Chapter-6
CONCLUSION

The advent of globalisation has been predicted as a new era for the socio-economic and political development of the world in general and the developing economies in particular. The experts argue that the linking of world economy and opening of world-trade through the liberalisation and privatisation of the economies will not only affect different countries differently, but its impact will be different on different people and groups in the same countries. Women constitute almost 50% of the world population and they are also considered as a group that is weak due to the marginalisation of women in the socio-economic and political set-up of the world. However, liberalisation and privatisation have impact on different groups of women differently and the inclusion and exclusion of women in the development process depends upon their socio-economic and political status.

The widespread use of information technology, media, free-flow of knowledge and the easy interaction among people of different countries and regions has been viewed as a positive development for the socio-political development of the developing societies. The global connectivity of women movements and the rise of global feminism have proved crucial for development and empowerment of women.

The socio-economic and political influence of liberlisation, privatisation and globalisation on the status and rights of women in India is a matter of serious concern for the policy makers and social scientists since their inception. The government and non-government organisations are coming out with the various findings and suggestions to improve women's condition and to enhance socio-economic and political rights of women in India.

The global influences on women rights have been linked to the historical evolution of women rights and their socio-economic and political set-up in

India. The socio-economic and political changes that have occurred in the last two and half decades are subject to the analysis of the impact of SAP, NEP and socio-cultural and political interaction of Indians with the outside world.

The socio-economic and political status of women is not only viewed in comparison with the other weaker sections in India, but it is also compared with the policy frame-work of mixed economy and welfare state model of women of the Nehruvian era. Women response to the economic opportunities, social exposure and the global demand for the political empowerment of women are also linked to the socio-economic and political set-up of Indian society. The studies on women development and empowerment in the era of globalisation in India revolve around the social and political responses of the Indian society to the new socio-economic and political developments and their influence on the status and rights of women.

Women movements in India have been linked to the western education and an organised campaign for the socio-economic and political rights of women in India. Although the social awareness against the evil practices like sati, child marriage, devdasis etc., were initiated by the Indian intelligentsia and social reformists but reformists could bring reforms only with the support of colonial bureaucracy. However, the political and economic issues like right to vote, political participation and right to property were only raised by the Indian women who got education in the west during the freedom struggle.

The issue of socio-economic and political rights of women was raised by the various women organisations during the freedom struggle; however, the colonial judiciary didn't adopt a secular approach while deciding the issue of the property rights of women and referred it to religious texts and other old customs which undermined the rights of women. As a free nation India started its journey with great promises of socio-economic and political justice to the weaker and backward classes of India under the state sponsored mixed-economy and social sector. The constitutional initiatives for social democracy

and the socio-economic and political justice were furthered by the constitutional amendments and legal and policy initiatives taken by the Indian government from time to time.

The provisions for the upliftment and development of women have always remained a serious issue for the policy frame-work and legal initiatives of the Indian state along with other weaker and backward sections of the Indian society. The Constitution of India guarantees right to equality to women in every sphere of life: right to equality before the law (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and human conditions of work and for maternity relief for women, (Article 42). To ensure the protection and promotion of women Indian Parliament has enacted special laws along with the constitutional provisions. The Minimum Wages Act, 1950 , The Mines Act, 1952 , The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 ,The Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act, 1956 ,The Hindu Minority & Guardianship Act, 1956, The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 , The Special Marriage Act 1954 , Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Child Marriage Restrain Act, 1961, The Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 , The Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 , Pre-natal Diagnosis Test, 1994, Maternity Benefits Act, 1971, The Family Courts Act, 1984, The Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Dowry Act, 1986, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Mental Health Act, 1987 , National Commission for Women Act, 1990, The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention , Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, etc.

Globalisation has provided a new platform to the Indian women and enables them to establish for themselves as competent professionals. They are no less than their counterparts in other parts of the world. The easy access to the knowledge and information along with the professional education has opened new horizons of opportunities and earning, however, the economic gains of globalisation are limited to a few metropolitan and urban educated women. The vast majority of rural and uneducated women are still untouched from the positive outcome of globalisation, infact they have lost the benefits of the mixed and welfare economy which they should have got due to the adoption of NEP by the Indian government. Moreover the use of the capital intensive techniques in agriculture has also led to unemployment of women in the rural and semi-urban areas at large.

