

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF GUJJAR WOMEN IN
PANCHKULA AND YAMUNANAGAR
DISTRICTS OF HARYANA**

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CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was done to access socio-economic status of Gujjar women in Panchkula and Yamunanagar districts of Haryana. It explores the current social and economic status of Gujjar women and why they are still living according to the age old orthodox practices and what conditions limits these women to their homes in spite of active work participation in the dairy sector. The work done by these women is not recognized by their respective families and the community which affects their overall status. They are not active decision makers in family ranging from the financial matters as well as other matters related to children. Their primary say is in the matters of kitchen and festival preparations. They are respected in the family but only if they adhere to the norms and value system followed by the community. Gujjar community is an educationally backward community and the prevailing cultural construct in the community is holding them back to explore life beyond home and family which impacts their status. As per researcher's knowledge no such study has been done on the settled Gujjar community specifically women in the area of the study. Gujjar women being from a backward class community and considering that they live in the highly patriarchal society of rural Haryana, such studies becomes relevant when we talk about Gender Equality. This study is an attempt to explore the life of Gujjar women, the challenges faced by them and required social work Intervention in the area of the study. This study also recommends studying women of different communities from a cultural perspective as it a major governing force in lives of culturally driven communities especially in rural areas. We have to reach out to different women groups so that the needs of different groups are met and status of women can be raised.

7.1 Summary of Major Findings:

Chapter 1 discusses the concept of Status, Gender, Gender Inequality and Women Empowerment in sociological terms. It also discusses the status of women in different times from ancient to British rule and in India post-independence to understand in which spheres the status of women have been improved and in which

sphere women are still struck. In this chapter various constitutional provisions for women, legal provisions for women, role of five year plans for uplifting women have been discussed. It also includes the background of OBC's in Indian and special provision for them as Gujjar in Haryana as a backward class. It discusses brief history of Gujjars which includes their struggle and life of Gujjar women and why is it important to study Gujjar women. Rationale, Review of literature, theoretical perspective, Research methodology, objectives of the study and chapterization scheme also forms part of the chapter. This chapter introduces the idea behind the study, its relevance and introduces the basic status of women in general and specifically introduces the lives of Gujjar women in study area. This chapter tries to explain the role of Gujjar women as informal workforce in the dairy sector, which is primary occupation of the community. This chapter establishes that way to empower this community is via channelizing work they do informally into a set system, which requires change in the cultural implications.

Chapter 2 This chapter includes Socio-Demographic Profile and Educational status of the respondents. Education backwardness is the major reason of the lower status of the women in Gujjar community. The inferences drawn from the various variables are summarized according to the objectives of the study. This chapter discusses how the socio- demographic indicators impact the life of women. It discusses the level of education of the respondents and how it impacts life of the women in various ways both socially and economically. This chapter also discusses why these women are educationally backward and how it impacts their overall status. The main indicators taken into consideration are discusses below:

- **Age:** As revealed by the sample one of the major determinants of the status among Gujjar women is age of the respondents. In an Indian household age decided status and role of a person in a family particularly in joint families. **Gujjar women enjoy a better status with age, particularly when acquire a status of the mother-in-law.** They have a say in many matters and have a complete control over their daughter in laws. In many cases the personal stuff, clothes of daughter in law were selected by the mother in law. It was observed that younger women of the house are assigned maximum duties and are

expected to be the most vigilant and responsive in all the matters related to home and children.

- **Occupation:** In the study area, majority of the Gujar women were not formally employed but it is inferred from the study that **majority of the respondents were informally employed in the dairy sector** as they actively participate in the dairy related work. Their work is unrecognized and they do not have any sort of monetary benefit from it. This serves as a major challenge for their empowerment. As updating women with knowledge about the latest technology and marketing by forming SHG's, they can be formally streamlined into the dairy sector. This main earning activity has a major role played by the women but without any reward and acknowledgement as this is supposed to be her duty being a wife and daughter-in-law. Women also consider it as a part of their routine and do not understand the importance of work they do in terms of the economic gain. Total 4.7% women in Panchkula and 3.5% women in Yamunanagar are employed in the formal (Government/Private job), **85.3% women in Panchkula and 63.4% women in Yamunanagar were informally employed in the dairy work which is a huge part of the sample.** A new trend has slowly been adopted by the woman that is **home based work (stitching, tuitions only by the educated respondents) which was done by 8.7% women in Panchkula and 3.3% women in Yamunanagar.** This work was generally limited to two major activities. Graduate women started taking up tuitions of children in the village and few illiterate women started up working as tailors. This shows a level of involvement in the informal sector and lack of awareness on the part of women regarding the work they do and there is a need to channelize their work so that it can help them empower themselves and uplift their status.
- **Income** is one of the major indicators of status of a person or family. Only few respondents were working formally with good income and there were few respondents running home based work with minimal income. 22% women in Panchkula and 12% women in Yamunanagar were earning, rest of the women had a good household income as they come from financially stable

households. Women generally have less income or no income which indirectly hampers their say in the family and their status. Among the respondents of the study, majority of the women were dependent on the men or mother-in law for money. Though they are not refused to have money in case of need but they do not have a regular money flow. Women who are formally employed did have a control over their money, but to a certain level. Few women doing home based work and even jobs handed over their money to their husbands and in-laws especially in joint families. **Most of the women have a satisfactory household income and living conditions.** Only few cases of women who were widows have very less income.

- **Family** Out of the total sample, **majority of households had joint family system. 62% families in Panchkula and 74.7% families in Yamunanagar were joint families.** Status of women was different in both the family systems. **Women in joint families had lesser control over the household decisions as compared to the women in the nuclear families.** Joint families had more restriction on the movement of women and ghoomghat as compared to the nuclear families. Status of women was better in the nuclear families as compared to the joint families. As women in nuclear families have a greater hold over the resources, decisions as mobility as compared to joint families where women have to adhere to norms properly. So type of family is one of the factors establishing the status of women. As in the joint families the presence of elders marks good hold over the culture and practices and hence due to patriarchal set up women are often given a secondary status.
- **Head of the Household:** In Gujjar Families generally the eldest man is considered as the head of the household. 89.3% households in Panchkula and 92.6% households in Yamunanagar had a male as a head of the household. Women who have daughter in laws keep a complete hold over their lives directly or indirectly, with few exceptions but **head of the family is eldest male or the eldest son who is the primary earning member of the household**, in case the elderly men has some serious illness and is not capable of taking decisions of the household. In the households under the study,

generally males are the head of the household and elderly women have power over their daughter-in-laws but they are not considered as the head of the household even if their husband is not alive, elder son takes the responsibility. Women in general are do not act as head of the household as they are not perceived as good decision makers by the males which shows their overall status in their community.

