1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The most valuable asset of a nation is its human resource. Developed nations are advanced not because of their high rise buildings and latest infrastructure, but because of the quality of human resource they possess. In today's world the countries who have learnt to invest in their human resource are the most progressive and developed nations. Women, the first school of the child, constitute roughly one half of the world's population. But their social, economic and political status is lower than that of men in almost all countries of the world. Of course, women do enjoy better position in some societies than in others, but their overall position everywhere is lower than their male counterparts. Even in countries and societies where there is constitutional provision for equal fundamental rights for all, the position of women remains painful.

The advancement of women is the most significant fact in modern India. According to K. Natarajan, as quoted by S.N. Mukerji, 'a person who died a hundred years ago come to life today, the first and most important change that would strike him is the revolution in the position of women'[1]. A century ago girls' education had open enemies in India but it is now a sine qua non of India's social and national development. Now women have been regarded as the nuclei of a nation. In spite of this women have occupied a disadvantaged position in almost all societies of the world.

1.2 WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY:

Women play an important role in the social, cultural, economic and political life of a country. Since time immemorial women were involved in the developmental process in our country but mostly in a very subtle way. The popular saying, 'Behind every successful man there is a woman', make this aspect amply clear.

It has however begun to be felt that importance of women's role in matter of building the character of would be citizens, economic reconstruction of the country and social reform cannot be minimized. Now a day not only in the most advanced countries of the world but in our country, the expected role of women goes much beyond the home. It is expected that they have an important role in the development of society. Our goals of national development, of economic

equality, social justice maximum production apply equally both to men and women and will remain unrealized unless women are allowed to play an active role. So development of society covers all aspects of community life including development of the condition of women.

The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly indicated that 'for full development of our human resources the improvement of homes and for moulding the most impressionable years of infancy the education of women is of ever greater importance than that of men. In the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with man the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects.'[2]

1.3 OVERALL EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF WOMEN EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD:

The position of men and women are different in every society. In the early 1970s, the concept Women in Development (WID) came into existence. The main purpose of WID was to look at the unequal position of women in relation to men and to develop different strategies to control the disadvantages of women. In 1975, the international conference on women issues was held at Mexico. In that conference the year 1975 was declared as the 'International Women Year' and 1976-1985 as 'United Nations Decade for Women.' The United Nations has created a voluntary fund named as 'United Nations Development Fund for Women' and later it was known as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In the early part of 1980 the Gender and Development (GAD) admits the biological and social difference between men and women. In 1990, the United Nations in its first Human Development Report introduced Human Development Index (HDI) to measure some indicators among which two were related to gender, Gender-related Development Indicator (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The Beijing conference in 1995, after the end of the women decade, has searched for ways to bring about gender equity. It means equal enjoyment of opportunities, resources and life chances, both by men and women.

In the post World War period it was recognized that the economic, political and social values of education led the progress of society and education

of women had an important role to play to establish social values. A noteworthy development in respect of women education was noticed after the pioneering work of the United Nations. A number of world conferences were held under different agencies like UNICEF, WHO, UN etc and created a sense of commitment in the development of women education.

Apart from other areas, women education in all over the world lags behind than their male counterparts. 'There are approximately 900 million illiterate adults in the world, of whom two thirds (65%) are women. Of the 130 million children of primary school age not in school over the world, 70% are girls.'[3] Early child bearing, domestic activities and traditional attitudes lead to high rate of illiteracy among women. According to Sundaram (1996), as quoted by Satinderjit and Sushma, 'more than 60 million girls in the SAARC countries don't get primary education and the majority doesn't complete their schooling.'[4] For the development of women education around the world some initiatives have been taken and attempts have been made to remove the social inequality in education. The year 1990 was observed as 'Year of Girl Child' by SAARC. The decade 1991-2000 had also observed as 'Decade of Girl Child'[5] by the same organization. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Copenhagen Declaration (1995), have formulated action programmes to establish gender equality in education to empower women for social justice[6]. On November 1967 the United Nations adopted the 'Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.' Article 3 stipulates: 'All appropriate measure shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women.'[7] Yet this idea still has currency. Women do not enjoy all the educational opportunities they should have, and often do not have any at all. Nearly everywhere in the world they are given less education than men, and over vast areas of the globe. The majority of illiterates are women.

The Picture of women education in UK is far more satisfactory than different advanced countries. In 1870, the first Elementary Education Act, popularly known as 'Forster Act'[8] came into existence and changed the educational scenario of women education in that country. Since 1900, almost all boys and girls have received education up to the age of 14 years. Now a day,

girls' enrolment in pre-school, primary and secondary education is between approximately 49 to 50 percent of total enrolment.

In Australia, the picture of women education was not fair like other parts of the world. In 1970 the educational reform was made by the government that focused on girls belonging to class and socio-economic disadvantage groups. The impact of 'International women's Year' (1975) has changed the picture of Girls' Education in Australia. Elizabeth Reid, the then Prime Minister made an enquiry into girls' education and it was reported by the School Commission in 1975 that every level, girls received less education than did boys. The present picture of girls' education in Australia is far better, women enjoyed equal opportunity and government initiatives have been increased to gender segregation of educational field.

In Ghana women are generally busy in domestic activities. The educational facilities are mostly reserved for boys. The Enrolment of girls in co-educational institutions is few in number. Some social factors are responsible for less enrolment and poorer academic performance of girls. The patrilineal inheritance system and traditional stereotype role of women in society are mostly responsible for slow progress of women education.

The most advanced countries like United States of America (USA) is also suffering by the problem of gender inequality in education. Sex discrimination has been observed in elementary, secondary and post secondary level of education. For reducing the discrimination, the government has taken different initiatives and now in new era, equal opportunity has been increased in educational areas. In 1972, title IX of Education Amendment was signed and then converted into law without having any controversy. Since 1990, the female dropout rate has been declined.

In Russia, women were engaged in industries as a cheap labour before Russian revolution. After the socialist revolution, the status of women has been changed and they get right to education, equal pay and right to vocational training.

In Cambodia, thousands of rural poor Cambodia struggle to meet their basic needs due to poverty. Many have no access to health care and a large number of rural children are unable to receive education because there is no school. Sometimes even when there is a school some children, often girls', can't

go to school because their families are so poor that day are forced to work instead. There are also orphans who have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS and no one is there to take care of them.

In Japan, educational opportunities for women are inseparably related to equality between man and women. In Japan, the proportion of girls' going on to senior high school surpassed that of boy's in 1969, and girls' admission to higher institutions reached 32.2% (boy's 37.9%) in 1983. At secondary level, however education emphasizing sex roles has been a controversial issue, and a low level of expectations by parents, teachers and society in general towards girls' has had a grave effect on girls' achievement and their choice of course. Since inequality at lower levels decides higher levels of educational opportunities, problems of women's education became conspicuous in higher education.

In 1945, General Head Quarters (GHQ) issued five directives for reform, whose aims included the equalization of men and women and the complete liberation of women. According to directives, the ministry of education proclaimed a programme for Reorganizing Women's Education and Published and Educational reform intended to equalized opportunities by introducing co-education, altering the content of education, and raising the level of reciprocal respect between men and women.

In Canada, women have progressed considerably in terms of education and schooling over the past few decades. Just 20 years ago, a smaller percentage of women than men age 25 to 54 had a post secondary education. Today, the situation is completely different. Education indicators show that women generally do better than men. This progress in favour of women is even noticeable at a young age, since girls' often get better marks than boys in elementary and secondary schools.

As well, more girls' than boys earned their high school diploma within the expected time framed and girls' are less likely to dropout. More women than men enrolled in college and university programmes after completing their high school education. Despite all that, certain challenges persist, women's employment earnings are all average still lower than men's even they have same educational level.

In Singapore, women play and important but subordinate role be it in economic, political or socials sphere, and Government's support for equal

opportunities for girls' is based on pragmatic economic considerations and not on adherence to any dogma or theory. This gender ideology that is reflected in the education policies and curricula for schoolings emphasized patriarchal values and up held traditional feminine virtues such as gentleness, docility and submissiveness. At the same time education and curricular policies encouraged girls' to study 'hard' sciences, like the boys. All these have resulted in the construction of a dual role for women in both the economic and domestic sphere. Education for girls' had entrapped them in the constructing a gender identity that upheld a patriarchal social structure. However, since the turn of the century, this construct has unraveled as the provision of modern education, especially in science and technology and opportunities for employment have enabled women to become independent in many senses of the world and this has brought about changes in society's gender ideology.

Ratio of girls' to boys in primary and secondary education in South Korea was last measured at 98.80 in 2010, according to World Bank. In traditional Korean society, women received little formal education. Christian missionaries began establishing schools for girls' during the late nineteenth and early part of twentieth century's. Ewha Women University began as a primary school established by Methodist missionaries in 1886 and achieved university status after 1945. There were approximately 262, 500 women students in college and universities in 1987. However, only as out 16% of college and university teachers were women in 1987.

