SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women development is a multi-faceted concept requiring action on many fronts and involves action in social as well as economic development and empowerment. While people at large and in the present case, women comprise the biggest stakeholder, government remains the main instrument to bring in change because of its resources, reach and power it holds over the people. Women as target group and affected party have been consistently fighting for their rights on equal basis. However, without a sympathetic and enlightened State, it becomes a long, unsuccessful struggle.

We have seen that States all over the world are cognizant of this matter and Indian State is no exception. Actually, Indian Government has always been at the forefront to legislate as well formulate progressive policy measures for the development of women. But these only show intent. The real thing comes in translating these legislative measures and policy proclamations into effective programmes and implementation thereof. In the previous chapters, effort was made to examine these in detail.

As far as this study is concerned, objectives, hypotheses and research methodology used and stated in chapter I are reiterated below:

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

(i) Examine women’s participation in politics and administration

(ii) Critically analyse the Government efforts being made for the upliftment and empowerment of women particularly of weaker sections in the light of socio-economic status of women and development strategy prevailing at present.

(iii) Identify the proportion of the benefit flowing from these efforts towards women and the possibility of enhancing this flow of
benefits, given the existing policy making and administrative structure.

(iv) Examine the difficulties being faced by women in (a) getting these benefits and (b) sustaining the benefits.

(v) Examine the impact of the Government policy and programmes in matching needs and aspirations of women.

(vi) Examine the leakages in the delivery mechanism.

(vii) Examine the possibility of evolving alternative policy framework and implementation mechanism (organizational structure) to ensure that benefits reach the target group.

HYPOTHESES

(i) Women’s representation in the political arena is very low.

(ii) Women’s participation in administration is poor.

(iii) Government budgetary support to education is inadequate vis-à-vis recommended norms by various education commissions and in the process women suffer more.

(iv) Government budgetary support to health is inadequate and in the process women suffer more.

(v) Women lack economic empowerment relating to access to employment, productive assets including land, finance, capacity building etc.

(vi) Women lack awareness of various government programmes meant for development of women.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The study is undertaken by using secondary data. The analysis of this data was done to see the impact of Government role in speeding up the process of political and socio-economic upliftment of women.

Secondary data was collected from different Government and Non-Government sources such as Planning Commission, Central Statistical Office,
MAJOR FINDINGS

(A) Government Role in Women Development

(i) Government of India acknowledges the need of women empowerment in its planning and policy, as a pre-requisite of overall socio-economic development of the country.

(ii) Constitution of India has requisite provisions for gender equality and equity in all spheres namely social, political and economic. However, affirmative action for women development is still lacking.

(iii) Indian Government has always been pro-active in ensuring legislation over women equality and empowerment in all fields.

(iv) Since Independence, planning process took full cognizance of women as a stakeholder in the country’s development. However, till mid-70s, women were mainly recognised as recipients/beneficiaries of Government policy and programmes. It was only after that they were included as active partners in development process.

(v) In spite of the paradigm shift in the process of thinking among planners and policy makers, actual translation of proclamations made in Plans and National Policies about women empowerment has been extremely slow.

(vi) Many programmes and schemes have been floated from time to time as per requirements based on assessment of experts in the maternal fields, but fund allocation has never been in commensuration of the quantum of the problems being addressed.

(vii) There is huge problem of leakages of these funds when the programmes are implemented. Corruption/ rent-seeking are rampant.
Due to very slow taking-off the schemes and low fund allocation, impact is negligible. While number of women needing help is in crore, number of women getting benefit under the schemes is in thousand or lakhs.

Whatever limited funds are made available for implementing programmes, most of this flow to marginalized sections such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes even when women themselves as a group without caste distinction are marginalized.

Since Government has never been able to address the needs of all needy women at a particular time, population increase keeps on adding to the absolute number of these needy women.

Functioning of the Government offices and delivery mechanism is very unfriendly and not pro-people who, given a choice, will prefer not to go to these places. Government rules, regulations and unfriendly atmosphere coupled with corruption make it difficult for the target group to access the benefit made available to them.

The study confirms government’s active role in the development of women through constitutional, legislative, planning and policy intervention. In spite of all this action, gender parity is nowhere near reach in any field.

(B) Status of Women’s Political and Administrative Participation

Women’s participation in political field is very low at 10 percent representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Reservation for women in political field helps women as has been proven by 33 percent reservation in local elected bodies.