- **Marriage:** is a highly valued social institution among the Gujjars. It is not only the alliance but a question of the status of family. **Marriages among Gujjar is more of a status based alliance and not dependent of the choice of girl or boy. Early marriages have always been a trend in the community.** 82% women in Panchkula and 90.7% women in Yamunanagar who were part of the sample were married. Only three cases of divorce were found in the families, who live in the Urban areas. Marriage is a priority for Gujjars than education. **They get married based on caste, status of family; both financial and social.** Early marriages have been a major reason of women dropping out of schools which has hampered their status to the maximum.
- **Religion:** Gujjars are a close knit community with immense respect for their culture and religion, which for them is their identity. They are a cohesive group with feelings of brotherhood and community sentiment. The areas of the study were Hindu dominated region. **97.3% women in Panchkula and 100% women in Yamunanagar were Hindus. Only three Muslim households of nomadic Gujjars were there in Panchkula who come from the Kotkhai hills of Himachal Pradesh during winters and go back in the summers. They were the group of nomadic Muslim Gujjars who needs to be explored.** But they do not visit each other's home and do not eat or drink anything made by the people following a different religion but have a mutual respect for each other based on the fact that they belong to a same community. Religion plays a very important role in their lives. It can be said that religion governs their life. Women do everything according to their religion and culture which are two sides of the same coin. Restriction on women

movement, not doing jobs and not moving frequently are part of their culture. Empowering women in such a scenario is difficult especially in Yamunanagar. Panchkula had a better status of women in this regard. To understand the lives of Gujjar women and to plan an intervention for them, it is important to understand them from cultural perspective.

- **Educational Status of Gujjar women:** Gujjar community through progressing on its own pace is still educationally backward especially women. Early marriage, restrictions imposed by cultural patterns not only hampers their movement but also their basic rights like Right to Education. Out of the total sample, 225 women were illiterate, **30% were matriculate, 24% were senior secondary, 15.3% were graduate and only 7.7% were post graduate. So we can see the downward trend in education with age.** Lack of education or lesser education is the huge road block in enhancing their status. The reason for not going to school is due to the early marriages and no higher education in vicinity and not sending girls out to study has led to Gujjar women to being illiterate or semi illiterate. Being lesser educated has impacted their confidence and they regret not completing education now. Women during focused group discussion collectively agreed to the fact that they regret not being educated and their life would have been much better if they were educated. As they would have been more confident and could teach their children. During discussion a women said:

“ib hum apne samudaye mein ladkiyon ko dekhte hai toh hume bhi lage hai padh liye hote tah behtar hote... ab chahte toh hai hamari ladkiyan ladke padhe likhe...unko achi naukri ka awsar milemagar who apne sanskar na bhule...ab ladkiyon pe utni bandishe naa hai jey hume hoti thi par apne sanskar bhi toh na bhulne chaiye”

Majority of the women i.e. 62.7% in Panchkula and 60.7% in Yamunanagar expressed that better education and job would have given them a better status financially and they could enjoy freedom in terms of their movement. **54% women in Panchkula and 37% women in Yamunanagar said that they are open for any training which will help them learn something good and earn for their family if**

permitted. This shows their keen interest in doing something and learning a new skill. This will ultimately empower them in various capacities. Out of the total sample, 68.3% women said that they want their daughters to work and not stay at home for the entire life like them. Women stated that this shift in their thinking has come with the changing times, which was not the case with them as their mothers never wanted them to think for themselves before family. Women have recognized the importance of education in changing their status and they want their daughters to attain higher education and work for their own identity. So it can be concluded on the basis of observation of the researcher and on the basis of data collected that **Education will serve as the major tool for empowerment of women and any community.** Gujar communities has realized the importance of education and now want their children should attain a good higher education and live a good life in terms of money and quality of life. For which along with proper implementation of the government programs, a good intervention plan by non-governmental sectors is required so that without hurting the cultural sentiment of the community reforms can be made to uplift the status of women. So it can be concluded that Education is the most important tool for the empowerment of Gujar Women or any other section of women in the society as well as other vulnerable groups.

Chapter 3 discusses the importance of culture and traditions in the lives of Gujar women and how it is linked to their Status. The impact culture and traditions make in their lives is a qualitative indicator of their status. Culture has a huge impact on the lives of Gujar women as observed by the researcher. Culture is a way of life for the Gujar Community. Cultural construct is governing the lives of Gujar women from birth till death. Keeping animals and doing dairy work is also a very important aspect of the Gujar culture as they trace their descent from the Yadav dynasty and Shri Krishna, who was also a cow grazer. They consider their animals as their own child and mark them as a good luck charm in their lives which protect their families. Their primary income comes from animals so worshipping animals is of prime importance to them.

Most of the major events in their life from child-birth, marriages and dairy as a prime occupation is governed by their culture. This chapter discusses how their

culture molds the life of women in a way that they live a life according to their cultural norms and not in a way they want. In a country like India culture plays a huge role in life of an individual as we still live on ascribed status i.e. the status of family one is born in. Along with social and economic standing we imbibe the culture preferences of the family which is very natural as family is the primary unit of socialization of a child. **The impact of culture is more on the women as they have a traditional responsibility of taking forward their traditions and cultural values so women become flag bearers of culture and traditions which is also the case in the Gujjar community.** Major findings regarding culture and lifestyle observed by the researcher are covered in this chapter which shows how culture plays an important role in their lives. It becomes extremely important to understand how culture impacts their lives.

- Majority of women who were part of the sample observe **Ghoonghat/ Purdah** in front of male members and outsiders as a part of their culture which most of the women accept as for their safety and regard for the elders. This tradition limits their movement and freedom to the extent that they have to seek permission to go outside from the home. So moving out and taking up higher education and jobs is a difficult task for them to achieve due to the imposed restrictions. Most of the women dropped out due lack of secondary education system in the village or due to marriage. In both the cases we can see the cultural implications.
- Lifestyle and Culture: Gujjar women has dairy as an integral part of their lifestyle other than household chores. **92% women in Panchkula and 84% women in Yamunanagar were actively involved in dairy**, work which includes bathing animals, milking animals and providing food and fodder to animals. Men are responsible for selling milk and manage the income from as women do not move out of homes. The animal work they do is also a part of their duty towards family and taking care of animal is their tradition. The hard work they do is not recognized in terms of economic activity. So here the cultural construct surpasses their informal employment which is necessary for their status upliftment.

