic needs as with the spectrum of human aspiration. It is guided by simple idea – people always come first. (UNDP, 1992 b, P.13). On the other hand, human resource development is nothing but building of human skill or capacities through training and acquiring knowledge from such other workshops for obtaining employment. UNDP (UNDP, BPPE, 1991, p.19) defines human resource development as referring to those policies and programmes that support and sustain equitable opportunities for continuing acquisition and application of skills, knowledge and competencies which promote individuals, the community and large environment of which they are a part.

Human development is the process of enlarging people choices.²⁶ The three essential ones are for people to long healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have

access to the resources necessary for decent standard of living. Human development thus has two sides; improving of human capabilities such as improved health or knowledge and the other the use that people make of these acquired capabilities for leisure or production purposes. This concept of human development is much broader than the conventional theories of economic development.

An essential component of the poverty alleviation strategy is human development, with special emphasis on food security, primary education, primary health care, shelter, the protection of poor children, defining and promotion of the role and status of poor women in society, guaranteeing full employment and right to work and ensuring full participation of all strata and groups of poor in social decision making. The real foundation of human development is universalism in acknowledging the life claims of everyone; it demands a world where no child goes without an education, where nobody denied health care and where all people can develop their capabilities. One of the major proponents of universalism was Thomas Paine, who wrote the “Rights of Man”²⁷ in 1792. The roots of the concept of human development can be traced to early periods in human history. UNDP considers the concept of human poverty as a complement to income poverty, emphasizing that equity social inclusion, women’s empowerment and respect for human rights matter for poverty reduction. No country or region has done well in reducing poverty without first providing wide spread basic education and health services. Education helps to empower the poor, to enhance their lives. World Development Report (1997) identifies the common goals of human development for the developing countries as slowing down the population growth, improving health and nutrition, building technical capability, and reducing poverty. The Chapter on investing on people concludes Governments need to make clear commitment to this task and put it among their highest priorities. The evidence shows that investing heavily in people makes sense not just in human terms, but also in hard-headed economic terms’ (World Bank, 1991 a, P.69) The report recognized the complexities involved in human development and suggested that it has heavy political dimensions, involves a vast array of provider and beneficiaries, demands a high recurrent capital –expenditure ratio, and requires a long gestation period. (World Bank, 1990).

The Human Development report²⁸ of 1993 focused on the critical role of people’s participation in human development. The report looked at the need for

decentralization and involvement of non-government organizations and other community organizations. The report highlighted five pillars of people-centered world order: (a) new concept of human security; (b) new models of sustainable human development; (c) new partnership between states and markets; (d) new patterns of national and global government and (e) new forms of international cooperation.

The report suggested that Government should:

1. Invest generously in basic education.
2. Liberate private enterprise and make market more accessible to everyone
3. Support small-scale enterprises and informal employment mainly through reform of credit system and fiscal incentives.
4. Create an efficient service economy for future by investing in the new skill required.
5. Encourage labour-intensive technology, specially through tax-incentives.
6. Extend employment safety nets through labour-intensive public programmes in the periods of major economic distress.

Economic growth does not automatically improve people's lives, either within nations or internationally. 'Growth on its own is not sufficient – it has to be translated into improvements in people's lives. Economic growth is not the end of human development, it is one important means that people contribute to growth and growth contributes to human well-being' (UNDP, 1992 b , P.12). The ultimate objective of economic growth is to a higher level of human development within the reach of people. The creation of an enabling environment for the poor to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives is the basic objective of human development. The table 2.1 shows that the levels of human development Indicators in India are quite low in Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Kerala is topped in the list followed by Punjab. Position of West Bengal is the 6th out of 15 State as shown in the Table 2.1. If public policy concentrates on those five states, India's human development would increase considerably.