The high level of unemployment and under-employment among women indicates that their proportion below the poverty line is higher than that of men. Women who come from rural areas are employed as unskilled labourers. The life of workers in the unorganised sector is very tough and they are exploited in many ways. The exploitation is not only carried out on class lines but also on the lines of male domination over females. Many studies have reported that the sexual harassment of women is common in the unorganised sector, but it goes unreported by women due to the fear of loss of employment and social pressures.

The impact of global technology, global health facilities, global media and spread of education on the rights of women is also relatively new to the social set-up of Indian society. It was expected that the global media and the exposure of the Indian society to the western culture in general and to women in particular will lead to the breaking up of old patriarchal set-up and male domination. However, the data and studies on women education, employment and family income just suggest the reverse. The rise in the education of women has not led to the rise of employment of women and the rise of family income

is also leading to loss of women in employment sector due to social conservatism and the practice of performance of house-hold work by women in India. Moreover, the rise of women and girls' education is facing serious challenges due to the higher drop-out rate of the girl child at the primary school level.

The impact of the rise in health facilities and innovations of the global health technology are also related to the socio-cultural set up of the Indian society. The uses of health technology and health expenditure are also subject to the gender of children and adults in the family in India. The health of the a woman and a girl child are still a secondary issue in comparison to the health of a male members of the family due to social conservatism. The problem of infanticide and foeticide are also related to the misuse of the global health technology under the impact of social conservatism, which considers the birth of a girl child as a burden. The use of modern health technology is also related to the health of women, reproductive rights and reproductive health care under the conservative social set-up of Indian society.

The social impact of globalisation and social change is much less. Age old superstitions and the deprivation of women in socio-economic and political rights still continue at the same pace. The age old definition of a "good woman" and gender stereo type, which were determinants of a good woman are equally relevant, both in urban and rural India and are still the same as they were before the globalisation. Their rights of taking personal decisions are still under the control of the male members of the family.

To tackle the problem of crime against women the Indian government has taken some important legislatives as well as other policy measures, which are particularly address the new challenges which the Indian women have been facing after 1990's. A National Commission for Women and State Women Commissions have also been established by the various states to address the new challenges. The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000),

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, 2010 and Verma Committee Report are enough to mention.   Irrespective of the policy initiatives and the development of institutional mechanism to ensure the safety and protection of women some permanent legislative measures have also been adopted by the Indian government. The Domestic violence Act, 2005 and   Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act, 2013 are worth mentioning. However, the figures of the crime against women have increased more rapidly than the legislative and policy initiatives take by the Government of India.

It can be said that the vicious circle of poverty is continuing in India and the women face worst of poverty, they lack access to the resources, education as well as the mainstream labour market. Unfortunately the women labour-force is still working under social conservatism and their economic contribution to the family income is still considered as secondary.

The immediate increase in women's work participation after the globalisation has declined within the small span of a decade. The government attempts to improve the women's skills through education has also met with its worst as the women work participation has shown a decreasing trend with the rise of female education in India.

The indicators like workforce participation rate shift in the pattern of employment in different sectors, employment status, unemployment rates and increased number of women in the unorganized sector point out towards the marginalization of women labour in India. The conditions and position of women's work participation in the unorganised sector   of the Indian economy also show the adverse. The government's efforts and claims to improve women's work participation are proving contradictory. The defeminisation of the labour market and the use of capital intensive techniques have forced the unskilled women labour to leave their traditional work and join the domestic and allied domestic work.

No doubt there are laws to protect women and prevent exploitation of women in the inside and the outside home, but these laws have not been strictly implemented. Being a vast country, the scattered nature of women workers, the lack of education and legal illiteracy and the indifferent attitude of the government, bureaucracy and the general status of women in society have caused vulnerability to women.

The rise of global feminism, Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals along with the efforts of the World Bank and other international agencies to increase women's empowerment has been viewed as a positive development for the empowerment of women in India. Since the Beijing Platform of Action many strategies and declarations have been adopted by the UN and the National parties have been advised to enhance the political participation of women. Irrespective of the global and national efforts, many women organizations are still working at the grass-root level to make women aware of their rights and importance of their participation in politics.