- Recreational activities for the women are also **based on their religion and culture which is basically satsang and festivals as told by 87.3% women in Panchkula and 82.7% women in Yamunanagar**. Occasional outings and visits of relatives is also a source of recreation for these women. Women's recreation is also linked to their culture; they hardly explore any other area of interest other than what is followed by their families. This binds women to the home and family which is established by the community as a role of a good women which has affected their status.
- Traditions are the most important part of their existence as told by 97.3% women in Panchkula and 98.7% women in Yamunanagar. No matter how educated they are or working in any part of country or world, they are supposed to follow all the rituals properly and visit their village and deities to seek blessings, which is important for a happy and satisfied life.
- They have traditional practices to be followed in every important phase of their lives like in marriages they follow caste endogamy, gotra exogamy, early marriages. The traditions of Bithana, Satta-Batta, Chunri are done according to the circumstances. **Dowry is completely acceptable and is a medium to showcase their status (Panchkula 93.3%, Yamunanagar 96%)** which has an impact on girls and women in Haryana on various levels. Bithana (Levirate Marriage) is done in case of early death of the husband, where women are married off to brother in law to safeguard her and keep the property intact. (Panchkula 68%, Yamunanagar 57.3%) This affects women on the mental level as they do not have a say to decide this as every decision is taken by the elders. **Women are also married to men much younger and lesser educated than them which creates compatibility issues and impacts women on a deeper level.**
- **Only 38% women in Panchkula and 10.7% women in Yamunanagar said that they meet the boy before deciding about the marriage.** In rest of the cases all the decisions regarding marriage are taken by the elders of the family based on the caste, land and financial status of the family. **Education is not an important aspect in finalizing marriage. The elders deciding marriages**

based on social and financial status of the family rather than interest of the boy and girl in the alliance leads to marriage between people of intersecting temperament which further leads to marital discord. This is sad state of affair for women as well as men on individual level. In district Panchkula, women in many families have been shown photograph of partners or allowed to see each other but this is not the case in Yamunanagar. As the villages of Panchkula has an impact of the lifestyle of the urban areas of Chandigarh and Panchkula. **But in the majority of marriages criterion of the selection of mate for the purpose of the marriage is set up on a pre prioritized set of thoughts which is based on culture and traditions rather than individual choice and need.**

“Hamare khoon mein bahaduri hai, kisi aur jaat mein shadi karke apne khoon aut apni sanskriti mein kaise milawat hone de, hmare liye hamari sanskriti hi sab kuch hai” (our culture is our pride).

- **No inter-caste and inter-religion marriages are permitted among the Gujjars** as told by 96.7% women in Panchkula and 98.7% women in Yamunanagar because of the difference in value system and culture. Gujjars believe in the purity of blood and the genes as researcher came across answers like.

They value their culture and traditions more than the individual happiness. If anyone does this kind of marriage, the family breaks all the ties with the couple and in traditional rural societies, **social boycott of the family also happens** if they do not break ties with the couple.

- It is also observed by the researcher that there is a stigma attached to divorce as 92% women in Panchkula and 94% women in Yamunanagar said that divorce is out of the question for them as it is not considered good in their community. But their community comes together to settle disputes in family and parents do step in to sort major matters their daughters face like infidelity, domestic violence (in some cases) as told by 79.4% women in Panchkula and

95.3% women in Yamunanagar but divorce to majority of population is unacceptable. This forces both men and women to accept their condition which hampers their happiness and life, which is common in majority of the community in our country and is not limited to Gujjars. To a certain extent it is good as these people value relationships and make adjustment with people around to maintain harmony at home.

- Status of women can be noticed from the fact that remarriage of men is acceptable in the community irrespective of the age. There were cases where men were married to women of their son's age due to the status of men (financial and social) as told by 98.7% women of Panchkula and 99.3% women of Yamunanagar. But remarriage of the women is only done in the case of Bithana (levirate Marriage) and only if the woman in the question is young. Remarriage of women an underlying reason of the property or upbringing of the young children.
- Childbirth also has multiple rituals associated like Tarakdi (87.3% Panchkula, 86.7% Yamunanagar), Gandmul (88.7% Panchkula, 86.7% Yamunanagar), Dasuthan (88% Panchkula, 95.3% Yamunanagar), Sutak (88.7% Panchkula, 87.3% Yamunanagar), Chaath (35.3% Panchkula, 34.7% Yamunanagar), Nazar Utarna (55.3% Panchkula, 64% Yamunanagar). All these rituals have a cultural importance attached to them as to make sure that a child has a good and fulfilling life. It consists of many totkas which are somehow away from rational thinking and sometime may have a fatal consequence.
- There are rituals associated with the death which are very important to perform as to make sure that the soul leaves the world peacefully and will always bless the generations to come. They practice less mourning and also arrange meals for the relatives, villagers and pundits to be thankful that departed soul has lived a fulfilling life, as told by 90% women in Panchkula and 96.7% women in Yamunanagar. But in the case of unnatural death nothing like that is practiced. No festivals are celebrated; simple food is eaten. **In case of death of the husband, Women have to get rid of gold Jewellery and colorful clothes and wear simple silver Jewellery and mild colored clothes**

which is called Palla Jhadna in the Gujjar community as told by 93.3% women in Panchkula and 96% women in Yamunanagar. This shows the that the status and lifestyle of women gets affected after the death of the husband, which is not the case with men. Being economically dependent on the husbands add to further deterioration of their socio-economic status.

- Celebration of festivals is of the prime importance for the Gujjars living in any part of the world. 90% women in Panchkula and 94.7% women in Yamunanagar said that the traditions and culture are most important to them. Women are the ones performing all the rituals and keeping fasts for the family. Men have little or no role to play. **kheda which is one of the major cultural spot to perform all the rituals do not allow women to entre and they worship kheda from outside. This is an irony in itself, as women are supposed to do everything in the festivals and do not entre the main spot of worship in the village.** Janamashtmi, Govardhan Puja, Teej, Ohi teej, Bhai dooj Rakhi are some the major festivals celebrated by the Gujjars which have major of women as they associate every festival with good luck and it is important to follow everything like a rule of book. Women life has a very important component of following cultural practices and lead their lives according to set norms.
- Due to the tradition of following of Gurus, Gujjars are strictly vegetarians. 97.3% women in Panchkula and 99.3% women in Yamunanagar come from vegetarian households. They follow gurus as a tradition and for mental peace and follow way of life as shown by gurus. This shows the Impact of culture and traditions on them which can be seen in their lifestyle as well as in the eating patterns.
- Their culture has a major component of observing ghonghat and restriction on the movement of the women. **61.3% women in Panchkula and 68.2% women in Yamunanagar said that they strictly follow practice of Ghonghat and restricted movement as a part of their culture.** Only girls who were unmarried do not have to take ghonghat and have lesser restriction

imposed on them. This is the major imposition of culture which is a major hurdle in the progress of the Gujjar women. As restriction of movement leads to their confinement to their homes. This hampers their exposure, learning and progress in many ways. But women have accepted it as a tradition and a mark of respect of family and elders which shows the level of importance of the culture in their community which makes women accept Ghonghat and living in the homes are still followed by Gujjar women as part of their lifestyle in this globalized era. Ghonghat signifies that women should be confined to home and family work as this is an accepted norm in rural Haryana.