Table-2.1**Selected Indicators of Human Development of Major States in India**

| Sl. No. | Major State | Life Expectancy at Birth (2001-2005) | | | Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live birth)(2006) | | | Birth rate (per 1000) | Death rate (per 1000) |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|--|--------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | | |
| 1. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 62.7 | 65.2 | 64.1 | 55 | 58 | 56 | 18.9 | 7.3 |
| 2. | Assam | 58.3 | 59 | 58.7 | 67 | 68 | 67 | 24.6 | 8.7 |
| 3. | Bihar | 62 | 60.1 | 61.4 | 58 | 63 | 60 | 29.9 | 7.7 |
| 4. | Gujarat | 62.8 | 65 | 63.9 | 52 | 54 | 53 | 23.5 | 7.3 |
| 5. | Haryana | 65.6 | 66 | 65.9 | 57 | 58 | 57 | 23.9 | 6.5 |
| 6. | Karnataka | 63.4 | 66.9 | 65.1 | 46 | 50 | 48 | 20.1 | 7.1 |
| 7. | Kerala | 71.3 | 76.3 | 73.9 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 14.9 | 6.7 |
| 8. | Madhya Pradesh | 57.8 | 57.5 | 57.7 | 72 | 77 | 74 | 29.1 | 8.9 |
| 9. | Maharashtra | 65.8 | 68.1 | 66.9 | 35 | 36 | 35 | 18.5 | 6.7 |
| 10. | Orissa | 59.2 | 59.2 | 59.2 | 73 | 74 | 73 | 21.9 | 9.3 |
| 11. | Punjab | 68.1 | 70.1 | 69.2 | 39 | 50 | 44 | 17.8 | 6.8 |
| 12. | Rajasthan | 61.2 | 62.2 | 61.7 | 65 | 69 | 67 | 28.3 | 6.9 |
| 13. | Tamil Nadu | 64.8 | 67.1 | 66 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 16.2 | 7.5 |
| 14. | Uttar Pradesh | 60.1 | 59.3 | 59.8 | 70 | 73 | 71 | 30.1 | 8.6 |
| 15. | West Bengal | 63.9 | 65.5 | 64.6 | 37 | 40 | 38 | 18.4 | 6.2 |
| | India | 62.3 | 63.9 | 63.2 | 56 | 59 | 57 | 23.5 | 7.5 |

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Economic Survey 2007-2008
Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh include Jharkhand, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand respectively.

Building a more effective state to support sustainable development and the reduction of poverty now remains the most important challenge facing the human world. According to the World Development Report (1997), five fundamental tasks lie at the core of every government's mission, without which sustainable, shared, poverty reducing development is impossible. These are:

- (1) Establishing a foundation of law
- (2) Maintaining a nondistortionary policy environment. Including Macroeconomic stability.
- (3) Investing in basic social services and infrastructure.
- (4) Protecting the vulnerable.
- (5) Protecting the environment.

The basic indicator of human development is the Human Development Index (HDI) which is a measure in human terms of the synthetic performance of development viz, the health index, which reveals by the life expectancy at birth, summarizes the combined influence of various factors on life, such as the evaluation of condition of the individual nutrition, condition of living and so on. The education index, which is the calculation of weighted arithmetic average of the literacy rate and of the gross enrollment rate in all levels of secondary education. It is the reflection of the amount of knowledge the individual has, his skills and ability to communicate and participate in the activities of the society. The rate of training is measured using data on the proportion of adults who are illiterate. The living standard index, which is evaluated through the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per capita indicates the average resources that individuals have access for having a decent living.

The sustainable human development is that development which not only creates economic growth, but also distribute the benefits equitably, regenerates environment instead of destroying it and promotes people instead of marginalizing them. The general concept of “Sustainable human development” had in view an ecological point of view, in time which moves to advocate for the harmonization of economic activities, social development and ecological mechanisms. Human development focused primarily on the active participation in the political life of society, on equality and moral guidelines, on human security, on the individual’s freedoms which together will enable people better life inevitably based on sustainability life norms. To make the human development stable and sustainable, the state has to keep its eye on the social fundamentals. Public policies can ensure that growth is shared and that it contributes to reducing poverty and inequality, but only if government put the social fundamentals high on their list of priorities.