Political parties are not enthusiastic in promoting women candidature.

Women have low representation in administration. Study shows that over a ten years i.e. 2001-10, their representation in All India Services on an average was 24 percent of the total.
**STATUS OF HYPOTHESIS (Administrative Participation)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
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| I     | Women's representation in the political arena is very low. | Secondary Data from Election Commission of India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Urban Development | • 10% representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha  
• 2009 election, only 134 women nominated for election.  
• 33% representation in Local Bodies. | ✓ validated |
| II    | Women's participation in administration is poor. | Secondary Data from Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy Department of Personnel & Training, UPSC | Low representation between 7.3% in IAS, 0.8% in IPS and 9.3% in IFS in 1995, respectively but steadily increasing to around 28 percent in all premier services together. | ✓ |

(C) **Status of Women’s Health**

(a) As percentage of total plan investment, health sector has been getting decreasing allocation.

(i) As share of GDP, health expenditure has not increased in spite of increasing burden of population.

(ii) Only two-thirds of women who receive any ante-natal check-up have the recommended 3+ visits to the hospitals. This share has remained unchanged since NFHS-2.

(iii) Among women who received ANC, less than two-thirds had weight, blood or urine taken, or blood pressure measured.
(iv) 56 percent of married and 59 percent of pregnant women are anemic.

(v) Institutional deliveries increased by 7 percent points between NFHS-2 and NFHS-3. Nonetheless, more than half the deliveries still take place at home; half are not assisted by health personnel. The majority of mothers with a recent delivery did not any post natal care.

(vi) Despite improvements in the provision of maternal health care, at the current rate of change at no more than one percentage point a year, women’s reproductive health will continue to suffer into the current century.

**STATUS OF HYPOTHESIS(HEALTH)**

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| IV    | Government budgetary support to health is inadequate and in the process women suffer more. | Secondary Data - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and another Government/International Agencies sources. | - Only 52.7% of the women from lowest health index access Government Health facility for antenatal care and 17.3% community worker.  
- 58.1% of women from Highest Wealth Index access Private health facility and 4.7% community workers. | ✓ validated          |
| VI    | Women lack awareness of various government programmes meant for development of women. | Secondary Data -WHO Report -Parliament Questions     | Low allocation of funds awareness Spots run mainly on Doordrshan and not on all channels.  
-50% knew about women specific Health Schemes.                                                                                                                                                   | ✓ validated          |

(D) Status of Women’s Education

(i) Government expenditure on education in the range of three to four percent of Gross National Product has been consistently lower than
required to achieve the proclaimed objective of universal education. since illiteracy is more prevalent among women, they suffer more.

(ii) School infrastructure has been found to be poor. Even now, there are schools without building, furniture and toilets especially separate toilets for girls.

(iii) Education standard as a whole has been found to be poor and this fact has been acknowledged by planners too.

(iv) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, main flagship scheme to ensure universal education has been found to suffer from misutilisation of funds as per Comptroller General of India’s report.

(v) Due to poor standards of education, people prefer to send their children to private schools.

(vi) Latest National Family Health Survey-3 conducted in 2005-06 comes up with following observations about Gender Inequality and Empowerment.

(a) Literacy among women have doubled in 30 years; even among the youngest one-fourth of women and one-tenth of men are illiterate.

(b) The poorest women and scheduled-tribe women and men are least likely to be literate.

**STATUS OF HYPOTHESIS (EDUCATION)**

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<td>III</td>
<td>Government budgetary support to education is inadequate vis-à-vis recommended norms by various education commissions and in the process women suffer more.</td>
<td>- Various Government sources. Education statistic - UNICEF</td>
<td>Low expenditure on education. Only 3% to 4% of GNP vis-à-vis recommended and accepted by Government norms of 6%. - Statutory reservation of 15% for SCs and 7.50% for STs. - Special Component Plan for SC/ST - SSCA focuses on girls especially belonging to SC/ST community who are given free text</td>
<td>validated</td>
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VI  Women lack awareness of various government programmes meant for development of women.

Secondary Data  Lack of awareness of various government programmes

(E) Status of Women's Economic Development

(i) Women have poor access to land holdings. Hardly 10 percent of the women are having land holding in their names and that too only in case of small holdings.

(ii) Budgetary allocations for women’s training and their consequent coverage as well as access to finance is very low.

(iii) Specific programme to provide employment to people such as SGSY and SJSRY have been found to be having less than 1/3rd and less than 50 percent of women beneficiaries respectively.