- Animals are also a very important part of their existence as observed by the researcher and based on the interactions with men and women of the community. **86.5% women in Panchkula and 80% women in Yamunanagar had milking animals at home.** Animals are considered as an important part of the identity of the Gujjars as a community. It is a fact in the community that if you are a Gujjar, you have to have animals in the house, even if they do not have dairy as their primary occupation. Animals are perceived as protectors of the community and also are considered auspicious for the household. Gujjars link their existence to Lord Krishna and worshipping cows and buffalo is equivalent to worshipping God for them. Majority of the work of animals is done by women and they even have many rituals associated with birth and death of the animals which are followed religiously by the community. It can be inferred that animal rearing is a major aspect of the lives of the Gujjar women and they love their animals like their own children.
- Gujjar women are basically very culture-oriented women as they are conditioned to be this way since childhood. Educating women is not considered important in their culture as told by 60% women in Panchkula and 74.7% women in Yamunanagar. Women have also acknowledged the fact that they lack independence and decision making as stated by 48% women in Panchkula and 51.5% women in Yamunanagar. But this was acceptable to many women of the community as a part of the culture. They have accepted that women are supposed to live like this. Women with time have realized that

it is very important to get educated and work to live a fulfilling life for themselves. They want their daughters to study and be independent and then get married. But do not want their children to forget their roots. Women stated that their children should always value their culture and traditions always. The essence of brotherhood and the feeling which prevails in the community is a rare thing these days. In the testing times Gujar community stands by with each other like a family. But apart from many good things in the community, the women of the community are somewhere lost in the home and family. To equip these women, it is very important to break the cultural barriers, which somehow hampers their lives in multiple ways. When cultural implications lead to less education, no jobs, restricted movement so how can women reach their full potential when they are not given the ground to test themselves. The changes are coming in the community but with a very slow pace as acknowledged by 29.3% women in Panchkula and 28.7% women in Yamunanagar. Only the women of families who have moved to urban areas and belong to an educated background have access to higher education, jobs and independence to a certain extent. Gujar women are respected in families in many ways but they attain this status with age. As a daughter in law expressive women are neither liked nor accepted by the families and the community. Women are respected and credited only if they cater to the needs of in-laws, husband and relatives just in a way expected by them. Individual needs of women are never considered or fulfilled. This patriarchal mindset is so very well constructed in the minds of the women and men of the community that Ghonghat, restrictions on movement are not violation of rights for them but a means of traditions and for their safety. The organization (Government and non-governmental) have this challenge of paving a way through these traditions and cultural barriers to reach out to these women and many other communities like these and empower them in such a way that their belief system is not challenged or disturbed and they make progress socially and economically.

So it can be concluded that culture is a way of life, a guide to exist in society for the Gujjar community. Women since ages have been given charge to safeguard their culture and pass it to the generations to come. To empower Gujjar community, it is extremely important to find a way to reach out to their women and create awareness among the women and the community members without hurting their cultural sentiments. Their women should be reached out via proper channel of Gujjar Bhawans and they should be provided with basic education and skill set which will empower them and make them confident and make them realize difference between following traditions and being orthodox.

Based on the field experiences in the area where the study was conducted i.e. District Panchkula and Yamunanagar in Haryana and also taking into consideration few Gujjar women settled in the urban areas we can trace some major inferences. One common factor that was present is of Culture. One thing that binds this community is their culture. No matter where who live, if you are educated-uneducated, rich-poor; culture and traditions of the community governs the lives of people of this community especially women. Now we know that the status of Gujjar women is not uniform as they belong to different social and economic spheres but the uniformity in their life is due to their culture. It is their culture implication. that women give acceptance to not letting them complete their education as sending them out for studying is not acceptable in majority of the families which were part of the sample. It is the cultural norm to not getting married outside their own caste and within their village as in that case couple and the family is completely boycotted by the community. The urban Gujjar households have allowed their children to move out, get educated but marriage by choice is still not acceptable. They do not let the children decide about the partner they wish to marry as the elders of the family decide their partner according to their status. This puts a lot of pressure on both boys and girls emotionally. But have to accept this as it is a cultural norm. **This is in contradiction to the Theory of Empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995), as it limits decision making of an individual related to themselves. As empowerment theory, research and intervention processes links an individual to his social and political environment. Socio-**

cultural restriction hinders the process of empowerment. Respecting and following traditions is a good thing to do but prioritizing culture over human emotion and wants somehow limits the progress of a person in social and psychological level. All the above mentioned things depicts how culture impacts lives of individual and especially women who face dual stress due to the existing patriarchal norms. So it becomes relevant to study the culture of a person before planning any kind of intervention for their upliftment and empowerment as in traditional Indian society, **as culture and traditions govern the life of a women and the impact is even more in the case of women who belong to the backward classes.**

Chapter 4 This chapter covers the Economic Status, Decision Making Power and General Awareness among Gujar women covered in the sample primarily in the Health, Legal and Political fields, which are the major indicators of the status of women. This chapter is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Majority of the Gujar women who were part of the sample, belong to a fair financial status. They have all the basic amenities present at their respective homes. **Only 6% women in Panchkula and 3.3% women in Yamunanagar (who were part of the sample) were from the low income households.** Though majority of the women who were part of the sample belong to a good financial background but they have **no control over the money matters.** They are being provided with the money in the time of need, which is generally at the time of the festivals and marriages in the family. Otherwise all the personal stuff and necessary items are generally brought by their mother-in-law or husbands. This is major indicator of their status as we can see that they lack decision making power even in the personal matters. They are not given any charge in the financial matters. But 53.3% women in Panchkula and 43.3% women in Yamunanagar said that they want to work if given a chance and if permitted by their families. Their main reason was to gain freedom of movement, confidence in dealing with the outside world and for being financially independent. **They have gained this insight with changing times as they have seen some exemplary women from their community who are educated are doing very well professionally and lead a better life as compared to Gujar women in villages.** This realization has led to the

change in the mindset where if given an opportunity they would like to be educated and independent. Women also have same aspiration for their children as they want their children to change with changing times. **These women have no financial security apart from their family income which includes income their husband. They have their Jewellery with them or with their mother-in-law and many women also have bank accounts, but hardly handle these account and are not even aware about the basic banking procedures.** Dowry is a tradition which is given to daughters to make sure that they live comfortably in their homes but **no property and land is given to the girls as this is not their tradition as this is considered as their son's right, as a son carries forward their family name. This is one of the major reason of son preference in any patriarchal community of our country. 95.3% women in Panchkula and 96.7% women in Yamunanagar said that they do not possess any share in any land or property.** If any girl demands share in property, maternal family breaks all the ties with daughter and her in-laws. So based on the data collected from the areas which were part of the study, it can be concluded that most of **the Gujjar women of the sample lack higher education which is a necessity to be independent financially and they have no hold on land, property or any bank balance which can be their savior in the difficult times. So this puts them at an edge where they are completely dependent on their husbands and sons which impacts their status and they live a dominated life.**

Further they rarely have say in any of the major decisions of family. **61.3% women in Panchkula and 74.7% women in Yamunanagar said that they are not consulted in any of the financial decisions.** The major reasons are the lack of education and exposure to the market and this directly impacts their status. In the case of education and marriage of children women are consulted but their opinion is always secondary and do not influence the decision made. They are given respect in a way but that does not mean that they have a say in their homes. Gujjar women gain a certain position with age when they have control over their daughter in laws. But otherwise when they are daughter-in-laws, they have less decision making power and a lower social status. The respondents did not have knowledge about the basic banking procedures, their rights and general awareness regarding which is also adding

to the deterioration of their status. They have fair knowledge about pregnancy related issues due to anganwadi workers but still have stigma related to vaccinations. They are over indulgent in tonas/totkas and home remedies and only visit doctors when they are seriously ill. They lack political awareness and importance to generate awareness regarding the health, legal, political and general awareness among the women.