D. Social Capital

Social capital is a concept²⁹ that aims at emphasizing the importance of social contact between groups and individual and some time between groups and within groups. Social capital is also said to be the quality and quantity of relationship, networks and norms among people and organizations that facilitate action including economic development for the members of the group and group as a whole. The concept of social capital also stresses that social networks lead to increase productivity in individuals groups and organizations. This increased productivity may be both financial and otherwise, leading social contact to increase in confidence and fulfillment by fostering positive relationships. That means just like other capital form, viz, human and financial, social capital is also important and beneficial to the sustenance of society Lyda Judson Hanifan³⁰ used it in his discussions of rural school community centres. He emphasized the importance of social discourse among people for building goodwill and sympathy among fellow members and promote cooperation. According to Robert Putnam³¹, (though not its originator), social capital refers to the collective value of all “Social net works” and the inclination that arise from these networks to do things for each other. According to Putnam and his followers, social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy. Francis Fukuyama³² described social capital as the existence of a certain (i.e. specific) set of informal values or norms stands among members of a group that permit cooperation among them. Patrick Hunout and the social capital foundation³³ have suggested that social capital is a set of attitudes and mental dispositions that favour cooperation within society and that as such, it equals the sprit of community. Although social capital has been defined in several different ways by different scholars, nonetheless, it may be said as the result of social relations. The concept of social capital not only enables to financial benefit to the individuals and groups but at the same time it bestows other expected benefit for the cooperation between individuals and various groups. Bonding and bridging³⁴ represent two aspects of social capital. Bonding social capital is that arises from the relations formed by homogeneous groups, such as members within a Self Help Group or employees of a Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society. Bridging Social Capital, on the other hand, is the outcome when, such members & different Self Help Groups forge connections to share ideas and information.

Social Capital may also have negative effects³⁵. For instance, negative social capital comes out when a social network is used for manipulative or vindictive purposes which affect the economy negatively, such as when a group colludes to fix the market prices. Nefarious groups, such as gangs and drug cartels, use social capital to strengthen bonds within the group and to reach out to like minded individuals to increase their ranks. Nonetheless, the presence of such groups can decrease the overall social capital in a neighborhood or city, which causes local business to suffer as the potential customers avoid such areas for lack of safety and security. At the present time impact of social networking sites on social capital is seen abundantly. Online social networking sites are basically the gatherings of individuals who share similar interests. Online communities like Face book, Twitter, link dinkedin and live- Journal bring together likeminded people and establish contact between them by providing information about each individual. The basic aim of individuals registered on these communities is to create personal or other type of relationships that can prove to be relevant in some or other way. Face book is considered as the most successful social networking site, created in 2004. It helps people share information about them and generate a connection with other individuals, Social capital can be defined in various different manners, but the main objective remains the same. Basically, it is referred as the resources built up through connections or relationships among people. The major impact of social networking sites on social capital may be jot down in a manner that they have made it easier for people to gather information about each other and establishing a relevant relationship among them. However, it has certain bad effects too. Due to the sharing of so much personal information about them, the registered individual on Face Book may face privacy problem. They can be easily traced out and these resources can be used as information against personal relationships or social relationships.

Presently it has been learnt that internet-based links or relationships are important to individuals as they make enable other aware of the progressions in the field of technologies politics, finance and present day social disorder and so on. Nonetheless of the above fact, it is suggested that a wise man should try his / her level best to avoid such trap in the interest of his/her personal safety and security as far as possible and practicable.

Viewed from the above perspectives, it can be truly said that a Self Help Group contributes to the formation of social capital, as its members come together and form a group on the basis of some mutual values, attitudes, cooperation, trust and goals and so on, for the development of their socio-economic, political and cultural conditions within a limited frame work of time, however avoiding the impact of the negative outcomes of social capital as far as possible and practicable.