In 1983 more women 51.8 percent were employed in rural areas than in urban areas – 37.9 percent. The growing number of women receiving a college education has meant that their see role differs from that of their mothers and grandmother's official South Korean statistics indicated that 43.6% women were in the work force by 1988. Prospects of lower clean women, however, were frequently grim. In some cases, they were obliged to become part of the entertainment industry's order to survive economically.

Women in South Korea have experienced great social change in the recent years, especially women's social status improvement over the last 30 years. It was shown that women's social status has become practically equal to men's in many social sectors such as occupation, legal rights education political participation and other areas. However, despite all these evidence of equality, it

still raises questions about the true nature of the improvement of women's social status and gender equality due to the remaining inequality, such as the scarcity of women in professional fields, the prevalent imbalance of housework, the coherent belief of gender differences, and other factors Korea remains a patriarchal society.

In accordance with its commitments to gender equality and promotion of women's rights, France is especially attached to the enrolment of girls' and young girls'. Girls' faces particular obstacle throughout their schooling, including the cost of schooling, early marriage safety, particularly in transport, and sexual violence. Girls' education is still faced with inequalities and gender based discrimination inherent in their society. France pays special attention to reducing gender inequality at all levels of education.

It was found from the investigation of Farida Allaghi and Aisha Almana that women in Arab gulf region confined themselves amongst their own traditional customs and rituals. Both men and women have different private world.[9] Women due to social isolation suffered from different harmful and social consequences. Now a day due to impact of modernization some gulf women enjoy better life and education has improved their social status.

The picture of women education is not satisfactory in Arabian countries. In 'Koran' it is stated that men are the protectors and maintainers of women as 'Allah' has given the one more than other, and because support them from their means'[10] This ideology affects the social and economic condition of women and the status of women is not at all satisfactory.

The picture about women education in Turkey has been found unsatisfactory like in other parts of the globe. According to population census of 2000 the illiteracy rate among men stands at 6% while that of women at 19.4%. The enrolment of girls in basic and secondary schools falls behind their male counterparts.[11]

The position and status of women in China before the communist revolution was not at all satisfactory. The famous Chinese proverb exposed the status and position of women 'Wife is like a horse a man has bough, he can ride it or flog it as he likes.'[12]

The present picture of women education is somewhat different from the past. The constitution of China makes better provision of women development.

Shortly after liberation of China, the Federation of Chinese Women was formed in 1949 to help China become a powerful communist country. Chinese women now enjoy equal opportunities to ensure their active participation in the development process.[13]

In Pakistan the picture of women education is not at all satisfactory. The socio-cultural pattern, negative attitude towards women education, economic condition of parents and adult illiteracy are responsible for female illiteracy. The enrolment of girls in primary education is very low in Pakistan. So, emphasis has been laid to make primary education universal and provide some special facilities to make education accessible to the female population.

Gender inequality is very much common in Bangladesh. Apart from parents' illiteracy and poor socio-economic condition, the 'purdah' system has influenced the poor female participation both in primary and secondary education.

Now, in Bangladesh, government has adopted a National Policy for Women's Advancement within the overall framework of CEDAW. This policy sets the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women by empowering them with the ability to be equal partners in the process of development. The country's fifth five year plan has set itself specific objectives for implementing the national policy including the promotion and protection of women's human rights, and ensuring women's legal rights over property inheritance and other related laws.

The educational opportunities of women in the Republic of Maldives are encouraging. Now a day, universal primary education has been implemented and the literacy rate increased to 91.4% in 1986. Separate schools for girls were started during 1950 when formal education was introduced. Here, attention to women's affairs and their integration into national development began in 1979 with the formation of a Preparatory Committee, later renamed National Women's Committee, for organizing activities related to International Decade for Women. This Committee has gone through several transformations, leading to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Women's Affairs and Sports in 1993. It has subsequently evolved into the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social security, still headed by a women Minister.[14]

In Srilanka, women enjoyed equal status and position in society. The constitution of Srilanka (1978) guarantees equal freedom to women and equal status and equal access to education. The retention of girls in secondary level of education is far better than boys.

The picture of women education in Nepal is not at all encouraging. In Nepal women have been found lagging far behind than men in educational and the social fields. The enrolment number in primary education is very low and drop out rate of girls is higher than boys. The early child bearing, domestic responsibilities, traditional attitudes, lead to high rate of illiteracy among women in Nepal.

The Bhutanese women play a very important role for the maintenance of economic and social life which is equal to men. In Bhutan, government through different five year plans, emphasize the involvement of rural women in development activities, especially in the area of education, health, hygiene and sanitation. Women are encouraged to participate in the various block meetings, where decisions concerning the development of blocks are made. A number of programmes have been implemented for women's advancement, often in collaboration with the National Women's Association of Bhutan (NWAB), the only formal women organization in the country. These include non-formal education programmes for women, vocational training programme, rural savings, credit scheme and programmes to promote women's involvement in health development.

Gender bias is a worldwide phenomenon. Issues of gender equality are moving to the top of the global agenda but better understanding of women's and men's contributions to society is essential to speed the shift from agenda to policy to practice. Too often, women and men live in different worlds, -worlds that differ in access to education and work opportunities, in health, personal security and leisure time. The 'World's Women' 1995 provides information and analyses to highlight the economic, political and social differences that still separate women's and men's lives.

1.4 WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA:

India is considered to be a mosaic of races, culture and religions of races, culture and religions. Racial diversity has been one of the hallmarks of India from time immemorial. Despite this diversity, there developed a sense of mutual unity and cohesion among the diverse people living in different parts of the country. But another major area where diversity was easily visible was in the field of education and status of women in Indian society. Gender inequality is seen in different parameters where women are lagging far behind than men.

In Vedic age, women freely pursued knowledge and enjoyed equal rights with men in the field of education and performed religious rituals with men.[15] Vedic studies presupposed 'Upanayana' which was general among girls at that time 'Harita Dharma Sutra' shows that girls used to be divided into two classes, 'Brahma Vadinis' and 'Sadyodvahas.' 'Brahma-vadinis' continued their education for a long period and used to become experts in philosophy, literature and religion. 'Sadyodvahas' used to stop their education on coming of ages when their marriages were arranged.[16]

But during the later Vedic age women were deprived of their social and religious rights. They were considered to be inferior to men. Girls were not allowed to participate in the religious 'sanskars.' Ultimately the position and status of women in the society fell so low that in many societies the birth of a girl child was regarded as a curse in the family.

The prohibition of entry of women in 'Sanghas' by Lord Buddha, shows that Buddhism, initially, did not have regard for women, but later on Buddha himself accepted his mother into 'Sangha'. Though he agreed to the admission of women in 'Sangha' even then women were kept under stricter rules and their places were lower than that of male monks. The eventual admittance of ladies in his monasteries gave an impetus to the spread of education and philosophy among the ladies of aristocratic and commercial communities[17]. Among the distinguished female scholars during this period some used to remain unmarried and some engaged in the teaching profession. It is evident from the special meaning of two terms 'Upadhuyayani' and Upadhyaya' in Sanskrit language where the former means the wife of a teacher and the later denotes female teacher.[18] Some of them like Sulabha, Gargi and Maitreyi seem to have made

some contributions to the advancement of knowledge and enjoy the rare privilege of being included among the galaxy of distinguished scholars. It is difficult to determine the actual position of higher education among women during this period. There were no schools for women, nor were they encouraged by parents to go to famous teachers for the completion of their education. 'Atreyi', a learned lady with a little exception went out on search of philosophy.[19] Thus higher education could have been possible only to girls in high and cultured families while women belonging to lower strata of the society were denied of such privilege.

In medieval period under the influence of Islam, women used to observe 'purdah' system. Therefore, they could not attend Maktabs or Madarasahs like male students regularly. Some girls of a locality assembling in company would go to the Maktabs attached to mosque for the sake of elementary education; their main purpose was to learn only reading and writing. There was no universal system of women education prevalent during that period. Whatever women education was there, it was confined only to urban areas. There was no separate provision for the girls, education of general masses.

During Moghul period education of women-folk was prevalent in some form or other. The daughters of royal and aristocratic families were educated privately at home. The curriculum for girls was mainly the study of religious books and Home science. Some girls from royal houses were proficient in literature and music. Even in Sultanate period, Sultana Razia was learned and expert in military art or warfare, politics and administration.[20] The girls of middle class Hindu families must have been receiving elementary education with boys or at home privately.