Chapter 5: As discussed in the previous chapters it can be concluded that majority of the respondents of the study are informally employed in the dairy sector but this they are not empowered. This is due to the lack of awareness regarding the existing policies and programs for the women especially in the informal sector. There is a need to sensitize these women regarding the same so that they can take advantage of the programs to empower themselves. This chapter is based on the governmental policies and programs for the women in Haryana which aims at the betterment of women in a holistic manner. This chapter covers the gender aspect in the five years plans, schemes and policies of center and state government to uplift the status of women. It also discusses National Policy on Empowerment (2001), Role of Haryana Social Welfare board and Haryana Women Development Corporation and how their schemes are helping in empowerment of women. This chapter introduces us to machinery available in the form of Governmental policies and programs which will be helpful in empowering Gujjar women by providing avenues of skill development via proper training and uplifting their status. The policies and programs offered by the government are tools for the social change. It provides the necessary support system for a country to progress. At the grass root level women are not well informed but only knew about the certain benefits they took during deliveries or some amount of money they got under specific scheme (they did not know about name of the scheme but only that they got some money or benefit). This is a common trend even in educated lot. But it become important and is relevant to publicize the running programs and policies via community radio and television so that awareness can be generated on a larger scale. In the case of Gujjar women Gujjars Bhawans can create awareness about the self-help programs and help women associate with provision provided by the government in the informal sector. Women should be made aware

about 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendments, Domestic Violence Act (1995), Sexual harassment at workplace act (2013), women's right to equality (Article 14 of Indian Constitution), Women's property rights, national Empowerment policy, National Education Policy etc. Women should be made aware about current policies and legal and constitutional safeguards so that they can assess their position in the society and can move towards their progress with the help of these programs. National Policy on Empowerment, Various programs by Haryana Government were laid down by various departments like Social Welfare Department, Haryana Women Development Corporation launched many schemes like Micro-credit scheme, education schemes and loans to uplift social and economic status of Women. Indira Mahila Yojna's programs like STEP, Distance education to fight illiteracy, Balika Samriddhi Yojna to uplift status of girl child by providing monetary fund to for girl born to fight the decreasing Sex Ratio in the state. They should be made aware about the work of Haryana commission for women regarding female education, keeping feticide in check, promoting education by providing scholarships for girls, deal with victims of khap panchayats and acid attacks by various schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samriddhi Account etc. Government also ensures maternity benefits for women to keep their health fine. They are working on the holistic development of women. This chapter covers the governmental schemes and programs which are available to uplift the status of women.

Chapter 6: This chapter deals with the role of social work profession in uplifting Gujar women in the required areas. It covers the methods, approaches, theories to deal with the present situation of Gujar women in the area of the study. It also discusses a suggestive model and intervention strategies for uplifting status of the women. This chapter suggests how social work intervention in a holistic way can work for women empowerment. It suggests utilizing the strength of women in their empowerment process (Strengths perspective) in accordance with their culture (Cultural Competence Perspective) so that their sentiment is not hurt. Researcher suggest that both Empowerment theory and Feminist theory will help in the intervention process and the former equips women to take decision and later focuses to have an equal standing of women, which will lead to women empowerment.

Various method of social work can be used from according to the suitability like social case work, social group work and community organization. It will counsel and facilitate women by providing them knowledge about important programs and policies; advocating for their rights; proving them information about banking, self-help group, health, importance of political participation etc. This model suggests working with women in groups as it will be convenient for the worker, women and the family. Following this process slowly and steadily will help in making women empowered socially, psychologically and economically. This will further strengthen the women of the Gujjar community and women of other vulnerable groups in the village, religion and culture.

7.2 Conclusion

To raise the status of women in a backward community where women are still living in the clutches of old age practices, lacks proper education and exposure, we need to empower them based on the needs and resources available. **Empowerment of Gujjar women will happen when they will have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology.** Empowerment is basically redistribution of power between both he genders as it is the only way to deal with unequal treatment of women. Gujjar women can only uplift their status if efforts for the change comes from their end. Empowerment has become the key solution to many social problems. Power may be personal power and social power. Empowerment is a sense of gaining control, sense of participating and sense of decision making. Power acquired shall be exercised, sustained and preserved and women empowerment is a process. The components of women empowerment are awareness building, capacity building, decision making, greater equality between men and women and so on. **For Gujjar women to attain control over their lives it is important to educate them in various ways i.e. basic literacy, social education and functional literacy. Education is the only way to transform the lives of these women and women of other castes, communities or any other category.** A specific focus should be on the education of young girls and women. During the data collection, young women showed interest in vocational training for themselves and their future generations. So it can be said that now they feel the need to have a shift and what they require is a

right guidance and direction. **For this purpose, government, voluntary sector and community self-help will have to work on providing them with required support and guidance.** The most important key to uplift the status of Gujjar women is the education of women and girls. This will have a positive impact in multiple areas of lives of women ranging from knowledge, income, confidence, awareness about one's rights and duties, poverty reduction, economic productivity, social justice and active participation in democracy. **Evidence shows a strong correlation between educating women and girls and increases in women's earnings, improvements in overall family health and nutrition, increases in school enrolment and delayed marriage. No other policy intervention is likely to have a more positive effect on progress than the education of women and girls (From the Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast, "Women's and girl's education: A development imperative," 30 June 2010.)**

Some Important Findings of the study are:

- Women are flag bearer of respect and honor of the family. The prevalence of Ghonghat and restrictions on movement is regarded as a mark of respect of family in the society. They are expected to be obedient and respectful in all the conditions. Their dressing and movement is controlled by others most of the times. These restrictions limit their opportunities for many women as they cannot move out for studies and jobs. But this mindset is slowly changing, as there are highly educated and working women in the community but less in number in the area of the study. Awareness generation is required in this regard.
- There is a class system within caste system in Gujjar community. The women who come from an influential family have a relaxed lifestyle than their counterparts in the villages. A woman of a mediocre family (socially and economically) has to go through more scrutiny than women of an influential family. This can be concluded on the basis of focused group discussions with different women groups, formed on the basis of family status and area of living (rural-urban). During the group discussions, women collectively agreed that if their husband is influential, there are less judgements on them as

compared to other women of an average family. Women agreed to the fact that their status in the family is directly linked to status of the family in the community and income of their husbands.