E. Empowerment: Types of empowerment, Economic, Political and Social

Empowerment is defined as ‘giving power to’, creating power within’ and ‘enabling’. Hence empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which should enable individuals or groups to realise their full potential and powers in all spheres of life. It is a comprehensive process which includes; awareness, confidence building, realization of self-worth, organizing, participating in decision making and finally having access and control over resources in fair and equal proportion. It thus envisages a greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making for self, to have greater ability to plan ones life and greater control over the circumstances which influence one’s life and greater capacity to free oneself from shackles, imposed on one by customs, belief and practices. Empowerment is a ‘process’ and not an ‘event’. It is therefore, time consuming and may have several phases. Each phase or step may be an effort by itself. It can be built only gradually by constructing each step solidly. The progress of the ‘whole’ depends on various environmental factors in a given society in which such a process of empowerment is trying to take place. It can be both self-initiated or initiated by others. Generally, development with justice, is expected to generate the forces that lead to empowerment of woman. It is more or less a kind of ‘national empowerment’ which is prevalent in these countries including India. This ‘favourable environment, to a great extent, is the creation of the series of world women’s conferences held in the last two decades with the United nation’s support. Within the women’s movement too, empowerment has been given considerable attention. Both academicians and consultants have also analysed their experiences with the process and offer lessons to learn. Empowerment can be broadly categorized as : a) Economic empowerment; b) Political empowerment; and c) Social or socio-cultural empowerment. (Human Development Report, 1997, UNDP 1997)³⁶

F. Types of Empowerment

a. Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is undoubtedly the key and may lead to all other kinds of empowerment. This is more true in the context of women. A major cause of a women's subordination is said to be her economic dependence. In the event of a social crisis, a woman is unable to express or decide for herself (and children). It is precisely because of this, that many women development programme either emphasise fully or have a component on the income generation activity, so that there is money available in a woman's hand and she moves towards economic independence and takes the first step towards empowerment.

The emphasis on rural women' in India is because (a) rural women constitute 75 percent of the total female population of the country (1991)³⁷, and the position of the same in 2011³⁸ was 69.08 percent (b) on any given indicator of development, the rural woman is further disadvantaged vis-à-vis her urban counterpart.

The profile of a rural woman is that of a "poor, ignorant illiterate, superstitious and suppressed being. She has low level of skills. Her access to information, assets, opportunities is also low. She is unorganized and under-represented. She is overworked. But, she is a producer, a farmer a household worker and a community resource manager, besides being a home-maker. Hence, she needs and should be provided with both, information and access, should get better wages, credit and ownership rights, should be trained and organized so that she is empowered.

As stated there have been significant shifts in the approach towards, the well-being of women from welfare in the 50s to empowerment in the 90s. In post-Independent India the Governments concern and sensitivity to the issue are reflected in many ways. The first serious attempt to better their lot was perhaps taken through assessing their existing status. This was done by way of appointing a committee on the status of Women in India in 1971, the report of which in 1974 finally led to the preparation of perspective Plan for Women: 1988-2000. This report puts together almost all that women have aspired for and what has been formally promised to them. Though the plan claimed to provide an alternate strategy of national development, so far as upliftment of women and their emancipation are concerned, it was admitted however, that no additional financial outlays are proposed to be made available for

programme specifically designed to uplift women who are supposed to be woven into the social fabric in what was called an integrated national development strategy. In the then prevailing social, economic and political environment, when there was no commitment on the part of the political and administrative machinery such a tall claim and any expectations on that basis appeared to be misplaced.

The report of the National Commission for Self-Employed Women and Women in the 'Informal Sector' (Sharmshakti, 1986)³⁹ also authenticated many realities about the conditions and contributions of women in this sector. NGOs working with women gained much strength and confidence from this report. The appointment of the National Commission for Women in 1992 and the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh in 1993⁴⁰ are part of the overall strategy of integrated approach to empowerment of women adopted by the Government in the 90s. Human resource development has been taken up as one of the major thrust areas by the Government of India during the Eighth Plan and efforts were directed towards mainstreaming men, women into the national development on an equal footing and the emphasis in respect of women was to make them economically independent and self-reliant. As per the policy of 10th five year plan started from 2002 to 2007 emphasis on empowerment of rural women have been envisaged by the central government and state government through Rastriya Sama Vikash Yojana (RSVY)⁴¹, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY)⁴² and Gram Unnyayan Samsad (GUS)⁴³, through the panchayat and rural development department of the state government for the development of economic status of the rural women.