The education of women during modern period has regained its lost status. The introduction of English education in India brought about the great transformation in female education in the 19th century though in the early days of East India company education remained a neglected affair in India. The Charter Act of 1813 first compelled the East India Company to accept the responsibility for education of Indian people. The credit for taking the task of women education goes to Christian missionaries. 1820 is a memorable year for every Indian when David Hare established a girls' school at Calcutta. After that pioneering work of missionaries India came forward to lend support to organize special schools for

girls and thereby breaking the traditional resistance to the education of women. Among the Indian pioneers the names of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar may mentioned. The most important event in the history of English education in India during the early part of 19th century was the equal importance given to women education. At that time provision for girls' formal education was very limited s very few literate women are found. 'In 1901, the percentage of literacy amongst women was only 8% The number of girls enrolled for every 100 boys was only 12 at primary stage and 4 at the secondary stage. The total enrolment in higher education was only 264. Much faster progress was made in next 50 years, both in developing their education; and the progress in the last 15 years has been almost phenomenal.' [21]

India witnessed her freedom on August 1947, and with dawn of liberation and marching towards modernity, people expected that all conservative mindsets and social irrational prejudices, among which gender discrimination is one, would fade away. In reality, entering into her 68th year of independence, the country is not free from multifarious problems of which the plight of the girl child is a serious socio-cultural concern. Among the many development indexes used as a yardstick for measuring social growth, the most important is education. Even today, 35% of girls are still illiterate as discrimination against them plaques the country and extreme patriarchy has robbed women of justice and equality, which only education and enlightens can secure. Society's history of denying opportunities for women to seek knowledge has obstructed their path to empowerment.

It is needless to acknowledge that women's literacy and educational levels help to secure social equality and human development, higher economic productivity and tolerant democratic society. In this regard Kothari Commission (1964-66) said 'the important social objective of education is to equalize opportunity enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of common man and cultivate all available talent must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and equitable society in which the exploitation of the weak will be

minimized.'[22] Equality and equity in education is directly related to democratic development and the establishment of egalitarian society.

Another important achievement towards the objective of the betterment of the Girl Child in India is the formulation of national 'Plan of action' for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000 AD). The Plan of Action advocates policies and programmes of both 'Advocacy' and 'Action' with an ultimate objective of building up of a better future for the girl child with positive image. The Plan of Action lays special emphasis on health, education and vocational training and awareness for girl children and adolescent girls. It also has special provisions for care and protection of girl children belonging to 'Special Groups' and children in difficult circumstnces.[23]

1.4.1 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGURD FOR WOMEN IN INDIA:

In Indian Constitution education is both a Union and a State subject. Our Constitution has guaranteed free and compulsory education to every child up to the age of 14 years. Indian Constitution provides several safeguards to its female citizen. These are as follows- Article 15 (I) states: "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, and caste grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth or any of them." Article 15(3) states: "nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making and special provision for women and children." Article 16(1) states: there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State." Article 39 (d) states: Equal pay for equal work for both men and women." Article 42 states: Provision for securing human conditions of work and for maternity relief. Article 51 states "Renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women."[24]

In Indian Constitution it is assured that no one is discriminated against on the basis of sex. But in reality social taboos have historically been retarding the progress of women, especially in the field of education. In all societies their roles are being subordinated, needs are beings ignored and rights are being violated in every corner. "With all the above guarantees, still women have not been restored to the rightful place to which they belong."[25] In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India. 'Every 26 minutes a woman is

molested. Every 34 minutes a rape takes place. Every 42 minutes a sexual harassment incident occurs. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped. And every 93 minutes a women is burnt to death over dowry. One quarter of the reported rapes involves girls under the age of 16 but the vast majorities are never reported. Although the penalty is severe, convictions are rare.'[26]

1.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF DIFFERENT COMMISSIONS AND POLICIES ON GIRLS' EDUCATION:

- **University Education Commission: (1948-49)**

  The University Education Commission (1948-49) included a short chapter on Women's Education but did not pose any special issues relating to it. Regarding higher education, it observed, women's and men's education should have many elements in common, but should not generally be identical in all respects.

  Regarding the importance of women's education, the commission observed: There cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for then it would most surely be passed on to the next generation. (UEC 1948-49)

  The Commission has recommended the following special courses for women in order to enable them to fit themselves well in their social set-up: (UEC 1948-49)

  a) Home economics
  b) Nursing
  c) Teaching
  d) Fine arts

- **Secondary Education Commission: (1952-53)**

  There is no special justification to deal with women's education because every type of education open to men should also be open to women. Many women have joined the Faculties of

Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Commerce, Law and Teaching as well as the Arts and Science and have taken to research.

Recommendations:

The Secondary Education Commission made the following recommendations in favour of coeducation:

1) While no distinction need be made between education imparted to boys and girls' special facilities for the study of home science should be made available in all girls' schools and in coeducational or mixed schools.
2) Efforts should be made by State Governments to open separate schools for girls' wherever there is demand for them.
3) Definite conditions should be laid down in regard to coeducational or mixed schools to satisfy the special needs of girl students and women members of the teaching staff. (SEC 1952-53)

- **National Committee on Women Education: (1958-59)**

The problems of education of girls' and women have acquired a new significance since the attainment of Independence. Education panels of the Planning Commission at its meeting held in July 1957, recommended that: A suitable Committee should be appointed to go into the various aspects of the questions relating to the nature of education for girls' at the elementary, secondary and adult stages and to examine whether the present system was helping them to lead a happier and more useful life.

The recommendation was placed before the Conference of the State Education Ministers held in September, 1957. The Conference also agreed that a special committee should be appointed to examine the whole question of women's education. A National Committee on Women's Education was accordingly set-up by the Government of India in the Ministry of Education, under the Chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh, who was also the Chairman of 'Central Social Welfare Board'.

The major recommendations made by the National Committee on Women's Education under different sections are as follows:

Special Recommendations:

1. The education of women should be regarded as a major and a special problem in education for a good many years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face its difficulties and magnitude and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible. The funds required for the purpose should be considered to be the first charge on the sums set aside for the development of education.
2. Steps should be taken to constitute as early as possible, a National Council for the education of girls' and women.
3. The problem of the education of women is so vital and of such great national significance that it is absolutely necessary for the Centre to assume more responsibility for its rapid development.
4. The State Government should establish State Councils for the education of girls' and women.
5. Every State should be required to prepare comprehensive development plans for the education of girls' and women in its area.
6. It is also necessary to enlist the cooperation of all semi-official organisations, local bodies, voluntary organizations, teachers organisations and members of the public to assist in the promotion of the education of girls' and women.
7. The planning Commission should set-up a permanent machinery to estimate, as accurately as possible, the woman-power requirements of the Plans from time to time and make the results of its studies available to Government and the public.

- **Report of the Bhaktavatsalam Committee: (1963)**

The National Council for Women's Education at its meeting held in April 1963 appointed a Small Committee under the Chairmanship of M. Bhaktavatsakam, Chief Minister of Madras to look into the causes of lack of public support, particularly in rural areas, for girls' education and to enlist public cooperation. The Committee made the following recommendations:

1) Direct cooperation of the public should be encouraged in the following fields:
   - i) Establishment of private schools.
   - ii) Putting up of school buildings.
   - iii) Provision of suitable accommodation for teachers and students.
   - iv) Popularization of coeducation at the primary stage.
   - v) Popularization of the idea of women taking up teaching profession.
   - vi) Encouraging married women to take up at least part time teaching in village schools and to work as school mothers.
   - vii) Initiating action and participating in educative propaganda to breakdown traditional prejudices against girls' education.
   - viii) Supplying mid-day meals.
   - ix) Supplying uniforms, free textbooks and writing materials to needy children.
2) The State should create public opinion in favour of girls' education through:
   - i) School improvement conferences
   - ii) Seminars
   - iii) Radio talks, audio-visual aids and distribution of literature.

iv) Enrolment drives generally in June and special additional drives for girls' education during Dussehra.

3) It should be the endeavour of the State to provide a primary school in each habitation with a population of 300. However, in scattered, hilly or isolated areas, primary schools should be provided where the population is even less than 200, so as to provide every habitation with school within a mile.

A middle school in each habitation with a population of 1,500 and above, and within a radius of 3 miles should be provided. Generally, there should be a secondary school within a radius of 5 miles.

4) It should be the aim of all States to appoint women teachers in primary schools and a great number of women teachers in mixed schools. Financial incentives like special allowance for hilly, isolated or any other specific backward rural areas should be given to teachers.

5) Attempts should be made to bring back to the teaching profession married women who have left it in recent years. Condensed courses should be organized for adult women, so that they could take up teaching jobs in rural areas.

6) During selection of trainees for training schools and colleges, special preference should be given to women from rural areas seeking admission.

7) A separate women inspectorate will help to bring in more girls' to school.

8) It is only by providing women teachers with quarters near the schools that many educated women can be attracted to the teaching profession.

9) Special programmes for girls' education should be taken up as centrally sponsored schemes on the basis of hundred percent grants outside the plan ceilings. The provision of suitable school buildings is one of considerable urgency.