- The status of women improves with age as they have daughter-in-laws to listen to them. But they do attain decision making powers in all the matters. Their power remains till preparation of festivals, functions following tradition.
- Urban Gujar women have better status then rural women, though they are culturally sensitive but they have less restriction on movement and dressing up as compared to rural areas. This is because of the urban influence and exposure among the urban Gujar families.
- Caste, class and financial status is more valued in the community as compared to education. In case of marriages, educated girls get married to lesser educated men if their financial and social status in society is good.
- Education is not directly linked to their status in the family. Education is undoubtedly making an impact but in the families where the head of the family i.e. male member is educated. In the case where women are educated and men is not, the achievement of the women is not acknowledged and there is conflict in thoughts of husband and wife. Researcher made an observation that a woman who is educated is not valued for the knowledge she holds or confidence she has. Education is a means of adding to the family income if they get a job. All the educated women are not necessarily working due to the cultural norms in the study area. But ones who are working has to prove her worth by being hands –on with her household duties. Researcher came across women who were post- graduate and working but their achievements were not recognized and valued. They are appreciated if they follow the traditional ways of living are keep their opinions to themselves. Gujar women are expected to be naïve in traditional rural joint families and especially in the lower income groups as compared to higher income groups. Opinionated women are generally termed as uncultured in the community and this hampers the decision making among the women.

- Impact of Education is seen where the head of the family is educated as he is the driving force for the entire family. It was observed during the study that in the family where father-in-law was educated then entire family had a progressive mindset. In the families where the men were uneducated, even if women are educated, their education is not valued.
- Women in nuclear families and urban areas have better status than in joint families as the restrictions are more in the joint families especially in the rural areas.
- Women in the villages of the Panchkula District have better status as it is close to urban areas of Chandigarh and Panchkula as compared to women in the villages of Yamunanagar. Yamunanagar as close to U.P had more impact of the state as regards status of women which can be observed by more prevalence of Ghonghat, more restrictions on movement and minimal decision making.
- Gujjar women are orthodox but hospitable, helpful and pleasant. They have adapted themselves to a state of mind which is running from generations. Majority of the women respondents were less educated and only few women who were the part of the sample were doing jobs (if permitted by the families), but the decision making powers were with very few women even in educated /working lot, which is major hurdle in their development. Generally, these women are culturally conditioned to live their lives in set pattern which is limited to home and family.
- It is to be noted that the people who broke the barriers in the community are the people who got educated. This realization is happening in the community among both men and women. There is no doubt that women of this community and many other communities in the village are illiterate or lesser educated but at the same time many women recognize this as a cause of their backwardness and majority of the women who were part of the sample are keen that their children irrespective of gender should be educated and independent. So we can see that changes or transitions are happening but it

requires effort from men and women, government and voluntary organizations.

- Women accept that change should come as regards their education and development but they are adamant when there is a question of culture and traditions. They can give their children a freedom to take decisions in terms of dressing and education but not in marriages and following traditions. They strictly follow the rule of purity of blood and in no way agree to exogamy.
- Son –preference is high among Gujjars as in the case of all the castes and communities of Haryana as well as in the other parts of the Country.
- Dowry is considered as a gift and right of the women. But girl claiming property rights is not acceptable to the family to the extent that they break all the ties with their daughter as her husband.
- Gujjar men and women hold high regard for their history and culture and makes it sure this history of their struggle is passed to next generations. They have extreme feelings of brotherhood, cohesiveness and love for their community. This community sentiment somewhere makes them rigid as they do not support anything which is not in favor of their community especially in politics.
- Gujjar women believe in superstitions like evil eye, tonas/ totkas very much. Most of the times they depend on these superstitions for the treatment of any illness. This hampers their rational thinking and impacts their lives negatively. These superstitions drive their lives to the extent that sometimes it takes a toll over their mental and physical wellbeing.
- Following a Guru is a must for a Gujjar household as gurus shows them right path in life. They lead their lives according to the path directed by their gurus. They dwell mostly on religion, culture and taboos and these things govern every aspect of their lives like marriage, childbirth etc.
- **Majority of the Gujjar women who were part of the sample are informally employed in dairy sector in the area of study making it a profound sector as far as empowering Gujjar women id concerned.**

Majority of the respondents actively pitch in the dairy related work but they are not involved in the financial aspect of the entire process. Women take care of animals like their own children. They associated animals with good luck as well as is a major source of income in majority of households under the study. By forming women SHG's and credit facilities their work can be channelized and they can be economically empowered.

- Education is given less priority in Gujjars but slowly the change is coming. The Gujjar earn well from dairy and agriculture. The good income from land holdings, small businesses and jobs make them satisfied financially and they do not feel necessary to take up higher education as education for them is a source of income generation and not to gain knowledge. But slowly as Gujjars have started moving to urban areas importance of education is making a mark and is the only tool to uplift women according to the researcher.
- Culture is the major governing force in lives of Gujjar women as their entire life revolves around the cultural set up which restricts their movement, makes women follow Ghoomghat, enforces early marriage, son preference, dowry culture and make women a flag bearer of respect and honor of the family which makes majority of women give up their personal way of thinking and taking up decisions for themselves as it is not culturally accepted.
- Culture and lack of education is a biggest obstacle in the way of the empowerment of the Gujjar women. Many families among Gujjars and other castes consider that the marriage is more important of their daughter than education. As marriage according to a general mindset provides social security to a woman. **But lack of education limits the awareness among these women to the point that they cannot understand that how the violation of their basic rights are happening due to limited or no education and early marriages. Lack of education makes them vulnerable and women often face domestic violence, sexual violence and emotional abuse as part of their marriage. But they are not empowered enough to understand and take action in this regard.**

- There is very less awareness about the available provisions under the IPC like Domestic Violence Act (2005), PC and PNDT act 2004 etc. which is essential for them to know.

Social Work Intervention should aim at proper dissemination of information, welfare measure at the grass root level among women. They can use the professional skillset to train women working in Anganwadis, elected members of the panchayats and members of Gujjar Bhawans on how they can upgrade their skillset and knowledge to ensure qualitative and impactful work. Social work intervention will help in the upgradation of the service.

- Social work Intervention should also focus on generating awareness about Right to Education by running campaigns at grass root level and in schools to generate awareness regarding importance of education. Panchayats should be mobilized to look into the drop out happening from the school and takes necessary step regarding that involving governmental and non-governmental support.

It can be concluded that, Gujjar community is a traditional community which runs on the basic principle of patriarchy, tradition and culture. Settled Gujjar community do not share much similarities with the nomadic Gujjars except their basic love for animals and love for their culture. Nomadic Gujjars are basically Muslims who have a different way of life. Settled Gujjars are both Muslims and Hindus, but the majority of the respondents of the study were settled Hindu Gujjars. The basic similarity in the community is the dedication and the community sentiment which was seen in elder as well as young men-women, boys-girls and even little children. Gujjar community people have high regard and love for the history and their community. Settled Gujjar community, which was part of the study is financially good. As Gujjars have reasonably good dairy businesses apart of the few educated members who are working in government and private sector. Gujjars are still educationally backward especially in the case of women. Though they have made progress as regards education but early marriages, dropout rates due to marriages and unavailability of schools and due to traditional barriers led to a blockage in the development of women of the community. These reasons are discussed in detail in the chapters. In the Gujjar

community many women and girls of current generation are now completing their education and taking up jobs but they are the women whose families are either moved out of the villages or are themselves into job sector. This change is motivating women to let their daughters complete their education. There were women who were completely illiterate, there were literate women who were not allowed to work, there were women who were doing home based work which was limited to tuitions and stitching. There were few cases of women who were into a good government job who were part of the sample. But during the data collection researcher came to know about women and girls of the community who were achievers in the different fields like administrative jobs, teachers, doctor etc. It can be concluded from the research that Gujjar community is going through a phase of transition. This transition is necessary not only for the community to flourish but for a nation to develop each and every ethnic group, minority and vulnerable groups should be reached out so as to cater their needs which will lead to a holistic development. At this point we have a professional social work intervention which has their value system and skillset to deal with the problems of individual, family, group and community levels to mainstream them and develop them in whichever way required.