Economically rural women are in a state of acute poverty. Rural females are considered consumers and not producers. They have no occupation, property, education or skills. A majority of women are at the state of disadvantaged position in gaining admittance to professional training because of unequal access to education at preparatory levels. As a result, they hardly get into the formal sector of employment. They are, however, a major work force in the informal sector but suffer from wage discrimination. Women also have unequal control and access to cash.

Many micro studies⁴⁴ have demonstrated the inverse relationship between income level of household and women's labour participation. In the last 40 years very few structural changes have taken place in female employment. Hence skill development, income generation and credit availability are the main planks of economic empowerment of women. Heavy domestic chores allow women little leisure

to invest in other activities. Technology transfers to reduce drudgery are being attempted.

Seriousness about extending benefits of economic development to women started in 1980 with the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), after the report of the National Committee on the status of Women⁴⁵ was published providing lot of information on the multiple roles of women by the earlier plans can be attributed to the lack of appreciation of the role of women and lack of proper perspective. The major thrust of the Sixth Plan was economic upliftment of women through greater opportunities for empowerment, imparting new skills and upgrading existing skills. As a result since 1997 to onwards there were 27 programme involving six ministries and eight department which focus on women in forms of training skill development, wage employment and income generating activities.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)⁴⁶, which is the main plank of poverty alleviation provides 40 percent share for female beneficiaries. The programme of Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment also provides as much share for female trainees. Wage employment programme such as the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)⁴⁷ and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)⁴⁸ have also to provide wage employment to women to the extent of 40 per cent. Then the exclusive programme of the Development of Women and Children in Rural Area as (DWCRA)⁴⁹ provides income generating activities to them. However, on the performance, the implementation of these provisions varies widely across the country.

The level of self-employment among women is also quite low as they have very little control over the productive resources and processes. Some steps are taken to ensure greater accessibility of women to credit through schemes like financing of self-help groups, through SGSY, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) & NRLM. The Government is also promoting local women's self-help groups in a big way under the umbrella of the Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) for the economic empowerment of rural woman.

Some non-government agencies such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad, the Community Health and Development (CHAD), Vellore. The All India Women's Conference (AIWC), New Delhi, the working Women's Forum (WWF), Chennai, and the Young Women Christian Association

(YWCA) are successfully operating programme for economic empowerment of women.

It has been observed that in the last few years there has been a significant increase in the percentage of women participating in economic activities, although this involvement is still limited in many developing countries. Nonetheless, where women are economically active they do not receive adequate recognition of this in terms of their contribution to the economy and therefore do not get compensated. The receiving of adequate compensation should be viewed significantly in terms of economic independence that gives to women which may become a route for an improved power base and greater resources fullness to rise the status of women and enable them to participate in decision – making process in larger scale than before.⁵⁰

The twelfth five years plan of India (2012-2017) endeavored to increase women's employability in the formal sector as well as asset base, for improvement economic conditions of the self-employed women. In the said endeavor it was focused to participate women's work-force particularly in the secondary and literary sector, ensuring decent work for them reaching out to women in agriculture, manufacturing financial inclusion and extending land and property right to women.

In spite of these intervention, the problems that affect women's role and opportunities, which spring from their dependence caused by their limited skills, illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status, remain to be tackled in a big way, for the economic empowerment of rural women.

b. Political Empowerment

Till the end of 19th century women in India were crushed under the weight of evil customs. They were socially weak, economically dependent and politically powerless. A common belief even with regards to women's voting behavior is that they are influenced by the male members of their family. They did not venture to stand for elections. Hence in the political sense the role of rural women was very much negligible. They were politically less conscious, less articulate and less active. They were basically apathetic and indifferent towards the political process (C.M..Hall, 1992)⁵¹.

However, women with elite background and political families, always found it easy and had a smooth entry in politics. Women's traditional role demanded full attention to home. This clubbed with modesty as a virtue kept other women away from politics in general. Their economic dependence and prohibitive election expenses were also hurdles.