(iv) Banks have been found to be reluctant in providing loans to women beneficiaries as they lack assets for collateral purpose.

(v) Women’s endeavour for economic development tend to fail because they lack access to markets to sell their products.

(vi) Among the population age 15-49, men are two times more likely to be employed and 2.7 times likely to be employed for cash than women. Among the employed, 64 percent of women vs. 91 percent of men earn cash. Female share of population employed in non-agricultural occupation is 22 percent.
(vii) The majority (59 percent) of employed women are engaged in agricultural work

(viii) Only 24 percent currently married women reported predominant control on her earnings while in the case 15 percent of these women, men have main control on women earnings.

**STATUS OF HYPOTHESIS (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)**

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<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Status of Hypothesis</th>
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</table>
| V     | Women lack economic empowerment relating to access to employment, productive assets including land, finance, capacity building etc. | - Government Data and Statistics.  
- Secondary Data | - Poor access to land holdings.  
- 10% of women having land holding in their names and that too only in the case of small holdings.  
- Budgetary Allocation for women training and access of finance very low.  
- SGSY, Achievement are less than 1/3rd of the Target.  
- Reluctance of Banks to provide loans.  
- SJSRY women comprise less than 50% of beneficiaries.  
- Low percentage of women in Government sector  
- Reservation in services  
- more than 50% benefit going to SCs/STs under MGNREGAR  
- Limited access to financial sector for women.  
- Poor Access to productive resources like land, finance, etc.  
- Poor coverage under Training.  
- Lack of access to market. | ✅ validated |
| VI    | Women lack awareness of various government programmes meant for development of women. | Secondary Data. | Low awareness and very low allocation of funds in awareness generation programmes. | ✅ validated |
(F) **Other Findings**

(i) Limited freedom of movement as only one-third go alone to all three destinations: the market, health facility, and outside village or community.

(ii) Women are disadvantaged absolutely and relatively to men in terms of access to education, media exposure, and employment for cash.

(iii) Traditional gender norms, particularly those concerning wife beating, remain strongly entrenched.

(iv) As the progress in the field of women empowerment is very slow, gender parity may remain a distant dream.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Strong Commitment to Population Control**

   The continuously increasing population of India itself is a problem that dilutes all efforts being made to ameliorate the conditions of citizens of this country which includes women. After the faux pas of coercive population control measures of emergency in 1975-77 and electoral consequences thereafter, no political party has the will to look into this issue seriously and take strong measures to contain population increase. This has resulted in perpetual increase in population. Therefore, whatever planning, policy and channelizing of funds have been made to develop the lot of women, it has failed to make remarkable difference in their lives as absolute number needing government’s hand holding adding to the population is much more than those who have been or could be assisted under these initiatives.

2. **Strong Commitment to the Cause**

   After more than 60 years of government efforts to improve the lot of Indian women, we find a relative change is visible but in absolute terms, women needing help from government have increased over time. To counter this, Government has to go beyond being partner in signing, ratifying various international treaties and announcing policy frameworks. The fact is that after making grand announcements about policies, government struggles to put
that ‘on paper’ plan/policy into action due to lack of commitment on the part of authorities. If the Government is serious about the issue, it has to have comprehensive single unit programme for the purpose of social, political and economic inclusion of women in the mainstream of society and stop acting in trial and error method.

3. **Assessment/Quantification of the Issue**

To have a comprehensive programme which is urgently required to achieve what the Government commits in its plans/policies for women development, following steps must be taken:-

(i) Quantify the problem by assessing the needs of women in the fields of politics, education, health and economic participation.

(ii) After this, number of women needing help should be assessed. Since, women in different economic and social classes need different kind of assistance, complete and not partial (as is being done for last many decades) assessment must be made of government’s financial intervention required to generate awareness of its programmes, affirmative provisions for women, skill enhancing training programmes and funds requirement for devising, implementing programmes for various groups as per their needs. It required ‘bottom-up’ approach.

(iii) A firm, consistent, feasible, practical and viable plan with definite time-frame must be prepared to generate funds for this purpose.

(iv) Time-bound programme with firm yearly target of fund flow for all these activities with clear cut responsibilities of authorities at every level and outcomes on all parameters must be devised.