For this, either hundred per cent central assistance or long-term central loans should be provided.

10) All States should find ways and means of providing funds in order to make education free for all girls' up to the secondary stage. In case resources are limited and do not meet the full requirements, the priority should be given to rural areas.

11) Compulsory Education Act should introduce in States where it does not exist. In addition, State Government should provide sufficient incentives and carry on propaganda to attract all children to school.

- **Kothari Commission: (1964-66)**

The Kothari Commission did not include a separate chapter on women's education. But it considered the issue and made some recommendations under Chapter VI (Towards Equalization of Educational Opportunity) and Chapter XII (Higher Education Enrolments and Programmes).

It has also made some suggestions and recommendations of its own.

1. The education of women should be regarded as a major programme in education for some years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face the difficulties involved and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible.
2. Special schemes should be prepared for this purpose and the funds required for them should be provided on a priority basis.
3. Both at the Centre and in the States, there should be a special machinery to look after the education of girls' and women. It should bring together officials and non-officials in the planning and implementation of programmes for women's education. (KEC 1964-66)

- **National Education Policy: (1967-68)**

Soon after the Kothari Commission Report, the 33rd meeting of 'The Central Advisory Board of Education' was held on 22-23rd of August, 1967, at New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Dr. Triguna Sen, the then Minister of Education. The first time when the Board had discussed a comprehensive statement on education policy was in 1944, when a Post-War Plan of Educational Development was formalized.

The National Education Policy Statement made provisions and recommendations for women's education in the last of its 35 paragraphs, runs as under:

The education of girls' should receive special emphasis and funds required for its advancement, particularly for the implementation of its special programmes, should be provided on a priority basis. The funds for girls' education and its special programmes should be earmarked so that there is no possibility of their being diverted into other uses.

- **National Policy on Education: (1979)**

The National Policy on Education emphasized that highest priority must be given to free education for all up to the age of 14 as laid down in the Directive Principles of the Constitution. Education up to this stage should be general and not specialized. With the help of tool subjects, it should develop among students scientific attitude. Elementary education should be an integral stage.

While it is necessary to expand the facilities for formal education in elementary schools for all children, in the age group 6-14, it is also important to formulate schemes of non-formal education for drop outs and the older children in the age group who have not any schooling. The aim should be to cover all the children in the age group 6-14 in the next ten years. Steps should

be taken to prevent children giving up schooling without completing the course. The problem of wastage should be studied in detail and remedial measures taken.

Incentives such as mid-day meals, free text-books, stationery and uniforms should be given to the education of girls' and children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

- **National Policy on Education: (1986)**

A National Policy on Education was approved by the Parliament, covering different aspects of education, including women education.

The following provisions regarding women education have been made in the text of the National Policy on Education 1986.

1. Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will faster the development of new value through redesigned curricula, text-books, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social -engineering. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development.
2. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets and effective monitoring. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to eliminate sex

stereo-typing in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emerged technologies.

- **National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector: (1987-88)**

1. There should be shifts for girls' at suitable times so that they can assist their mothers in work and go to school.
2. To encourage parents to send their girls' to afternoon shifts.
3. It would be preferable to have a regular crèche attached to the primary school.
4. Incentives for sending the girls' to school will have to be given to promote their education.
5. The syllabi need to be made more relevant for the children of rural areas.
6. Under the Government scheme of Condensed Courses being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board, the adolescent girls' and above, who acquire education in a non-formal manner, have to appear in the same examination for which children from public schools from metropolitan cities also appear.
7. At it is emphasized in Programme of Action 1986 that women teachers should be preferably recruited at the school level to give greater confidence to the parents to send their girl children to the school.
8. In the rural areas there are not enough trained women who can be appointed as teachers.
9. The revision of the text-books and the primers need to be carried out keeping the objective of bringing of women into greater focus.
10. Greater emphasis has to be given on the vocational aspect of education.

11. For the vocational training of girls'- there should be a revolving fund from which they may be given scholarships to bear the cost of training and hostel facilities and they should reimburse the amount after they get suitable jobs.
12. It is necessary to convince the parents of poor girls' regarding the relevance of education to the lives of their daughters.
13. The commission does realize that literacy in itself is not a solution to the basic problem of poor women, viz. exploitation and hunger and therefore literacy has to be understood in the wider context of the social structure.

- **National Perspective Plan for Women's Education: (1988-2000 A.D.)**

The National Perspective Plan formulated some important specific objectives to ensure the participation of women in the areas of social, economic, cultural, political and educational. The objectives of this plan are:

1. Elimination of illiteracy, Universalization of elementary education and minimization of drop-out rate in the age group of 6-14 years and stagnation in negligible proportion.
2. Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to appropriate level, nature, quality of education and also the where with at for success comparable with men.
3. Substantial vocationalization and diversification of secondary education so as to provide a wide scope for employment and economic independence of women.
4. Making education an effective means for women's equality by eliminating the existing bias in the system preventing women from participating in the educational process, by making necessary intervention in the content and processes of education to inculcate positive and egalitarian attitudes,

and to ensure that teachers perceive this as one of their essential roles.

5. Providing non-formal and part-time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.
6. Impetus to enroll girls in various professional degree courses.
7. Creating a new system of accountability, particularly in respect of basic educational services, to the local community inter alia, by active involvement of women.

To achieve these objectives for women education, the National Perspective Plan has made several recommendations. Some of the salient ones are:

1. Awareness needs to be generated among the masses, regarding the necessity of educating girls so as to prepare them to effectively contribute to the socio-economic development of the country, to strengthen their role in society and to realize their own capacities. The media and various forms of communication have to be geared communication have to be geared to this end.
2. Involvement of local leaders, voluntary agencies and women's group is also necessary.
3. For improving enrolment and minimizing drop outs and wastage in case of girl students, it would be helpful if learning is made more attractive by providing adequate teaching materials in schools.
4. School timing should be flexible and fixed to suit local conditions and the needs of the working girls and must be available within the walking distance of the child.
5. In addition to incentive like free text books, free supply of uniforms, award of attendance scholarships and mid day meal, facilities such as proper school building, safe drinking water, and toilets etc., need to be provided to encourage school enrolment and retention of girls

especially girls from educationally deprived social groups and from hilly tribal, desert and remote rural areas and urban slums.

6. Local talent must be developed in order to meet the need for recruiting women teachers at the primary and elementary levels especially in rural and tribal areas. In this Endeavour national agencies, mahila mandals and local self-government agencies can make significant contribution.
7. There should be a reservation of 50 percent posts for women teachers in elementary schools. Women teachers working in the rural areas should be provided suitable accommodation.
8. Multi-entry system for girls who cannot attend school continuously should be adopted.
9. Wherever necessary, schools meant exclusively bringing tribal children, particularly girls, in school system. Tribal dialects, extreme poverty, problems of community, rigidity of formal education and its irrelevance to the tribal culture and the tribal distrust of the ways of the mainstream society, must be borne in mind in formulating strategies.
10. General and vocational training courses should be combined so that prospect of career immediately or completion of schooling may attract girls from weaker sections.
11. Vocational and technical education for women both formal and non-formal should be a major feature of the programme of rural universities.
12. A large number of girls cannot participate in whole day education programmes. Provision of non-formal and part time programmes with flexible school hours and sensitivity to the agricultural cycle are of particular importance.

13. At least 50 percent seats in pre-service courses in all teachers training institutions should be reserved for women.

14. The strategies spelt out in the National Policy of Education 1986, the Programme of Action for its implementation and the National Literacy Mission and the successful achievement of the goals imposed in these documents, would be important, for improvement in the status of women.

With the implementation of the recommendations of the National Perspective Plan for women's Education by the Department of Women and Child Development Ministry, the enrolment of girls in primary education and the literacy growth of women, changing day by day. It also be expected that women's education in our country would take great strides with the total implementation of the recommendations.

1.4.3 LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN INDIA:

- **National Adult Education Programme (NAEP):**

On October 2, 1978, the government of India launched a programme by the name "National Adult Education Programme". According to this plan, the government announced to promote literacy amongst 100 crore adults in the age group of 15-35 years by 1983-84. The programme was supposed to be implemented in joint collaborative effort of the central and state governments, administration of union territories, voluntary agencies, colleges, universities and youth centers. The main objectives of the Adult Education Programme are:

i) To impart literacy skills (reading, writing in mother tongue) to the target illiterate population i.e. 1 crore

ii) To impart functional skills to the adult learners like skill to learn and feed the family, acquire social status etc.

iii) To create awareness amongst the adult learners regarding the laws and policies of the government, fundamental rights and duties provided by the constitution, gain knowledge of health and hygiene, our national culture and heritage etc.