We talk about empowering women to uplift them which is more or a psychological process, which is required for the desired change. **Power in one's hand will empower them i.e. Power of deciding for themselves. This power can empower an individual in two ways i.e. Individual and collective.** On the individual level women can decide on their own. Collective choice is where a women make choices in accordance with their families. Women's empowerment can be observed on the basis of the participation in decision making. It can be both, quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative indicators of women empowerment are self-esteem, awareness, increase or decrease in work load, visible changes in women's participation etc. The quantitative indicators of women empowerment are women participation in development programs, access to community resources and participation in political process. The quantitative and qualitative indicators of women empowerment are discussed in the previous chapters based on the data collected. We can say that Gujjar women will only be empowered only if their cultural reorientation

happens. Article 10 of CEDAW, states that *“The signatory states must take all necessary measures to eliminate discriminations in education, and must ensure that women have access to educational information that will help secure the health and wellbeing of families”*. For this we need to educate women and make them independent in terms of finances and well aware to make informed choices and not accept any injustice in the name of culture. **For economic empowerment we need to work on the skill development trainings in their villages so that women can enroll within their area as they have restriction of the movement. Education of semi-literate women via social workers, training and awareness generation is a required.** There is a need to make women aware about successful dairy practices in India like Amul and others like Lijjat Papad via documentaries can be done. The women status will eventually change when their families and community will see that they are working from a safe place with the familiar people and earning for themselves and the community. The women life cycle in their community will be challenged and changed for the good, by empowering their women.

So it can be concluded on the basis of observation of the researcher and on the basis of data collected that Education will serve as the major tool for empowerment of women and any community. Gujjar community has realized the importance of education and now wants their children should attain a good higher education and live a good life in terms of money and quality of life. For upliftment of such women groups along with governmental policies and programs requires a professional. Time bound holistic intervention programs to as the reach out to them in a proper way and working on a deeper level i.e. changing their mindset which will make them confident to take their decision and in doing so they will work in a direction which will empower them in every way.

7.3 Recommendations:

Any research is not only limited to answering research questions but should also come up with the significant ideas to deal with the problems in the field and suggest further contributions needed in the particular area. So there are few recommendations researcher would like to put across:

7.3.1 Recommendations for the Researchers/ Academicians:

- This study deals with the socio-economic aspect with special focus on the culture. But this community can also be studied from other perspectives like life Satisfaction, Politics and Health. As this particular community has a major inclination for politics and intense participation can be very fruitful for the upliftment of women. Cultural perspective plays a huge role in the lives of women as the traditional practices and tonas/totkas are extensively followed. This forms an interesting area of study. Life satisfaction study of women can also be taken up as an area of study as it will give a clear sense in which women want to be empowered.
- A study should be done on Women as a significant force in the Dairy Business.
- Researcher should be done on nomadic Gujjars from come from adjoining state of Himachal Pradesh in winters. It is important study the variations within the same community based on religion and nomadic lifestyle. As researcher encountered few nomadic Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh with a need for development in all the respects.
- Other disciplines like Human Rights, Women Studies should also work for these women as they have to touch a specific aspect of the lives of these women.

So it can be said that, it is important to research a particular problem from various angles so that the root cause of any problem can be identified and intervention can be planned.

7.3.2 Recommendations for the Policy Makers:

- Policies and programs should be holistic and should be based on the need of a particular group and area.
- There should be Integrated Programs, which can serve as a one-stop shop for the rural illiterate population especially women who hardly have any exposure and awareness and have restrictive movement so they cannot move around to gather information which limits their prospects. Sensitization programs on different topics health, education, welfare programs and legal rights, if done

by different agencies to generate awareness among the illiterate population is time consuming process. But integrated through strong grassroots channels like panchayats will prove to be more effective and will ensure its reach to the target population.

- More stress should be laid on the awareness generation among the illiterate women. Basic literacy campaigns should be there, particularly focused on the illiterate women to sensitize them on basic skills like operating bank accounts, ATM's, loans and self-help groups through Anganwadi and voluntary organizations. Mobile vans should be visit the interior areas to help women understand and operate ATM's, understand about bank accounts and other basic banking and credit services.
- Education is the main tool for social change in any society. Special audio visual tools to education the illiterate population should be formed. It should also work on generating awareness according to the need of the area and covering wide range of topics from legal, political, health and education are needed on extensive levels to make women know about the changing scenarios and life beyond home and kitchen. This will lead to a sense to motivation among the women to look out for better opportunities for themselves and their children
- Policy framers should also work on proper dissemination of the information through mass media i.e. T.V and community radio, which will improve the reach and results of the programs and the policies.
- Policy framers should also plan the implementation strategy along with the ground level organizations like Panchayats and Gujjar Bhawans, to ensure the goals of the policy are fulfilled and the desired change can be seen.
- Vocational training regarding home based works can be provided to the women like Stitching, beauty parlor courses etc., as women showed a keen interest in vocational training for income generation from homes. This will provide them income generating avenues.

It is important to make policies and programs are need based according to the area and also ensuring that they are much more accessible by making them

visible in public eye via involving grassroots level organizations like Gujjar Bhawans and panchayats in implementation of the policies and programs. They need to make sure there are proper channels i.e. mass media like T.V, community radio to disseminate the information so that positive results can be expected.

7.3.3 Recommendations for Women, Community and the Gujjar Bhawans Regarding Social, Economic and Psychological Development of women:

- The school “Gujjar Kanya Vidya Mandir” is an exemplary model has made a huge impact in the lives of girl’s education but also led to the social transformation of the entire social fabric of the village. The awareness drives run by the management led to the change in the mindset of the people as 10 years back a village with illiteracy and backward thinking, has now every girl taking up school and higher education. We can see how the social transformation has happened in the community. Researcher observed the difference in the village of Devidarh and the nearby villages. So we can see that this community run practiced has led to the transformation of the village at all the levels and such models along with governmental and NGOs support will lead to the social change at all levels.
- The monthly meeting (Kitty), of urban Gujjar women held in Gujjar Bhawans can be used as a platform for the mobilizing them to help empowering the rural women. These women can serve as a link between the rural communities and the service providers. It will be easier to implement anything when somebody from their own community will help women to understand issues and take necessary actions.
- Gujjar Bhawan who are actively working for the upliftment of their community should be provided with proper orientation regarding the governmental support and NGO’s who can help hem channelizing their work so that impact becomes more powerful and systematic. Community and Governmental tie-up should be done via the non-governmental organizations which will ensure better service delivery.