The constitution of India opened a new chapter in the matter of equality of women. Articles 15(3) empowers the states to make any special provision for women and children even in violation of the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination among citizens inter alia of sex. Reservation of seats for women in local or educational institutions has been held to be valid in view of these provisions. Ever since the first general elections in 1952, women voter's participation in various elections has been increasing. But their representation in the National Parliament has never crossed 10 percent. Keeping this in view a modified strategy to increase the women participation in political decision making by way of adopting a quota system to women in the legislative bodies was adopted. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment providing for one-third of the seats to women members in all the rural local self government institutions (Panchayati Raj bodies) is considered a landmark attainment, towards political empowerment of women in the Lok Sabha and in the Legislative Assemblies of the states by way of the 81 Constitutional Amendment is under consideration of Parliament. These provisions are basically to create more consciousness among women and to strike a greater gender balance in the decision making. For the first time opportunity to share power with the elite is ensured constitutionally. These Acts are expected to bring in a silent revolution in the gender constitution of political structures in India. Arguments both for and against are put up on this preferential treatment meted out to women. However, whether the presence of women will change the political culture in any measurable or symbolic way is to be seen (Judith and Murrel, 1990)⁵².

The power of elected Representatives should be harnessed as change agents for better Governance and social change. They need be trained up to ensure the efficient delivery of Public services under the Integrated Child Development Services, the National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and etc by way of monitoring the functioning of Grassroots level workers like Anganwadi workers Accredited Social Health Activities, Primary School teachers and so on. Committees at Village level must be formed in

which women workers at grassroots level that that is member of the Panchyat and Self Help Groups, Angaradi Workers, Accredited Social Worker Activities, School Teachers and so on could collectivity discuss and frame work plans to address issues arising in the norms of implementation of the programmes campaign and highlight the of important issues under their active leaderships.

Though the political situation of women is changed in the Constitutional document, it will take time to make rural women politically equal in practice. Amendment is a progressive landmark in the history of political empowerment and will enhance their status and development.

c. Social Empowerment

In the social sphere rural women are still religious, tradition bound and custom oriented. Scientific temper has not yet shattered them. The changes towards modernization on the part of the rural women are not as conspicuous as in the case of urban women. Though women constitute half of our population, without proper education and training, they can hardly become partners in the development around them. It is however, unfortunate that the socio-economic and legal reforms towards the splift of women have awakened only a few of them about their rights and duties. Life still remains difficult for a woman than a man. The mere quarantine of legal equality would be of little purpose. Besides material comforts, intellectual and moral growth is also essential for any worth living. Women do not live in vacuum. They are part and parcel of society. It is to the advantage of society, itself that every single member of it, man or women, should be enabled to contribute his/her best to it. It is an acknowledged fact that women were, by and large; excluded form certain crucial economic social and political activities till recently., Their roles as wives/ mothers were/ are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than the roles of men. As a result there is still a wide disparity in social roles, perceptions and status between men and women (Jaya Kothari Pillai, 1995)⁵³.

Social empowerment is by far the most difficult and long-term goal to attain, because social equality includes equality of opportunity, equality of recognition and above all equality of status. It basically entails a change in perception, attitudes, and values which is hard to come. Social legislation has done little and could do little in this

respect except providing a legal sanctity to a social equity measure (Ramya Subramaniyam 1992, Chanta Kalibagh, 1991)⁵⁴.

In terms of rights and privileges the Indian women not only enjoy constitutional protection but also special legislative enactment. The constitution grants equality to women and also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralising the cumulative socio-economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental rights among others ensure equality before law, equal protection of law, prohibit discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and guarantees equality of opportunity to all in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(A), 39(B) and 42 of the constitution are of specific significance in this regard. Several important social legislation are also enacted which aim at social empowerment of women like.

1. The Factories Act, 1948 (provisions relating to crèches).
2. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929.
3. The Hindu marriage Act, 1955.
4. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.
5. The Maternity Benefits Act, 1955
6. The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961;
7. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971;
8. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
9. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1986.
10. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986 and Rules 1987.
11. The Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Divorce Act 1986 and Rules 1986.
12. The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1887 and Rules 1888.
13. The Hindu Widows Remarriage Act, 1856.