4. **Effective Implementation of Women Development Programmes**

Lack of effective implementation of the schemes for developing women is a major bane in the country. To improve the functioning of the system, the country requires decentralization and single window operation of the programmes. Programmes should be devised with clear-cut backward and forward linkages. While there are quite a few women training programmes, each has been found in the study having small coverage. Not only this, post
training, trainees’ employment or engagement in self-employed income generating activity is not ensured. This has been found to negate the objective of improving the socio-economic status of women as most of these trained women find themselves not equipped to use their training for earning purpose. Women should be ensured access to political Institutions for decision making, schools for education and market to sell produce through affirmative action. Regular review with immediate corrective action rather than prevailing slow mechanism should be initiated.

5 Involvement of Women as Stakeholders

Experience gained over time and changing political social environment requires that target group should always be made a stakeholder as a beneficiary and decision maker. Study has revealed low participation of women in political and administrative structure. Discussion with women representatives have been there since beginning but this group has been generally the elite. What the country requires is open discussion with grass root level women, discussion in Gram Sabha and similar forums where they are empowered to decide priorities needing government intervention in their lives. It is, therefore recommended that enlightened people should be doing hand-holding of these women to equip them to see, recognize, explore and find their potential as per their needs and not be the decision makers on their own.

6 Affirmative action to enhance women’s participation in the decision making process

To make women stakeholders in the socio-economic mainstream in the country and decision making process, it is required that government urgently passes Women’s Reservation Bill to provide 33 percent reservation to women in Parliament and it should be further taken down to states’ legislative assemblies too. Similarly, some affirmative action must be initiated to improve women’s participation in administration, not only in premier services but at all levels.
7 Dissemination of Information

A popular saying that ‘Knowledge is Power’ is applicable in all fields and more so in those areas where aspiration are lacking because of lack of information. Primary data reveals that women are ignorant of the various government programmes launched to develop them. So, ignorance is not always bliss. Until and unless women are shown a different life, a different view which is better than their present, they will prefer to continue to live their present lives. Therefore, government needs to intervene actively on a daily basis through all formats of media to inform women of every strata of society about their rights, government programmes, access points and delivery system.

8 Improvement in Delivery Mechanism

Delivery mechanism requires proper manpower planning and putting right kind of persons for the job. The ultimate success of any government intervention to improve the lot of women is dependent on persons managing the work. The weak human resource infrastructure will provide weak delivery mechanism thereby failing the whole exercise/efforts of the government. In the light of these reasons, it is suggested that clear unambiguous guidelines for functional purposes without much of discretionary power and total transparency should be laid down with dedicated, qualified and competent manpower to implement these programmes.

9 Improvement in the work ethics

Corruption and diversion of funds is a major issue afflicting the country. As per Transparency International, India with a score of 3.3 out of ten, is ranked 87 in the list of 178 countries in 2010 as far as corruption is concerned. This holds true in respect of women programmes too as found in the present study too. To improve this status requires consistent tough action on corruption. Presently, civil society is struggling to get Lokpal Bill with effective powers drafted and passed by the government. It is recommended that not only action on this Bill is completed at the earliest but also all the pending cases about government functionaries’ corruption are speedily disposed off with exemplary punishment wherever people found guilty.
10 Revamping of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

SSA has become main vehicle of the government to ensure universal education. Since women's/girls’ literacy rates are much lower than male literacy rates, women are more affected if this programme is implemented in right spirit and vigour. However, the study reveals that all programmes under this are not implemented in all the states. Spread of the programme is slow and many States are not forthcoming to take advantage of this. It is suggested that this programme is urgently reviewed and revamped to infuse enough flexibility to enable states’ to take benefit out of this as per their local needs.

11 Speedy implementation of National Rural Health Mission

Even though National Rural Health Mission is government’s flagship scheme, it is taking lots of time to put even physical infrastructure in place resulting in slow and low expenditure in initial years. This factor needs to be looked into to ensure that basics required to put this programme into action mode are attended to at the earliest. It is further recommended that manpower capacity building is ensured for the success of the programme as this study has shown shortage of doctors especially women doctors and other technicians required to run the scheme at ground level. This is a pre-requisite to provide women health services near their residences as they have poor mobility due to various reasons.

12 Gender Sensitisation of Government Personnel

Success of any initiative is wholly dependent upon the people managing it. Until and unless they are convinced and dedicated to the cause, result will remain less than satisfactory. Therefore, it is necessary that these persons are imparted gender sensitization to overcome their diffident traditional attitude and they become pro-active stakeholders in the field of women development.