- Community level awareness should be generated regarding the property rights. Through puppetry, documentaries, short films it can be propagated that instead of giving dowry to the girls for safeguarding their rights, they should be given inheritance rights which will be a support system for them throughout their life and will provide a financial back-up and a lifelong link with maternal family.
- Awareness generation needs to be done intensively as women of the particular area may not be easily allowed to attend any program. So reaching out to these women is a challenge. These women can be sensitized along with satsang programs (by proper channel of community members working for the community) which are way of life for them or through Focused Group discussion involving Gujar women who are educated and working for the progress of the community.
- Panchayats and Gujar Bhawans can be provided with the relevant aids like documentaries on the rights of women in every sphere like family, work, health, political and legal which is a necessity for their empowerment as only if they know about their rights, they will access the areas they are lacking in and will try to fill the gaps which will ultimately empower them.
- Community level awareness drives should be done to discourage early marriages and encourage education in Gujar community and in villages. Social Work Intervention can be helpful in this regard as Family should be sensitized regarding the importance of education and working of girl and women and it is important not only for income but all round development of the family. Gujar Bhawans should look into the matter to discourage the practice like early marriages, drop-out rates within their communities to uplift the status of women. As to make a change in this community, their participation is extremely important along with governmental programs. As their help will help in meaningful implementation of the available schemes.
- There is need to inculcate importance of Women's perspective at the grassroots level. People including men and women should be mobilized to

address the women issues in the community. This should not be limited to Gujjars but for all the people in the village as addressing their needs and problems is important to uplift the status of women and develop a community, village, state and Nation.

- Make women more aware to realize the importance of the constitutional, legal and other major provisions like 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, National Education Policy, Property Rights. Women have to understand and be aware how to use the tools in their hands to break the barriers and uplift their status.
- Cultural barriers have to be broken to certain extent with the participation of community, by not hurting the sentiments of the community. This should not be done by challenging their beliefs but molding their thinking and taking a rational track with the help of a proper intervention. The community based organization can help in this process by working with people on a steady pace so that desired change can be brought regarding higher education and improved role of women in decision making which lead to a better status of women.
- Making women economically self-sufficient should also be a target which needs participation of women, family members and government hand in hand. Families need to be sensitized about the scope and importance of informal sector, the available schemes and machinery, so that they accept the women moving out and getting trained to be self-sufficient. The orthodox thing of limiting women to homes as a part of respect of family is hampering the status of women in the Gujjar community.
- Special focus should be given to the upliftment of nomadic Gujjars who come to Haryana especially in the education of their children which is required for their development.

It can be concluded that the community participation is a much needed step in uplifting and empowering women. It is difficult to reach out to each and every woman due to the cultural barriers. So Gujjar Bhawans and related organization will be beneficial to build rapport with the women and intervention will prove to be more impactful.

7.3.4 Recommendations for the Government

- Door step skill development campaigns should be done to increase the scope of home based or village based income opportunities with special focus on dairy sector as it is their primary occupation and such training can be quite helpful in empowering women in this sector. Success stories of successful self-help programs like Amul can act as a model to sensitize the women, family and community. Such programs can be held with the help of the audio-visual aids to encourage women for self-employment via home based work and uplift their economic status.
- There are schemes specially for the OBC category in the economic domain as the National Backward Classes Finance and Development cooperation provides loans to backward classes (BC's) with concessional rate of interest to promote self-employment specifically the people below poverty line among the backward classes but these schemes could not make the desired impact due to the lack of awareness about the same so evaluation and awareness regarding the schemes should be there.
- More communities like Gujjar communities where majority of the women are not easily allowed to work should be targeted as there is a need to reach out to different communities, especially backward communities where women face dual backwardness which hampers their overall status which further affects the process of development and the goal of Gender Equality.
- There is a need for gender based studies in the informal sector, specifically covering women supporting their families through home-based work like Gujjar Women. As their work is generally unnoticed and unrewarded. If we want to empower them, they need to be streamlined, as regards their work. This will increase the scope of intervention to empower them socially and economically.
- Efforts should be made to secure property rights of women as this will be a powerful step in their empowerment. This needs a grass root level campaigns as well as a strong media campaigns to make people realize how important it is to secure one's rights. This change will come slowly but this is an important step to uplift the status of women in the Gujjar communities and in general.

- The elected women under the 73rd constitutional amendments should be properly trained and a mechanism or monitoring system should be there to know the level of involvement of the women and ensuring that the elected women members are actively participating in the decision making and not merely used as rubber stamps. This is a major step required to uplift the status of women.
- A more professional approach and models should be applied at community level to bring out the desired social change as per the requirement. Government should be joining hands with professional social workers to work for the upliftment of women with different needs and in different situations.
- The Anganwadi workers should have a proactive role in mobilizing women and for this they also need proper orientation programs. They are the primary link with the women of the villages and know their issues inside out. So we need people who belong to these places and share a good rapport with the community as they are the ones who can guide the whole process of development.
- An approach from cultural perspective is required when we are working with women in India especially in rural areas. As per the results of the study and observation of the researcher culture makes a huge impact on the lives of the women. To change the thought process, the cultural componentence is very important, which will lead to a social transformation slowly and steadily.
- Women need to be sensitized regarding the concept of informal sector via success stories. This will help them acknowledge the importance of the work they are doing and will be motivated to get benefits from the same.
- Education is the tool for the social transformation so ensure education to all is important at grass root level. Panchayats should be mobilized to look into the drop out happening from the school and takes necessary step regarding that involving governmental and non-governmental support.
- A general awareness campaign should be adopted at state level to ensure that everyone has PAN card, Aadhar card, Voter ID card and Bank accounts especially in the case of women. This will help them link with the banking system and is a much needed step in the economic empowerment

- Formation of SHG as regards dairy sector should be encouraged so that women with the support of each other strengthen their economic progress.
- With the help of medical social workers, basic awareness in the area of health should be there. Importance of vaccination is also needed as the grass root level as there are myths related to vaccinations among the women. A drive to overcome superstitions, which hampers the wellbeing of the community, is needed to be addressed in the rural areas in accordance with the health.
- More community based studies should be done to know about the similarities and differences in needs of different groups especially pertaining to women issues in various communities according to which programs and policies can be formulated. This will be helpful for the Women's commissions to cater to the needs in a more proactive manner.

It can be said that Government plans and programs should be implemented by professional agencies in generating awareness and empowering women. This will only happen if there is a proper research on the existing issues and mechanisms to deal with them. In the case of Gujar women empowerment can happen only if the women's informal employment is properly channelized and empower them socially and economically, which will be done by the efforts of Government, Community, Panchayati raj Institutions, NGO's and women themselves. Empowerment of women can only be done if the concerned bodies work in sync to uplift the status of women in the community. It is important to make the services more accessible to the women.

“The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence.”

Swami Vivekanand