- **National Literacy Mission (NLM):**

National Literacy Mission Campaign was launched by the Government of India in 1988. The National Literacy Mission lays stress on correct monitoring and systematic evaluation of adult education programmes launched under it in the country. It has developed and circulated guidelines for concurrent and final evaluation of the literacy campaigns and post literacy programmes. It has also prepared a comprehensive set of guidelines on continuing education.

i) Self reliance in 3R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic)

ii) Becoming aware of the causes of deprivation and moving towards improving their condition by participating in the process of development.

iii) Improvement of skill to improve economic status and general well being.

iv) Imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality and control of population growth etc.

- **Total Literacy Campaign (TLC):**

The Total Literacy Campaign was launched by the National Literacy Mission as its principle Strategy for eradication of illiteracy in the country. It was launched in the year 1988. Its chief target was to achieve total literacy by the year 2005. 442 districts have been covered under this campaign and 215 districts under Postal Campaign. Since it's launching about 90.55 million

persons are reported to have been enrolled under this campaign out of which 66.56 million have attained literacy. The overall literacy rate increased from 18.3 percent in 1951 to 52.2 percent in 1991.

- **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP):**

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in India in 1994. It is one of the largest education project ever taken in the world. The programme was launched with an aim to achieve the goal of universalization of primary education.

India has been striving to achieve the goal of universalization of primary education right from 1950. But this could not be achieved. There were still high dropout rate, large number of out of school children, lack of access of habitations within 1 km. radius and high wastage taking 7.2 years for 5 years of primary schooling. The causes for all these have already been discussed above. The Programme of Action in 1992 called for an integrated and decentralized approach to the development of primary education particularly at district and sub-district levels. The spirit of this policy, led to the birth of DPEP in 1994.

The criteria for selection of districts under DPEP are:

i) Educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average.

ii) Districts where Total Literacy Campaign have generated demand for elementary education.

The chief functions of DPEP are the following:

i) Text books Development.

ii) Supplementary reading material.

iii) Pupil Evaluation.

iv) Teacher training.

v) Academic Support Institutions.

vi) Strengthening of DIET.

vii) Recruitment of teachers.

viii) Setting of SIEMATS.

ix) Distance Education.

x) Integrating the disabled.

xi) Early childhood Education.

xii) Social Equity.

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):**

Sarva Shiksha Abhijan, shortly SSA is an attempt to universalize primary education by community ownership of the school system. There is a demand for quality education in our country. So, the Sarva Shiksha Abhijan is a response to achieve the quality primary or basic education. It is a mission to provide an opportunity to all children to improve their capability. This programme can be considered as an opportunity for the promotion of social justice through universalization of primary education. It is an effort to involve all the human resources in the form of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committee, Village and Urban Slum level Education Committee, Parent-teachers Association, Mother-teachers' Association, Tribal Autonomous Council and other grass-root level structures in the effective management of elementary education. It includes all the sources which may provide congenial environment and full co-operation from the community for providing quality basic education throughout the country.

- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009:**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed in August 2009 and came into force from April 2010. This was a historic day for the people of India as from this day the rights to education of all children between the age group six to fourteen years will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution. The Act emphasized on providing educational facilities to the children in the neighbourhood. It stressed on availability

accessibility, adoptability and accountability in the field of primary education.

1.4.4 GIRLS' EDUCATION IN THE FIVE YEAR PLANS:

The five year plans have launched the various programmes for the educational development of the country. Here a brief account of the women education launched under the different five year plans is given:

- **First Five Year Plan: (1951-1956)**

  In regard to women education it stated under its' 'point 8 Women's Education' that the general purpose and objective of women's education cannot off course be different from the men's education. The problem of women's education in India is above all the problems of the education of grown up women. The first five year plan gave greater attention to resumption of studies by women at leisure time whop left education due to different household problem.

- **Second Five Year Plan: (1995-1961)**

  The Government had decided to stop the problem of wastage and stagnation at the secondary stage, as at this stage the education of girls lags seriously behind. Out of total population of 12 million girls in the age group of 14-17 years, about 3 percent are attending schools. First, it wanted to expand the existing facilities and secondly to bring about the expansion of secondary education for girls.

- **Third Five year Plan: (1961-1966)**

  This five year plans stated that there exists a large gap between the boys and girls attending school. The National council for Women's Education carefully considered the special measures for promoting girls education at primary middle and secondary stage. These include the provision of quarters and special allowances for women teachers working in rural areas, condensed education course for adult women, stipend for women teacher trainees, attendance prizes and scholarship for girls students, appointment of school mother in co-educational institutions.

- **Fourth Five Year Plan: (1969-1974)**

  In its chapter 'Education and Man-power' under 'Girls Education' the Fourth Five Year plan stated that the enrolment of girls will be further increased through the organization of special programmes, the nature of which will vary from state to state.

- **Fifth Five Year Plan: (1974-1979)**

  In this plan priority was given to the programme under the Directive Principles of state policy, free and compulsory education was to be provided for all children up to the age of 14 years. The central and state governments have taken a number of steps to stimulate the education of girls and women. These included establishment of separate cells in the State Directorates of Education to look after the programmes of girls' education, establishment of polytechnics for girls and holding of seminars in different states to discuss the problems and programmes of girls' education.

- **Sixth Five Year Plan: (1980-1985)**

  In the history of planning in India, for the first time, a separate chapter on "Women and Development" was introduced in the Sixth Five year plan. The plan stated that 'in the field of education, under the programme for universalization of elementary education, there has been a special drive for higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools. There was also the provision of incentive for school going girls like uniform, free books, stationery and attendance scholarships. The enrolment of girls increased from 272.78 lakhs to 281.18 lakhs in 1981-82 in classes I-V. The target for 1984-85 was 319.60 lakhs. Similarly, for classes VI-VIII the enrolment of girls improved from 61.53 lakhs to 73.83 lakhs in 1983. The target was 87.41 lakhs.

- **Seventh Five Year Plan :(1985-1990)**

  Seventh five year plan made emphasis on women education on different aspect:

1. Provision will be made to provide 100 percent coverage for education of girls up to the age of 14 years. Importance will be given to retain girls in schools.
2. Provision of free education for girls up to the end of the higher secondary level.
3. It is proposed to expand the 'Open Learning systems' including corresponding courses for women.
4. It has been proposed to be modified the content of adult education programme to incorporate new value systems in the community regarding the role of women in the family and community in addition to increasing the coverage of literacy. The number of nonformal education centers for girls will be increased.
5. During the plan period more and more polytechniques for women are to be set up for the promotion of vocational education.
6. Participation of girls and women in sports and games will be encouraged.
7. Additional facilities would be given among the girls belonging to schedule castes, schedule tribes and other weaker sections under the 'Development of Backward Classes' sector.
8. To increase the number of trained women teacher, priority will be given to women in Teachers' Training Programme.

- **Eight Five Year Plan: (1992-97)**

The trust areas of eight five year plan in the field of education for both the sexes are- as follows:

1. Universalization of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15 to 35 and strengthening of vocational education so as to relate it to the emerging needs in the urban and rural settings.
2. The need for according the highest priority to Universalization of elementary education is, therefore, well

established. Within the overall school- age population, the focus would be on girls, who accounts for two thirds of target and among adults the focus would be on women's literacy which has a beneficial impact on children's literacy as well as other national objectives like population control objective like population control and family welfare.

3. Special attention would be paid to increase retention, improvement of quality, specification of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) and their attainment by the learners.
4. In regard to literacy, the emphasis would be on sustainability of literacy skills gained and on the achievement of goals of remediation, continuation and application of skills to actual living and working conditions.

- **Ninth Five Year Plan: 1997-2002)**

The ninth five year plan identifies the empowerment of women and other socially disadvantaged groups as crucial to socio-economic change. The plan seeks to promote their participation in local government and in people's organizations. Emphasis was laid on providing all primary schools with clean drinking water, sanitary facilities, better nutrition for pupils through mid-day meals, health check-up and primary health care facilities and a network of roads for making the school easily accessible.

- **Tenth Five Year Plan: (2002-2007)**

In this plan government of India has introduced a scheme as 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan' to promote elementary education in India. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to the poor children through provision of committee owned quality education in a mission. The SSA is also to provide useful and relevant

elementary education for all children of 6-14 years age group by 2010.

The tenth five year plan has reorganized the immediate need to enhance the level of girls' participation in education if the country has to achieve universal elementary education in the stipulated timeframe. Two new programmes, one targeting formal schools, the other targeting girls in remote habitations, have been launched to include girls' in elementary education.

- **Eleventh Five Year Plan: (2007-2012)**

  The eleventh five year plan put great emphasis on expanding the access of girl child to education at all the three levels elementary, secondary and higher education, and also on improving the quality of education. NPEGEL is implemented in 25 states and union territories covering 6,956 Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) centers. Assam is included under this scheme to enhance the self image and self confidence of women.