In addition in the field of social and criminal justice too, few changes have been brought about by way of either amending the existing Acts or by way of fresh enactment with the objective of providing greater gender justice and to improve the social and legal status of women. Some of these measures are:

1. Amendments to the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 in 1983 as part of the judicial reforms.
2. Amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and additions of several new clauses during 1983 as part of judicial reforms. (this includes introduction of the concept of custodial rape, redefining of dowry death elaborating the term cruelty and so on.)
3. The Family Courts Act, 1984 to expedite disposal of select family disputes.
4. The pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of misuse) Act, 1994⁵⁵ to prevent the increasing incidence of female feticides. Attainment of social equality will not only depend on how effectively these and other provisions are enforced but also how sensitized the planners, implementers and common people are to this issue and to what extent are they prepared to concede and accommodate the spirit behind the provisions. In India during the last 50 years there have been some achievements in select areas but quite a few failure too. Female literacy has risen from 7.9 percent to 39.43 percent, expectation of life increased from 41.7 to 60.4 years, average age at marriage increased from 15.4 to 19.5 for girls. The maternal mortality rate reduced from 37 to 04. Against this we also find 60 percent of women still illiterate, over 80 percent of women work in unorganized sector where no child care or maternity benefits are available. Female workers in this sector are still paid less for equal work. About 60 percent of pregnant women are still anemic. Sex specific mortality rates still show a high death rate for female children. Violence and crimes against women are on the rise. Convicts of rape are hardly punished. Dowry death show no decline. The media still represents women in an unfair

manner, and immoral trafficking, specially of young girls, is on the increase. (Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation, Government of India 1995)⁵⁶.

Thus women are still oppressed and need to be empowered in all walks of life. All aspects of society have to be restructured. The empowerment mechanism is easily enumerated. All agree that women should have :

- a. Higher literacy and education,
- b. Better healthcare for self,
- c. Higher age at marriage,
- d. Better skills and better work participation,
- e. Facilitating their involvement through policy formulation,
- f. Advancement into higher positions of power and decision making,
- g. Self-reliance, self-respect and dignity,
- h. Better conditions of living with leisure and
- i. Encouraging socio-culture change by exploring gender issues and promoting effective implementation of economic activities through development of their entrepreneurial and earning capabilities and access to credit.⁵⁷

But the major question is that of operationalisation. Government may offer welfare scheme. It may float anti-poverty programme. It may launch projects of upliftment. It may enact legislation to safe-guard women's right. The Government policies may only facilitate the process, reduce the hurdles and create an atmosphere conducive to transformation. But ultimately it is the women who have to empower themselves. Unless they become conscious of their oppressions, show initiatives and seize opportunities it may not be possible to change their status.

Since power is not a commodity to be transacted or can be given away as alms, empowerment also cannot be traded. Like power it has to be acquired. Further once acquired it has to be sustained, through its exercise and has to be preserved. Self

conscientisation and initiate are as much as a part of the exercise as state support. It cannot be merely a fad, tactic or a quick-fix.

The Government of India with a specific objective launched the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)⁵⁸ though the various Ministries / Departments for ensuring convergence and enter correlations among the schemes/programmes. The NMEW would aim to strengthen the process that promote overall development of women on a coordinate approach for implementation of the scheme of concerned Ministry/ departments, which would include creating awareness building strategies to the questions that prevail on “patriarchal” believes establishing convergence mechanism at multiple levels, creation of gender resources centers formation of women’s collectives and improving their capacity to access the benefits to government scheme programme loss and political and developing empowerment indicators relating to the survival, viability, freedom and equality of women. The NMEW would also look at the inclusive development of women including mapping vulnerabilities of women living in difficult situations taking into consideration of age, caste, women headed household, ethnicity, education, income, minority status, religion, region, marital status and so on as parameters. The NMNW also recommends to collect data on mortality of women especially maternal mortality of women, deaths related to deceases, different abilities and violence based on the socio-economic parameters. Effective participation of women in the institution of governance may only assure the way of empowering women and bring gender discrimination under focus.

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RSVY, Planning Commission, Government of India,

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