Indian leadership is committed to the concept of equal political rights for women as conveyed by conventions and declarations on women rights. India has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), Convention on the Nationality of Married women (1957), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); however, the political participation of women has remained the subject of internal factors and the socio-economic and the political set-up of Indian society.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were enacted by the Indian parliament for 33% of reservation of seats for women in the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj and Municipal Corporations. The last 23 years of panchayati raj in India have witnessed a dramatic change as the women members and heads have been trained into politics which has strengthened their political participation. Their day to day experience at grass-root level and the resistance

to established patriarchal set up has been enriching the women experiences and women movements across India.

Women are now accepted by the male dominated politics of village community and they are equally participating in the decision making policies and the number of women members is increasing. As per latest data of grass-root democracy, there are 28 lac elected panchayat representatives of which around 10 lac are estimated to be women. The average women representation in panchayats across the country is 36.94%. However, few states have gone beyond the mandate of 33 % and provided more reservation for women. For instance Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarkhand and Rajasthan have reserved 50% seats for women in Panchayats and Sikkim has reserved 40% seats for women. Roughly 55% of elected representatives in Bihar are women.

The 110th Constitutional Amendment Bill 2009 provides reservation for women from 33 percent to 50 percent in PRIs. The bill seeks to amend the Article 243 D to enhance the quantum of reservation for women from 1/3 to one-half of the total seats in the panchayats. Similarly these reservations should be provided in the total number of offices of chairperson.

The evolution of women empowerment and political participation at the broader national level has not turned up as expected as a result of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and India's commitment to the international agenda for political empowerment of women. The analysis of women's participation in the parliament elections and the figures of women MPs and Women Ministers shows that the political participation of women in India has remained poor. Moreover, the recent studies on the Panchayati Raj suggest that the reservation of seats for women at the village level Panchayats has not led to the empowerment of women in reality, as the husband and other male members of the family take the actual decisions and women are just rubber-stamps.

The political set-up of the state and national political parties is also of patriarchal nature and the dominant leadership is not in favour of encouraging of women politicians in the party. While distributing the party tickets and party positions discrimination against women is reported in every political party,. The leaders of both pre and post independent India have paid only lip service to the upliftment of women in various walks of life including rightful representation in the legislatures, both at the centre and in the states.

After analysing the government policies, programmes and legislation on the socio-economic and political development and empowerment of women in gloablised India, some suggestions can be made to improve the socio-economic and political status of women.

The need of the hour is that only joint efforts and co-ordination of both the government and non-governmental organisations can help to improve the socio-economic and political position of women. The wholehearted and serious efforts are required to eradicate the problem of the vicious circle of poverty and violence against women at all levels. The problems of poverty, crime against women, prevalence of social conservatism and women backwardness can be controlled through the policy frame-work, education, awareness and the development of scientific temper among the citizens of all ages.

This awakening can be brought about by launching education campaign among youth and by making them aware of existing social evils and the means to eradicate the same. Mass media can play an active role here as these days it has reached every corner of the country. NGOs can help to spread the concept of gender sensitisation for both the male and female population of India. Women can be trained into new professions and they can work collectively under the self-help groups run by trained women professionals and they can be guided to manage the sale and marketing aspects of their products by the experts.

The trade unions and voluntary organisations can play a vital role in making them conscious of health and education and, above all, their rights concerning education and training. Therefore, a credible strategy to enhance the education and employment of women should be directed to the enhancement of their educational level, which will help women workers to improve their economic and social status. Specific industries should be set up to absorb the higher proportion of women labour and to create quality jobs.

At the same time law and enforcement agencies should be well trained to react towards the cases of women and children. Exemplary punishment should be given to culprits and zero –tolerance approach against sex offenders should be adopted. Radical reforms can be done in the old police and security system by using the latest techniques of crime investigation and by using the latest techniques of surveillance like the initialisation cameras at public places, proper lighting and easy access to the police through public information system.

The end of political corruption and political reforms can help to politically empower the marginalised groups in general and women in particular. The administrative and electoral reforms should be initiated to end the violence and corruption in the elections. The quota and constitutional amendment for the reservation of 33% seats in the state legislative and parliament should be implemented. To actualise the dream of women empowerment and political participation of women and the capacity building for women politicians and women workers should be orgainsed from the grass-root level upwards. The civil society groups and women organisations can build a pressure on the political parties for the inclusion of women in the party set-up and at various positions in the political parties.