  The eleventh five year plan has introduced KGBVs and bridge courses for Out of School Children (OoSC), KGBVs are operating in 27 states and united territories through 2,565 residential schools covering 1.96 lakh girls.

  The 12^{th} Five Year plan also lays emphasis on the role of education and states that education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. Accordingly, recognizing the importance of education in national development Twelfth Five Year plan places an unprecedented focus on the expansion of education, on significantly improving the quality of education and on ensuring that educational opportunities are available to all segments of the society.

1.5 GROWTH OF WOMEN LITERACY IN INDIA:

Promotion of Girls education has been the concern of India since independence. In this light, the central Government and state governments, institutions and organizations have been doing a lot for the progress of girls'

education. Yet, the achievement in girls' education is far from the goals set for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). This goal has been repeatedly reconfirmed, but primary education in India is not yet universal. India has the largest population of non school going working girls'. India's constitution guarantees free primary school education for both boys and girls up to the age of 14. But Women and girls receive far less education than men. It is well known that in all countries men fare better than women on most socio-economic indicators, although the degree of disparity may vary. The situation in India is not different. The most glaring evidence of gender bias in India is the low sex ratio, 940 female per 1000 males, according to latest census. There is evidence of considerable gender gap in educational investments such as literacy, enrolment ratio, completed level of schooling etc. Low level of literacy among women and girls is one of the fundamental causes of gender backwardness.

At the beginning of 20th century our literacy rate was about 6% and it rose to 74.04% in 2011. In 2011, the female literacy rate was 65.46% when male literacy rate was 82.14%. The gender specific literacy rate of India from 1951to 2011 is shown in the following table:

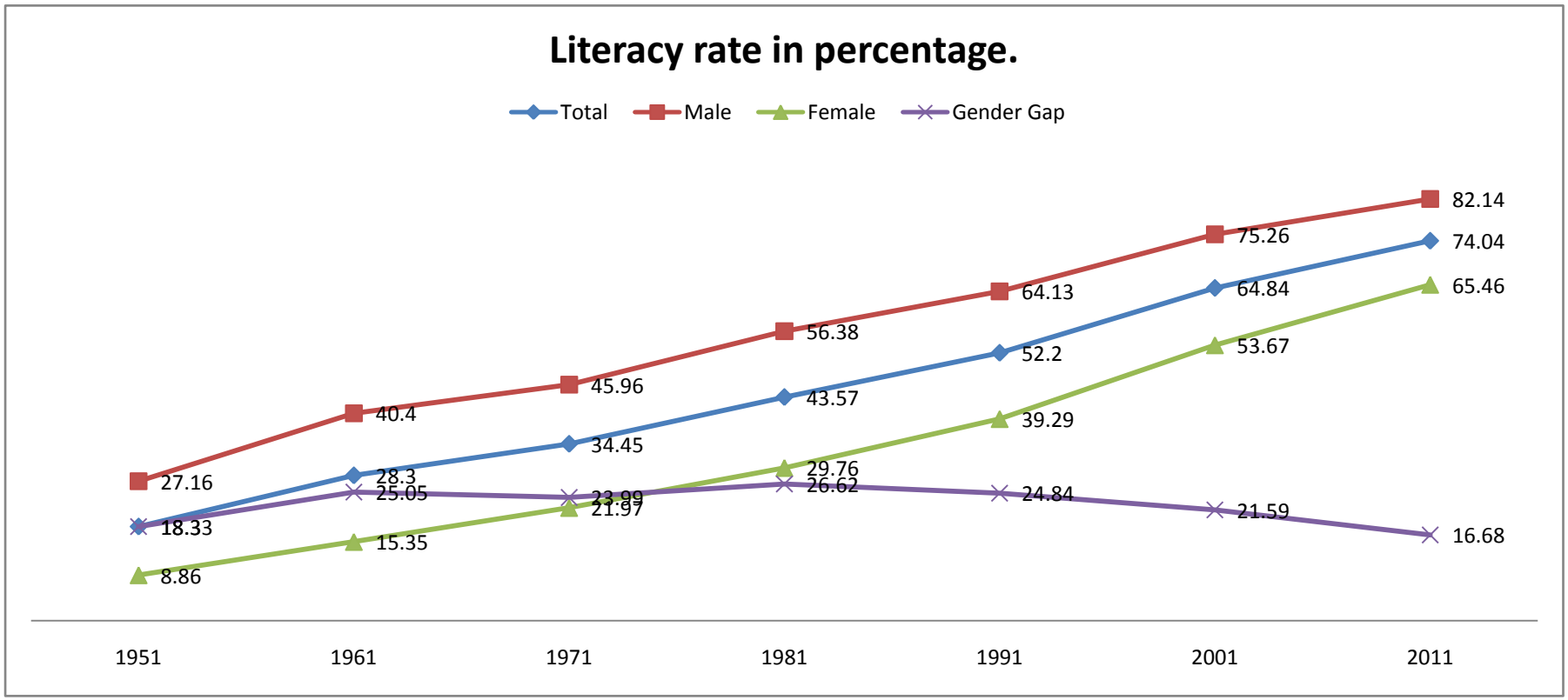
Table: 1.1

Female literacy growth in India from 1951-2011

Year	Literacy Rate in (%)			
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Gender Gap**
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.3
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.99
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Census of India (1951-2011)

Fig.:1.1:
Projection of literacy growth in India



Source: Literacy Percentage in India from 1951-2011

But gradually female literacy is increasing. Though the female literacy rate increases with the progress of time yet the disparity in literacy between male and female is still very wide and this gap was 26.42%, the highest, in 1981 and then gradually declining from decade to decade and now it has come down to 16.68 percent as per the 2011 census report. The goal of universalization of education as set out in the constitution seems unrealizable even after six decades of independence. The situation further worsens when the question of girl child arises. Regardless of its highest value paid in gender equality and importance on women development, inequality between men and women still continues in the field of education.

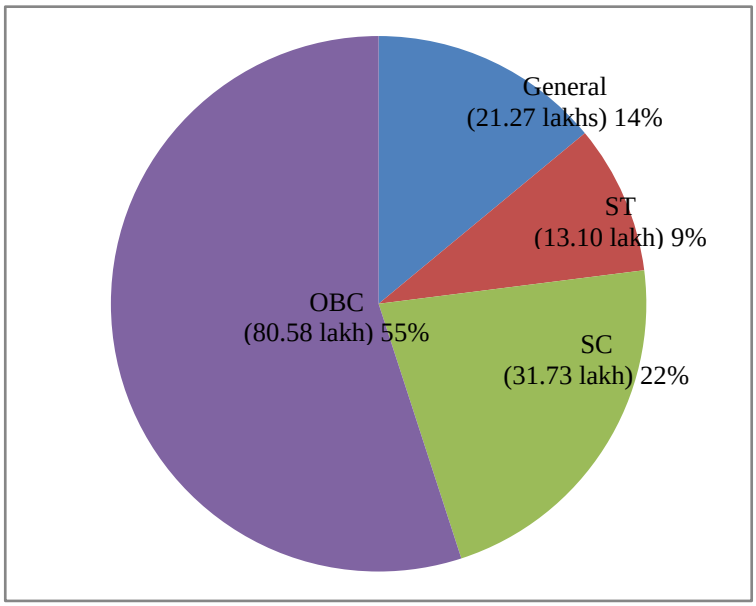
1.6 ENROLMENT OF GIRLS' IN EDUCATION:

In comparison, the growth in the enrolment of girls' at primary level has been much impressive, although it is still not adequate to attain the constitutional goal of universal enrolment of children up to the age of 14 to education. Gender discrimination has also been seen in participation of students at different level of education all over India. The enrolment of students at different levels of education is shown in the following table for the session 2011-2012.

Fig.: 1.2

Enrolment in Elementary Schools 2007-08 to 2013

Share in increased enrolment by social groups

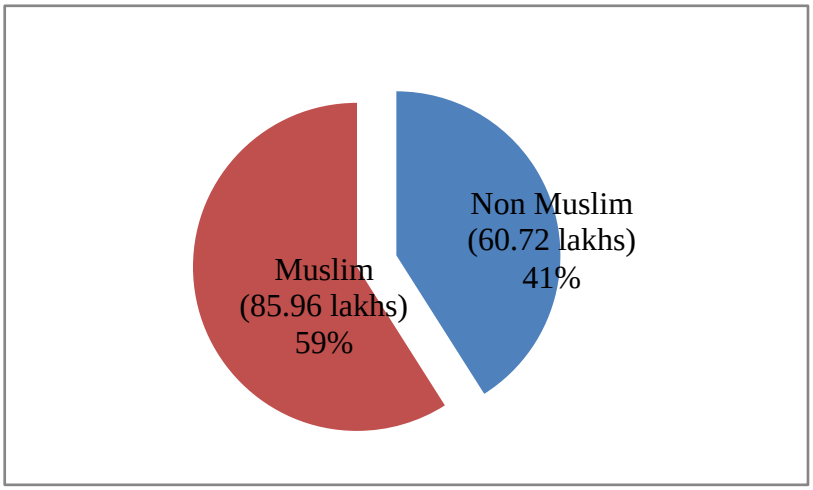


Source: Statistics of School Education, MHRD, GOI (2013)

Fig.: 1.3

Enrolment in Elementary Schools 2007-08 to 2013

Share in increased enrolment by religion



Source: Statistics of School Education, MHRD, GOI (2013)

Percentage of Enrolment at different level of Education in India: (2011-12) each level of education. In Primary level it is 47.37% and in secondary level it is only 44.62. After so many efforts on women education the constitutional goal of universalization of primary education is still a far cry.

1.7 DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN ASSAM:

In the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century women education was not at all popular in Assam. Girls were mainly taught at home about their work and responsibilities towards their home, family and society. Only women from the affluent families received education mainly at their homes.

After the Yandaboo Treaty of 1826, Assam became a part of British India and from then on the Christian missionaries gradually started educating boys as well as girls, they realized the importance of women literacy as a means of their empowerment. Women were persuaded to come to the mission bunglows where they were taught on many practical subjects by missionary wives. The missionaries started the 'Zenana School' for the education of women in Assam. Mrs.Nathan Brown, Mrs. O. Cutter in Sibsagar, Mrs. Baker in Guwahati and Miles Bronson were some missionary wives dedicated to the cause of women education.[27]

In 1839 the first primary school for girls was established in Sadia, upper Assam and in 1889 the number increased to 185. To enroll more women in schools the Nowgong Orphan Institute was started in 1843. However, women education progressed very slowly due to several problems. To encourage women education and empower them was very difficult at that period. Anandaram Dhekial Phookan at that time gave utmost importance to women education in Assam.

The Wood's Despatch of 1854, Hunter's Commission of 1882 gave importance to women education. Some eminent Indians like Iswar chandr Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to promote Girls education along with that of boys.

After independence, women education received much more importance than before. The University Education Commission (1948-49), the National Committee on Women Education (1958), the Kothari commission (1964-66), NPE of (1986), POA of 1992 offered valuable measures to promote women education all over the country. The establishment of the Assam state Council for Women Education provided new direction to women education in the state. The female literacy rate in Assam prior to independence was 0.6% in 1901 and 4.4% in 1941. In 1916, the first girls' high school was established by Christian missionaries at Dibrugarh. There were 31 girls' high schools in Assam before independence. Female Education made considerable progress after 1947. The Government took a special initiative in promoting female education. The Assam Elementary Education Act 1962 was in force up to 4th September, 1975. The Board of Secondary Education was established in 1962. The Board has many committees to help perform it functions. One of such committees is the Girls' Education Committee which looks into the matters related to girls' education. To look after the development of women's education, several women officers were appointed in the department of Education of Government of Assam. The State Council for Women's Education was also formed in 1963 to advise the Government on the improvement and expansion of girls' education in the State. The functions of this council were as follows:

1. Education at the Secondary stage should have an extensive expansion by providing separate schools for girls'.

2. Immediate steps should be taken by the Government to make education free up to class VI.
3. Due to the economic pressure in Assam education in Assam was no longer a luxury but an imperative necessity in the rural areas.
4. For the expansion of primary education there should be more women teachers, more training facilities, free distribution of text books particularly in rural areas, building grants for primary schools, an introduction of a primary section attached to primary schools to improve the quality of education and for that purpose expansion of training facilities for such schools.
5. Scholarships for women at the secondary stage should be considerably increased and where there is co-education greater facilities should be given.
6. Sanction of grants for opening girls' schools should not be dependent on normal terms and conditions prescribed for sanction of grants for opening new schools.
7. For encouraging college education, at least one college in each district with provision of Science and Arts should be provincialized. All first division girls' should receive scholarships to cover college and hostel expenses.
8. Post-graduate scholarships for girls' should be increased considerably.
9. Liberal provision for foreign scholarships for girls' should be made.
10. For the training of women teachers for secondary school more training colleges should be opened and the number of seats in the existing training colleges should be increased.
11. To enable the adult women, widows and destitute for their entrance into polytechnic institutions, artisan courses, gramsevikas, and dhais, they should be encouraged to quality themselves for Middle English or High School Leaving Certificate Examinations.
12. There should be intensive drive for enrolment of girls' and determined efforts must be made to enroll additional girls' in

schools by the end of March 1966. This should not be a difficult target provided a properly planned enrolment drive was made. In order to achieve the target, a concerted drive jointly by the Education Department and the State Council by organizing public meetings in each Block, Panchayat, Broadcasting talks, distribution of pamphlets containing messages, special schemes of girls' education and publicity of Government scheme in rural areas should be undertaken.

13. An Assistant Inspectress in each circle should be appointed to look after the control and expansion of girls' education in the circle.
14. One officer of the rank of Joint Director at the head quarters to look into the education of girls' at all levels should be appointed.

But after independence, rapid progress occurred particularly in women education which resulted in phenomenal increase of women literacy and their status. The following table indicates the literacy growth of Assam after independence.

Table 1.2

Literacy growth in Assam from -1951-2011

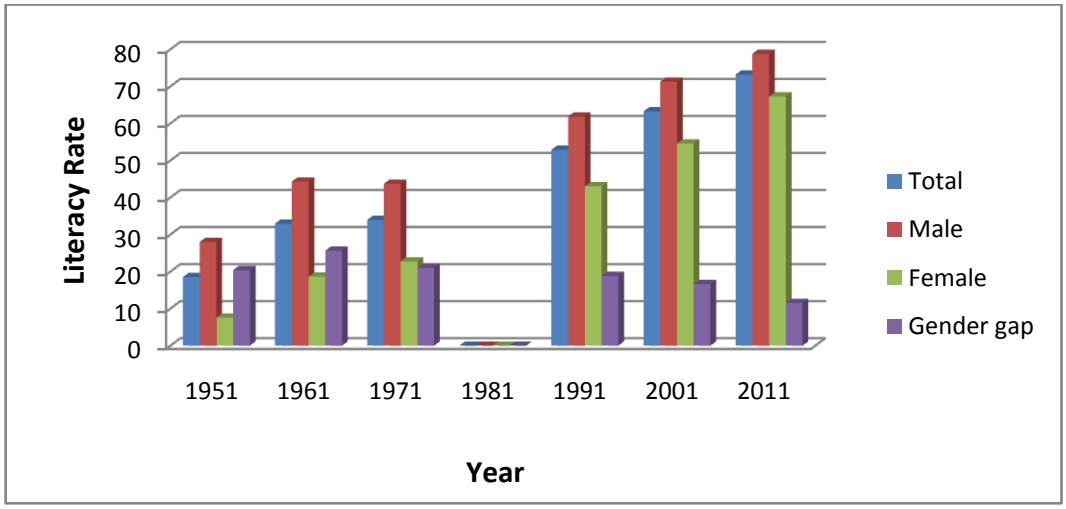
Year	Literacy rate in (%)			
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Gender Gap**
1951	18.53	28.01	7.58	20.43
1961	32.95	44.28	18.62	25.66
1971	33.94	43.72	22.76	20.96
1981	NA	NA	NA	NA
1991	52.89	61.87	43.03	18.84
2001	63.25	71.28	45.61	16.67
2011(P)	73.18	78.81	67.27	11.45

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

NA – Census could not be done in Assam.

Fig.: 1.4

Bar Projection of Literacy growth (%) in Assam (1951-2011).



From the above table and figure, it is evident that the female literacy rate started rising from 7.58% to 67.27% between the period 1951 to 2011. Although the female literacy growth is satisfactory yet it is lagging behind that their male counterparts.

In case of enrolment of students at various stages of education in Assam girls students have been again trailed behind their male counterparts. The following table shows the enrolment of students at the different levels of education in the state for the academic session 2011-2012.

Table: 1.3

Gender wise enrolment of students at different levels of education in Assam (2011-2012).

Levels of Education	Male total Enrolment	%	Female total Enrolment	%	Gender Gap
Primary	23,71,511	49,20	24,40,181	51.71	1.42
Secondary	5,03,642	55.29	4,07,244	44,71	10.58
Higher (U.G.)	1,24,324	62.90	73,320	37,10	25.8
Higher (P.G.)	8,102	60.55	5,279	39,45	21.1

Source: Statistical Handbook, Assam, 2012.

The enrolment of girl students (50.71%) in primary level for the academic session 2011-12 is higher than boys (49.29%) but the difference is very negligible. In secondary and higher level the enrolment of girls again trail behind their male counterparts.

1.8 PROBLEMS OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN ASSAM:

Like in the other parts of India, Assam too has many problems related to women education. Assam is behind many states in the overall literacy and women literacy rates. Even today compared to boys, fewer girls are enrolled in the secondary and higher level of education. There is huge percentage of drop out of girl students both in primary and secondary levels. Girls are usually made to do household works while boys are sent to school. Household factors were found dominating among the reasons of girls being tied down to domestic works, apart from helping parents in their occupation, and taking care of siblings, lack of parental motivation for education of girls, illiteracy among parents, and engagement of girls in other remunerative employments.

It is evident from different studies that 'household' and 'socio-cultural' and some 'school related' factors contributed towards dropping out of girls from schools. Another important factor relating to schools was the inability of girls in passing the examinations due to other pressure at home, lack of separate schools for girls, lack of facilities exclusively for girl child and the middle schools being far away from the habitation. Restrictions on sending them to school after puberty, and early marriage also emerged as socio-cultural factors responsible for their drop out.

Even today in most of the rural areas, especially in hilly and remote places transport facilities are either very poor or non-existent. Students of these areas do not get any kind of motivation to attend the school. A school needed be equipped with all facilities like playgrounds, lavatories, drinking water etc. But unfortunately most of the schools do not have such type of facilities. Robinson says, as quoted by Renu Devi, 'like most women of India, they (students from hilly and remote places) were denied even the latest portion of education, and are excluded from every social circle.'[28]

1.9 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Education is the key factor in the social, economic and political development of a society. The Third world countries have realized the importance of the social development of women in the overall development of the nation and this depends on the position of women's education, as women have an important role to play in development of a country.

The women of India have suffered neglect in the matter of education throughout the ages, seriously affecting their intellectual development and social status. The Constitution of India mandates universal and compulsory education for all. A number of programmes have been implemented and are still under implementation to improve the female literacy rate. Some states have made remarkable progress in this direction, but some have not. It is almost axiomatic to state that a literate mother is the greatest guarantor of education for the next generation with a great bearing on the socio-economic and cultural advancement of a nation.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has played a pivotal role in enhancing women's education, so as to focus the attention of the world communities on the problems and issues concerning women and to define ways and means to improve their status, health and education.

Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country's economic growth. Though the major indicators of socio-economic development, viz., the growth rate of the economy, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate (IMR) and literacy rate, are all interconnected, the literacy rate has been the major determinant of the rise or fall in the other indicators. There is enough evidence even in India to show that a high literacy rate, especially in the case of women, correlates with low birth rate, low IMR and increase in the rate of life expectancy. The recognition of this fact has created awareness on the need to focus upon literacy and elementary education programme, not simply as a matter of social justice but more to faster economic growth, social well being and social stability.

In a progressive society, life should be a joint venture for men and women. Men should share the responsibilities of parenthood and home-making

with women and women in their turn should share social and economic responsibilities of men. Women's role in matters of building the character of future citizens, the economic reconstruction of the country and social reforms remains undeniable and unchallenged. Under these circumstances women must be mentally prepared to shoulder the responsibility that is given and expected of her.[29]

Assam is situated in the North East corner of India, the land inhabited by people of divergent social elements having different social structure and cultural heritage. A land of hills and valleys, Assam is one of the most beautiful states of India. She played a glorious role in the country's freedom movement and produced a host of martyrs men and women.[29]

After independence, although many changes have come, the utilization of human resources is low as most of them are illiterate and unskilled. The women folk who form half of the population did not have the opportunities to contribute their share in the developmental process. In spite of all constrains, the women of Assam are passing through a stage of social change. Education is considered a potent instrument through which the process of modernization of a society could be affected. Under these circumstances, women's education should be taken on a priority basis.

The key to the development of a state is the development in the field of education in general and in the field of women's education in particular. In this endeavour, it is essential to take a stock of the existing position and the action being undertaken by various bodies to enhance women education. It is also be important to know how parents of girls view the education of girls, as parents play an important role in the promotion of education among girls. Very few studies have been conducted in Assam to look into these aspects of women's education. The study by Das (1979)[30] and Bora (1995)[31] are of a wider nature on the women's education in Assam. The studies provide picture on the issues up to a specific period. Very recently Devi (2013)[32] has been conducted a study on women's education in Assam, but this study look into the problems of women education. As the statistics show that there is a change in the entire educational enrolment set-up, it is imperative that an investigation should be taken up to study the progress and development of girls' in Assam.

It is also to be noted that with the declaration of the International women's Year (1975), the United Nations Decade of Women and holding of World Conferences regarding women's development by various nations especially India, serious efforts are being made to enhance the educational status of women. National 'Girl Child Day' is celebrated every year on 24th January as a national observation day for the girl child. It was started by Women and Child Development Ministry since 2008 to celebrate as the national observance. The Women and Child Development Ministry had implemented a scheme called 'Dhanlaksmi' to the girl child family to fulfill the basic needs such as immunization, birth registration, school enrolment and maintenance up to the class VIII. In Assam too, its effects were felt. A number of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or Voluntary Organizations have been playing their respective roles to promote education among women especially in the rural areas.

Considering a number of factors effecting development of a state, it was felt that an investigation should be made to study the progress of Girls' education in Assam in general and Nagaon District in particular. The available literature reveals that lot of studies have been conducted on women, girls' and girls' education in India but hardly any study has been taken up to study the status of women education in Nagaon which pursue the researcher to raise the following issues such as who goes to school? What are their statuses? What are the rates of their participation? What are the problems they come across etc. to find out the answer of these issues the present study entitled, "**School Education of the Girls in Nagaon District**" has been carried out. The investigator conducted a pilot study to find out the present status and progress of girls' education in the district of Nagaon, Assam and this pilot study is the main source of present research work. Apart from that, the study will have the educational and the social implications which motivate the investigator to conduct the study.

1.10 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem under study is "School Education of the Girls' in Nagaon District."

1.11 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the objectives of the present study:

1) To study the participation of girl children age group 5+ to 16 years in educational programmes.

2) To find out the available programme of Girls education in addition to existing programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
3) To study the various facilities available for girls' education.
4) To study the community participation for the girls' education in the district.
5) To study the problems of girls education in Nagaon district.

1.12 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

The terms used in present research work are explained as follows:

School: According to Oxford Dictionary, School is an institution for educating children, a days' work at school, any institution at which instruction is given in a particular subject, a department of a university, artists, writers or philosophers sharing similar ideas.[33]

The term 'School' has originated from the Greek word 'Skhole' which means 'leisure', 'philosophy' or 'lecture place'. In ancient Greek society there were distinctly two classes of people. The upper class had their fortune of enough leisure and pleasure. They used to spend their leisure time through talks on cultural and philosophical discussions at a place called 'School.' 'School is a place where children are give formal training'.[34]

Education: The process of educating or being educated. [35] 'Education ought to be related to the life, needs and aspirations of the people so as to be a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation.'[36]

Girls: Belong to a group. A female child, a young or relatively young woman.[37]

1.13 DELIMITATION:

1. With regard to the topic and objective (V), the study is delimited to Nagaon District of Assam.
2. The study was limited to age group 6 to 16 years.
3. Only selected variables such as participation, programmes, facilities and problems, rural and urban location have taken into consideration.

4. Only selected institutions and school facilities have taken into consideration.

1.14 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

The present research study consists of six chapters. Following are the different chapters of the study –

i. **Chapter 1:** It is the introductory chapter contains the background of the study, understanding the concept of the study and the status of women around the world, India, Assam and in Nagaon district. It also contains the statement of the problem, operational definitions, objectives, delimitations and organizational pattern of chapters etc.

ii. **Chapter II:** Contains the review of related studies. Some previous studies have been searched to develop the conceptual frame work of the present study. These studies are categorically organized in three heads like studies abroad, studies in India and in North East including Assam.

iii. **Chapter III:** Contains the methodology of study. The design of the study, definition of population, sampling procedure, research tool development, data collection process from different sources, data interpretation procedure, statistical techniques, result and interpretation procedure are discussed here.

iv. **Chapter IV:** Contains the result of the collected data. It also deals with the data editing, tabulation, analysis techniques, their interpretations and graphical representation of collected data.

v. **Chapter V:** Contains the major findings of the study.

vi. **Chapter VI:** It is the last Chapter of the study and it contains the summary, conclusion, implications and the possible suggestions for further study.

1.15 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER:

Women play an important role in the social, cultural, economical, educational and political life of a country. It has however begun to felt that

women's role in the matters of building the character of would be citizens, economic reconstruction of the country and social reforms remain undeniable.

But apart from other areas, women education in all over the world lags behind than their male counterparts. There are approximately 900 million illiterate adults in the world, of whom two thirds (65%) are women. In India after so many government and non-government efforts, the overall scenario of girls' education is not very satisfactory. So the present observation is designed with some specific objectives to study the overall condition of girls' education in Nagaon district. The overall research design of the present study is picturised in this chapter.

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